

Wellbeing in South Jersey

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outline economy

- people
- public health / risky behavior
- nature
- conclusion
- bonus 0: definitions and future research
- bonus 1: some more findings
- bonus 2: some uses of happiness to evaluate policy

a disclaimer

- ◊ i am a social scientist−
- · sociology, economics, public policy, geography, psychology
- ◊ i am a happiness researcher, an academic
 - i am not a practitioner, i do not have applied knowledge of local government
- \cdot and i am new in New Jersey
- i always present at academic conferences—this is my first presentation to non-academics
- i am happy to be here—there should be less disconnect between academia and the rest of the world

objective v. subjective QOL

- ◊ objective QOL (Quality Of Life):
- \cdot economy: land use, employment
- \cdot human capital: demographics, education
- · public health: risky behavior, physical/mental health
- subjective QOL: happiness/life satisfaction

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Salem has most Agricultural land (%)



more than 50% of Camden is urban (%)



Atlantic, Cumberland and Salem persist in agriculture



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most urban Camden is not urbanizing any further



 \Diamond

more barren in Gloucester



Salem, Burlington and Cumberland protect forest



 \Diamond

many people in trade, transpo, and utilities (handout)

employment, 1,000s



 \Diamond

Cumberland: increasing



Camden: decreasing



Housing bubble burst



Atlantic: declining



Cape May, Cumberland, Salem: flat

Education_and_Health_Services



Recent few years are flat



Burlington many creative jobs; Cumberland few (handout)



equal in inequality; (US, NJ .46 in 2000)





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Cape May, Camden and Salem don't grow

population growth relative to 2000



most births in Cumberland



Cumberland is aging least (this and following: $\Delta 00 - 10$)



more youngsters in Ocean; fewer in Camden (Δ)



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Burlington: more old people (Δ)



Whites: more in Ocean; fewer in Camden (Δ)



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Blacks: flat in Atlantic, Cape May and Salem (Δ)



 \Diamond



people

prim. lang. not English: Atl. and Cumb. (NJ 29%; Hudson 58%)



county-to-county population flows

- ◇ difficult to summarize in a graph or even a map
- ◊ the detailed flows are in the paper
- ◊ an interesting pattern: many outflows to Florida

20% of Cumberland no HS



Higher education: Burlington>200%Cumberland (Morris 49%)





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public health / risky behavior

Burlington most educated; Cumberland least educated





public health / risky behavior


public health / risky behavior

Cumberland: 400% of teen births in Gloucester



Cumberland most dangerous



Cumberland: many smokers



Salem: many liquor stores



Ocean drinks responsibly



physical exercise as a solution?

- arguably people engage in risky behavior to achieve happiness
- we know that substance abuse results in momentarily happiness (Linden, 2011)
- · and in long-run misery...
- but physical exercise produces same (neurological)
 happiness as substance abuse does (Linden, 2011)
- "the runner's high"
- maybe more effective to promote sports than prevent substance abuse ?

Cumberland: fewer healthy food outlets





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my research-the smaller the area, the more bliss

nature

biophilia

- an innate need to connect with other organisms, not only with other humans
- animals, plants, landscapes, and wilderness benefit our wellbeing (Frumkin, 2001)
- ◊ nature helps recover from pre-existing stress
- o immunizes and protects from future problems
- helps to concentrate and think more clearly
- ◊ reduces frustration and increases patience (Pretty, 2012).

biophilia, Pretty (2012)

- ◊ sensory stimulation: colors, sounds, smells, and so forth
- physical activity and manual tasks in natural settings (e.g. chopping wood, building a fire)
- ◊ increased life expectancy
- o decreased risk of mental health problems
- ◊ fewer illnesses, less frustration and more patience
- ◇ "nature is not a place to visit, it is home"

biophilia

- ◊ ecopsychology:
- ◊ the hustle and bustle of a typical city taxes our attention
- ♦ natural environments restore it (Berman et al., 2008, 2012).
- if you work in a big city,
 living in South Jersey helps your health



- $\diamond~$ TV-series not the only benefit
- improves mental and physical health (Wheeler et al., 2012, White et al., 2013)
- $\diamond\,$ it is good for our health and happiness to live on the shore

natural amenities scale, 1993





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happiness, (BRFSS 2005-2010)

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- ◊ the <u>ultimate</u> goal for policy makers and people
- ◊ so far we discussed objective quality of life
- does it translate to subjective quality of life (happiness)?
- ◊ yes !

county	happiness
Atlantic	3.38
Burlington	3.43
Camden	3.37
Cape May	3.46
Cumberland	3.31
Gloucester	3.43
Ocean	3.42
Salem	3.37



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what is it?

- "overall judgment of life that draws on two sources of information: cognitive comparison with standards of the good life (contentment) and affective information from how one feels most of the time (hedonic level of affect)" (Veenhoven, 2008)
- for simplicity used interchangeably: happiness, life satisfaction and (subjective) wellbeing
- usually an answer to a question like: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

validity

- even though self reported and subjective, valid (people know whether they are happy) (Myers, 2000) and some reliability (precision varies)
- closely correlated with similar objective measures such as brain waves (Layard, 2005)
- unhappiness strongly correlates with suicide incidence and mental health problems (Bray and Gunnell, 2006)
- not only correlates highly with other non-self reported measures, but also does not correlate with measures that are not theoretically related to it: happiness has discriminant validity (Sandvik et al., 1993)

three major theories

- adaptation theory (Brickman et al., 1978) \diamond
 - adjustment to external circumstances
 - 'hedonic treadmill'
 - the more one has the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of filling needs (Durkheim, [1895] 1950)

multiple discrepancy theory (Michalos, 1985) \Diamond

- social comparison
- comparison to various standards
- it is better to be a big frog in a small pond than a small frog in
 - a big pond (Davis, 1966)

needs/livability theory (Veenhoven and Ehrhardt, 1995)

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ranking?

- substantial variation across counties
- but consistent in terms of winners and losers
- ◊ a difference between objective and subjective QL
 (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2011)
- Cumberland comes out at the bottom of the ranking in terms of both, subjective and objective qualities of life (except nature)
- ◊ Burlington tops ranking in terms of objective quality of life
- Cape May appears to be at the top in terms of SWB

weaknesses-strengths

- $\diamond~$ low demand for housing is a weakness on the one hand
- o but that also makes housing prices low
- ◊ which is a strength

public-administration-business; (Porter, 2013)

- disconnect between academics and non-academics is one thing
- but there should also be less disconnect between public administration and business
- and especially now-there's not much money in public administration, and it may be less in the future
- solving social issues by public sector doesn't scale
- we simply cannot do enough because we do not have enough resources
- a key would be to collaborate with business to solve social problems
- Son maybes more tourism in South Jersey...

working from home ...

- o more and more people work from home much of the time
- ◊ including myself
- then why would you pay \$2,000 for a tiny apartment in crowded Philadelphia
- you can rent a house in Cumberland for half of that and enjoy a view of trees as opposed to a view of parking lot !



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income increases happiness, but...



income increases happiness, but...



income increases aspirations, too



Easterlin's paradox income in the US, 1947-98 (Diener and Seligman, 2004)



bonus 1: some more findings

66/80

Easterlin's paradox happiness in the US, 1947-98 (Diener and Seligman, 2004)



67/80

bonus 1: some more findings

an example: expected vs. experienced utility



Kahneman (2000), Kahneman and Krueger (2006), ?), Kahneman and Tversky (1979), Kahneman bonus 1: some more findings 68/80

an example: expected vs. experienced utility



income vs. happiness in the us, 1981-4 (Diener et al., 1993)



income vs. happiness in the world, (wvs) 1996-2004



income vs. happiness across countries



Source: R Ingelhart, 1997
world happiness

A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: The First Published Map of World Happiness



Happy ----- Average ----- Unhappy

Cartographic Unit . University of Leicester



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the outcome line (Mohr, 95)

happiness research applies to public policy



social capital

- trust and social capital are key for happiness
- local governments and cities should promote it
- e.g. community initiatives, local organizations, participatory politics, etc

commute

- ◊ commute is the worst for happiness
- hence, there should be as few commutes as possible to make citizens happy
- ◊ e.g. good public transportation

unemployment and welfare (Di Tella and MacCulloch, 2006) $\diamond H_0$: decrease unemployment benefits to decrease unemployment rate

> [in Europe] the relatively generous level of unemployment benefits has made workers unwilling to accept the kinds of low-wage jobs that help keep unemployment comparatively low in the United States.

Paul Krugman cited in Di Tella and MacCulloch (2006)

 happiness gap between employed and unemployed, however, did not narrow with increases in benefits in Europe from 1975 to 1992.

bonus 2: some uses of happiness to evaluate policy

direct democracy (Frey and Stutzer, 2000)

- happiness and direct democracy (referenda) are positively related, but...
- o direct democracy makes citizens happier than non-citizens
- it is not the policy outcome that matters (foreigners cannot be excluded) but

the process of participating in decision-making itself



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