

# **‘Generalised’ or ‘Particularised’ Happiness Measures? Implications for Time Diary Research into Happiness.**

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## **Abstract:**

### *The Importance of Happiness*

The study of happiness – and well-being more generally – has achieved ever-greater salience within the social sciences over the last two decades. Much effort has gone into producing reliable measures of happiness within individuals and populations. This has been driven by a desire to produce credible alternatives to more conventional economic measures of societal progress. Objective economic indicators like GDP-growth and per-capita income have traditionally been used as stand-alone indicators of national social progress, and their popularity has stemmed from the ease with which such measures of material and physical well-being can be closely monitored. It has been assumed that these measures alone will adequately reflect well-being.

However, recent work on measuring happiness, which is gaining traction in the eyes of the public and policy-makers, suggests this is not the case. Interest in measuring and incorporating happiness into policy has been fuelled by well-publicised analyses of people’s self-reported levels of happiness from population surveys. Such surveys ask generalised questions about happiness, along the lines of: “*Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are, 00 being extremely unhappy and 10 being extremely happy?*” Studies aggregating these measures to the level of population contrast such measures with rates of GDP growth. They have found that if a country’s level of GDP is high, it does not immediately follow that levels of subjective well-being (such as feelings of happiness or satisfaction) will match this (Easterlin, 1974, Layard, 2005, Diener and Seligman, 2004, Kahneman, 2006, Veenhoven, 1994).

Subjective indicators like happiness tell an important story. They are, at the very least, important measures to include alongside the more objective conventional economic indicators in national accounts, if we are to have a proper and well-recognised understanding of all the factors that comprise human well-being and progress. The task of generating appropriate measures of happiness, however, is not straightforward. Popular research by Diener and Seligman and Layard has advanced both the profile of happiness and the measurement of happiness by use of the generalised happiness question, but we should not conflate the appropriateness of the former with the latter. We suggest that there are particular contentions to be raised over the use of the generalised happiness measure.

### *Generalised happiness versus particularised happiness*

The primary criticism we raise against the generalised happiness measure is that survey questions that simply ask respondents how happy they feel in a general ‘all of life’ sense cannot capture the day-to-day micro level factors that affect a person’s feeling of happiness, such as social interaction with others. While emotions like happiness are commonly perceived to be individual, private phenomena, sociologists of emotion have also, in the last thirty years, shed light on their social dimensions.

Some sociologists have argued that cultural norms, otherwise known as ‘feeling rules’ are central to an individual’s emotional experience. These rules can determine what is felt and when, and how intensely it is felt. Others say that emotions are also shaped by more social structural or macro-level factors. Thus, this paper will explore and discuss some of the major sociological studies of emotion (Hochschild, 1979, 1983, 1998, Durkheim, 1961, Thoits, 1990, Shott, 1979, Kemper, 1981) and will shed light on some of the socio-cultural factors that can influence people’s feelings, and more importantly, their perceptions of their levels of happiness. However, what these researchers have in common is an understanding that emotions like happiness are *contextual* – one way or another, they are caused by events and activities that people experience. This suggests that people’s responses to survey questions on generalised happiness are likely

missing a great deal of important and subtle information, and must be examined with an eye towards looking for viable alternatives.

#### *Contrasting 'generalised' and 'particularised' happiness using the ESS*

We will present data from the European Social Survey (ESS) to illustrate the nature of the relationship between generalised measures of happiness and alternative measures of happiness and well-being. Alternative measures are particularised in that they are asked in relation to the past two weeks, and the activities and experiences that occurred therein. We will demonstrate that these measures do not show the kind of statistical coherence that one would expect if they were adequately examining the same phenomenon, and argue that this is representative of the inadequacy of the generalised happiness measure, and of the need for alternative measures.

#### *Alternative particularised measures of happiness – Emotion Time Diaries*

We then proceed to argue that a better method for measuring happiness is through the use of time diaries. This builds on an existing body of research. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2003) did a study using the *Experience Sampling Method* (ESM) and Daniel Kahneman (2004) developed the *Day Reconstruction Method* (DRM) to measure happiness and other emotions. Both go into great depth, looking on a micro level at everyday activities and how these affect emotions and happiness. The former asks respondents to record their feelings in response to random beeps delivered at regular intervals throughout the day, whilst the latter uses a diary-like structure and intends to act as a less expensive alternative to ESM. For two days, at the end of each day, respondents must retrospectively record activities that they engaged in, as well as emotions felt at the time.

However, whilst either method captures the multi-dimensional nature of happiness (such as the different types of activities that could make one feel happy), they both have the distinct disadvantage of only being able to uncover emotions that were brought about by an activity or event at the present moment, and not at any time in the past. There is also no way of knowing whether the activity itself was the cause of the emotion, or whether it was caused by something different (for example, an event that occurred in the past, or something other than an activity). Neither method provides a means by which socio-cultural influences on emotion (explored by sociologists in the last thirty or so years) can be detected.

We propose an alternative methodology – an Emotion Time Diary - for quantitatively measuring happiness and other emotions. This aims to rectify all of the problems that have been encountered in studies using both survey measures and the Experience Sampling and Day Reconstruction Methods. It takes the diary-like structure from these two methods but it also has its differences. The design will enable the accounting for socio-cultural influences on emotion that are discussed in the sociological literature. We will present aspects of the overall design of the diary and some preliminary results from a small-scale pilot exercise. This will shed light on the advantages that the diary method of happiness measurement has over conventional generalised survey variables.

## Introduction

The study of happiness – and well-being more generally – has achieved ever-greater salience within the social sciences over the last two decades. Much effort has gone into producing reliable measures of happiness within individuals and populations, with such measures being promoted as good alternative subjective ‘social indicators’ of well-being and societal progress.

However, recent work on measuring happiness, which is gaining traction in the eyes of the public and policy-makers, suggests that there are problems with measurement.

This paper will explore reasons for the importance of happiness and will give a brief overview of some of the research that has been done on subjective social indicators and their relationship with objective measures of well-being, such as GDP and income. Arguments will then be presented for the usefulness of *particularised* happiness as opposed to *generalised* happiness as a measure of well-being, drawing on sociology of emotions theory; we will then present some analyses of data from the European Social Survey (ESS) that illustrates the shortfalls of the generalised happiness measure. The paper shall lastly propose a new method for measuring happiness that is able to incorporate its particularised dimension, as well as some of its socio-cultural influences.

## The Importance of Happiness

Much effort has gone into producing reliable measures of happiness within individuals and populations. This has been driven by a desire to produce credible alternatives to more conventional economic measures of societal progress. Objective economic indicators like GDP-growth and per-capita income have traditionally been used as stand-alone indicators of national progress, and their popularity has stemmed from the ease with which such measures of material and physical well-being can be closely monitored. It has been assumed that these measures alone will adequately reflect well-being.

Interest in measuring and incorporating happiness measures into policy has been fuelled by well-publicised analyses of people’s self-reported levels of happiness from population surveys. Such surveys ask generalised questions about happiness, along the lines of: *“Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are, 0 being extremely unhappy and 10 being extremely happy?”* Studies aggregating these measures to the level of population contrast such measures with rates of GDP growth, as well as with other more ‘objective’ indicators of well-being such as income and employment rates. They have found that if a country’s level of GDP is high, it does not immediately follow that levels of subjective well-being (such as feelings of happiness or satisfaction) will match this (Easterlin, 1974, Layard, 2005). Easterlin concluded that *“the positive correlation between income and happiness that shows up in within-country comparisons appears only weakly, if at all, in comparisons among societies in time or space.”* (1974:119). Therefore happiness measures are, at the very least, considered to be important measures to include alongside the more objective conventional economic indicators in national accounts, if we are to have a proper and well-recognised understanding of all dimensions of human well-being and progress.

Thus, subjective indicators like happiness tell an important story. However, the task of generating appropriate measures of happiness is not straightforward. Whilst popular research by Easterlin and Layard has advanced both the profile of happiness and the measurement of happiness by use of the generalised happiness question, we should not conflate the appropriateness of the former with the latter. We suggest that there are particular contentions to be raised over the use of the generalised happiness measure.

## Generalised happiness versus particularised happiness

The primary criticism we raise against the generalised happiness measure is that survey questions that simply ask respondents how happy they feel in a general ‘all of life’ sense cannot capture the day-to-day micro-level factors that affect a person’s feeling of happiness, such as daily activities or social interaction with others. While emotions like happiness are commonly perceived to be individual, private phenomena, sociologists of emotion have also, in the last thirty years, shed light on their social dimensions. Turner and Stets (2005), for instance, state that sociological theories of emotion emphasise *“how emotions are, at one and the same time, constrained by situations, structures, and culture while being the very dynamic that makes face-to-face encounters, social structures and culture viable.”* (2005:25). Thus, this paper will explore and discuss some of

the major themes highlighted in sociological studies of emotion (Hochschild, 1979, 1983, Thoits, 1990, Kemper, 1981, Rose, 1998) and will shed light on some of the socio-cultural factors that can influence people's feelings, and more importantly, their perceptions of their levels of happiness.

Some sociologists have argued that culture-specific norms - otherwise known as 'feeling rules' - are central to an individual's emotional experience (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). 'Feeling rules' govern how an individual 'should' feel in different circumstances (that is, a feeling that is 'appropriate' to the situation); Hochschild asserts that these are "*the social guidelines that direct how we want to try and feel*" (1979:563). An example of a feeling rule from contemporary Western culture is the norm that one 'ought to' feel happy on their wedding day. But what happens if there is a discrepancy or dissonance between what an individual actually feels and what the feeling rule 'prescribes' for a given situation? Hochschild states that "*the individual often works on inducing or inhibiting feelings so as to render them "appropriate" to a situation.*" (1979:551). She calls this act of inducement or inhibition 'emotion work' or 'emotion management'. An example of this is making oneself feel happy at a party, even if one feels depressed. Such emotion management can be carried out either by 'surface acting', where the individual consciously pretends to feel a more socially 'appropriate' emotion (e.g. *trying* to feel happy), or by 'deep acting', in which the individual changes their feeling without even thinking about it, so to speak. Attempts may or may not be successful; unsuccessful cases have been termed by some as 'emotional deviance' (Thoits, 1990). Nevertheless, this theory highlights one way in which feelings of happiness can be strongly shaped, or influenced by social and cultural factors. Generalised happiness measures are unable to account for feeling rules or emotion management; this may have implications for the accuracy of responses to this type of question. High levels of reported happiness may, in actual fact, be the responses of people who feel that they 'should' be happy (for example, if they had a highly paid job), even if they are not!

Others say that emotions are also shaped by more social structural or macro-level factors (Kemper, 1981, Rose, 1998). Rather than actors defining situations themselves (as a 'happy', or 'sad' situation, for instance), it is social structure that determines these definitions and the emotions associated with them. Kemper (1981) claims that it is power and status relations between actors that bring about emotions (such as happiness). He uses these terms to refer to hierarchical relationships between members of society; power relations are those characterised by domination and control over one actor or group by another, and status relations are those characterised more by compliance, approval or even love (despite some individuals or groups having higher status than others). An example to support this is that of hosts and guests at a party; an actor with 'host' status would make his guests feel welcome and 'at home', and the guests in turn would feel happy at their enhanced status. Another theorist who might argue that particular emotions are brought about by social structure is Nikolas Rose (1998). Although Rose is not a sociologist of emotion as such, his theory suggests that the behaviour of individuals living in advanced liberal democracies is centred around their desire for the maximisation of happiness and physical and mental well-being. Thus, they are likely to behave in ways that would induce positive emotions (like happiness) and minimise negative feeling. He states that:

*"Contemporary individuals are incited to live as if making a **project** of themselves: they are to **work** on their emotional world, their domestic and conjugal arrangements, their relations with employment and their techniques of sexual pleasure, to develop a 'style' of living that will maximise the worth of their existence to themselves. Evidence from the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom suggests that the implantation of such 'identity projects', characteristic of advanced liberal democracies, is constitutively linked to the rise of a new breed of spiritual directors, 'engineers of the human soul'... [the activities of these figures] ... promise to allow us to transform our selves in the direction of happiness and fulfilment."* (Rose, 1998:157).

Therefore, individuals work to bring about positive emotions that are classed by contemporary western society as desirable, and to minimise suffering, or negative feeling, that is undesirable.

What these researchers have in common is an understanding that emotions like happiness are inherently social – they can be brought about by socio-cultural factors, such as norms and relationships. Such factors help to determine the nature of one's emotional experience (and experience of happiness in particular). Thus, they would also agree that happiness is contextual – one way or another, it is caused by events and activities

that people experience. This suggests that people's responses to survey questions on generalised happiness are likely to be missing a great deal of important and subtle information, and must be examined with caution and an eye towards looking for viable alternatives. It could even be argued that the generalised happiness question may, in fact, be a kind of measure of utility, rather than of happiness itself, and immune to day to day activity.

### **Contrasting 'generalised' and 'particularised' happiness using the ESS**

How do we know that the well-established generalised happiness is inadequate for capturing the minutiae of every-day activity? Could it not be that people simply 'average' the quality of their various experiences in coming up with an answer to how happy they are in general in life? If this is the case, there should be very strong associations between feelings associated with well-being that have arisen as a result of pursuing one's daily or weekly activities, and self-reported measures of happiness.

It is possible to examine such associations using the European Social Survey (ESS). Two rounds of ESS data have been gathered since the survey's inception - in 2002 and 2004 - comprising representative population samples of nearly every country in Europe (with over a thousand respondents per country), so an analysis of associations using the complete dataset should provide a comprehensive pan-European picture of associations between happiness and more specific measures of well-being across a range of culturally different settings.

The ESS asks the generalised happiness question in each round of the survey. In addition, it also asks a range of more specific questions about well-being as part of a battery of questions designed to capture well-being in the 2004 round. The following well-being questions are asked in the 2004 survey, of a total sample of 47,537 respondents, with answers to these questions ranging on a six-point scale from 'all of the time' to 'at no time':

- Have you felt cheerful and in good spirits in the last 2 weeks?
- Have you felt calm and relaxed last in the 2 weeks?
- Have you felt active and vigorous in the last 2 weeks?
- Have you woken up feeling fresh and rested in the last 2 weeks?
- Has your daily life been filled with things that interest you in the last 2 weeks?

We suggest that these measures of well-being may be very different to the generalised happiness question in that they are *particularised*. They are asked in relation not to a wide canvas of life experience spread over an undefined time period, but specifically in relation to the past two weeks and the activities and experiences that have occurred in that time. If the generalised happiness measures are adequately capturing all that they need to capture about well-being – if they are reflective of day-to-day, and week-to-week experience, instead of merely reflecting a personality trait or normative bias – then they should associate very strongly with these kinds of measures.

We first undertook to subject the measures of happiness and well-being to *correlation analysis*. Keeping in mind the possibility that generalised happiness might be more of a measure of utility, we included another variable in the correlation matrix more similar to happiness in this regard – a sense of generalised satisfaction with one's life. The well-being questions are coded negatively in the ESS, so we have reversed the coding in this analysis to help with ease of interpretation, with a score of 1 meaning the respondent 'never' feels the relevant feeling, and 6 meaning they 'always' do. The results of this can be seen in table 1 below.

The correlation analysis shows that there is indeed a positive relationship between happiness and the various particularised measures of well-being, as there should be if they are capturing similar things. However, what is noteworthy is that the correlations are not particularly strong, certainly not as strong as might have been expected between measures of happiness and well being. Coefficients range from a high of 0.45 for 'feeling cheerful in the past two weeks' to a low of 0.26 for 'having woken up fresh and rested in the past two weeks'. Compare this to the correlation of 0.71 between generalised happiness and satisfaction, and suddenly it seems appropriate to raise the question of why well-being measures do not associate more strongly with measures of happiness.

As a further test, we undertook a series of *regression analyses* to see whether a set of independent predictors – gender, whether or not one has dependent children, age, educational attainment, marital status, employment status and income - predict the various measures of well-being as well as happiness. This is a useful piece of

**Table 1 – Pearson’s R Correlations – Happiness, Well-being and Satisfaction**

	Have felt cheerful and in good spirits last 2 weeks	Have felt calm and relaxed last 2 weeks	Have felt active and vigorous last 2 weeks	Have woken up feeling fresh and rested last 2 weeks	Daily life been filled with things that interest me last 2 weeks	How satisfied with life as a whole
How happy are you	0.45	0.35	0.34	0.26	0.38	0.71
Sig	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	40299	40260	40258	40253	40208	40261
Have felt cheerful and in good spirits last 2 weeks		0.65	0.61	0.49	0.54	0.41
Sig		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N		40449	40447	40440	40397	40352
Have felt calm and relaxed last 2 weeks			0.52	0.52	0.45	0.34
Sig			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N			40426	40415	40365	40315
Have felt active and vigorous last 2 weeks				0.57	0.54	0.32
Sig				0.00	0.00	0.00
N				40414	40368	40312
Have woken up feeling fresh and rested last 2 weeks					0.45	0.25
Sig					0.00	0.00
N					40370	40306
Daily life been filled with things that interest me last 2 weeks						0.37
Sig						0.00
N						40263

Notes:

- 1) To maintain a more consistent sample across countries, the sample includes only those aged 20 to 74.
- 2) All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

analysis in itself – it is important to reveal differences in what predicts different measures of happiness and well-being, as a ‘happiness-only’ research agenda focuses on only one aspect of happiness to the exclusion of important others – but our primary reason for undertaking it here is to again try and draw a distinction between generalised and particularised measures of happiness. Dummy variables were created for each independent predictor; categories for these can be seen in table 2 below. The reference categories here are females, those without children, those who have completed secondary education, those who are partnered or married, those who are full-time employed, and those with middle-range income.

It can be seen that there is a fair degree of alignment between predictors of happiness, particularised well-being and satisfaction, particularly with regard to *marital status*, *employment* and *income*. Those who are divorced or single; who are unemployed, students, or are retired; and those with lower incomes tend to be unhappier and more dissatisfied according to all the measures. However, similarities are not apparent for all predictors. *Education* has an almost random effect upon the well-being indicators, with those who have completed primary or tertiary education (as opposed to secondary education) happier and more satisfied. However, they have felt cheerful and in good spirits and have woken up feeling fresh and relaxed *less* often in

**Table 2 – Regression Models – Happiness, Particularised Well-being, and Satisfaction**

	How happy are you			Felt cheerful and in good spirits last 2 weeks			Felt calm and relaxed last 2 weeks			Felt active and vigorous last 2 weeks			Have woken up feeling fresh and rested last 2 weeks			Daily life been filled with things that interest me last 2 weeks			How satisfied with life as a whole		
Sample N	28700			28782			28761			28749			28742			28726			28747		
R Square	0.14			0.10			0.04			0.07			0.03			0.10			0.17		
	Coeff	S.E	Sig	Coeff	S.E	Sig	Coeff	S.E	Sig	Coeff	S.E	Sig	Coeff	S.E	Sig	Coeff	S.E	Sig	Coeff	S.E	Sig
<u>Constant</u>	8.26	0.06	***	4.81	0.04	***	4.10	0.04	***	4.54	0.04	***	3.80	0.05	***	4.42	0.04	***	7.75	0.07	***
Males	-0.12	0.02	***	0.05	0.01	***	0.18	0.02	***	0.15	0.02	***	0.18	0.02	***	0.06	0.02	***	-0.14	0.03	***
Live with Kids	-0.12	0.03	***	-0.12	0.02	***	-0.15	0.02	***	-0.06	0.02	***	-0.13	0.02	***	-0.10	0.02	***	-0.22	0.03	***
age	-0.01	0.00	***	-0.01	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	-0.01	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	**	0.00	0.00	***
Completed Degree	0.11	0.03	***	-0.04	0.02	**	-0.09	0.02	***	0.02	0.02		-0.06	0.02	**	0.08	0.02	***	0.13	0.03	***
Completed Primary Education	0.03	0.03		-0.07	0.02	***	-0.03	0.02		-0.05	0.02	***	-0.04	0.02	**	-0.22	0.02	***	0.05	0.03	*
No qualifications	-0.43	0.06	***	-0.46	0.04	***	-0.35	0.04	***	-0.44	0.04	***	-0.39	0.05	***	-0.78	0.04	***	-0.25	0.07	***
Divorced or separated	-0.74	0.03	***	-0.21	0.02	***	-0.18	0.02	***	-0.22	0.02	***	-0.26	0.02	***	-0.20	0.02	***	-0.56	0.04	***
Single	-0.37	0.03	***	-0.05	0.02	**	-0.06	0.02	***	-0.12	0.02	***	-0.22	0.03	***	-0.04	0.02	*	-0.19	0.04	***
Part time employed	0.07	0.05		0.06	0.03	*	0.09	0.03	***	0.11	0.03	***	0.21	0.04	***	0.06	0.03	*	0.05	0.05	
Unemployed	-0.69	0.05	***	-0.36	0.03	***	-0.16	0.03	***	-0.30	0.03	***	-0.05	0.04		-0.40	0.03	***	-1.08	0.05	***
Other Student Retired	-0.04	0.03		-0.12	0.02	***	-0.05	0.02	**	-0.27	0.02	***	-0.11	0.02	***	-0.16	0.02	***	-0.05	0.03	
High income - upper 4 bands	0.46	0.03	***	0.18	0.02	***	0.12	0.02	***	0.06	0.02	***	0.03	0.02		0.22	0.02	***	0.67	0.03	***
Low income - bottom 4 bands	-1.01	0.03	***	-0.49	0.02	***	-0.34	0.02	***	-0.33	0.02	***	-0.17	0.02	***	-0.49	0.02	***	-1.36	0.03	***

Notes 1) To maintain a more consistent sample across countries, the sample includes only those aged 20 to 74.

the past two weeks. In addition, tertiary completers have felt calm and relaxed less often and primary completers have felt active and vigorous less often in the past two weeks. The differences along gender lines are even more divergent, with men reportedly less happier and satisfied than women, but feeling a greater sense of well-being according to all the particularised variables.

Another noteworthy point is the differing r-squares for each of the seven models – for generalised happiness, satisfaction, and each particularised well-being measure -, and the alignment between happiness and satisfaction. The r-square goodness-of-fit measures for the particularised well-being models are quite small, indicating that the predictors do not do a great job of explaining much of the variance in the measures of well-being (10%, 0.4%, 0.7%, 0.3% and 10% of the variance explained respectively). However, the r-square goodness-of-fit measures for the happiness and satisfaction models are almost twice as large as the r-square measures for the various models predicting well-being (the independent predictors explain 14% of the variance in happiness and 17% of the variance in satisfaction). The models for happiness and satisfaction appear to line up well with one another, with independent predictors showing similar coefficient sizes and near identical significance and direction, which is very different from the models predicting well-being. The generalised happiness and satisfaction measures seem to be telling a different story to that of the more particularised and transient well-being measures.

Why, then, do the particularised well-being measures correlate less successfully with happiness and satisfaction variables, and why are they predicted by different independent variables with varying degrees of success in different regression models? We suggest two possibilities, though neither stands (nor is intended to stand) as proof. First, the generalised happiness and satisfaction questions may be capturing stable 'all of life' worldviews that do not change much according to specific circumstances, whereas the well-being measures are looking specifically over the past few weeks, and therefore are 'what happened to you' activity measures. Second, these questions may be sensitive to a normative bias that leads many people to answer them in a similar manner – they may over-report their feelings of happiness if it is seen as 'socially desirable' to be uncomplaining. This second possibility seems less likely, in that several of the well-being measures are also worded in such a way as to attract normative bias, although the 2 week time limit may allow people to respond truthfully on the proviso that they 'normally' feel very happy - thanks for asking, they are just having a few bad weeks!

As noted above, the analysis undertaken here does not undertake to prove any of these suggestions. Our analysis is simply placed to show that happiness is a complex entity that can be measured in different ways with different results, and that more than simply asking people if they are happy, a better understanding can be gained from asking for more precise information about what makes them feel happy. Here, the 'what' took the form of a time period – the last two weeks. We suggest, however, that this information is still too generalised to really examine the 'what' and 'why', as well as the 'if', in trying to understand happiness. For us, the greater precision should come from time diary estimates.

### **Alternative particularised measures of happiness – Emotion Time Diaries**

We then proceed to argue that a superior method for measuring happiness is through the use of time diaries. This builds on an existing body of research. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2003) did a study using the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) and Daniel Kahneman (2004) developed the Day Reconstruction Method (DRM) to measure happiness and other emotions. Both go into great depth, looking on a micro level at everyday activities and how these affect emotions and happiness.

Both studies use a diary-like structure; the ESM asks respondents to record their feelings (alongside daily activities) in response to random beeps delivered at regular intervals throughout the day, whilst the DRM intends to act as a less expensive alternative to ESM. For two days, at the end of each day, respondents must retrospectively record activities that they engaged in, as well as emotions felt at the time.

However, whilst either method captures the multi-dimensional nature of happiness (such as the different types of activities that could make one feel happy), they both have the distinct disadvantage of only being able to highlight emotions that were brought about by an activity or event at the present moment, and not at any time in the past. There is also no way of knowing whether the emotion itself was the cause of the activity done at

the time, or whether it was caused by something different (for example, an event that occurred in the past, or people with whom respondents were interacting). Neither method provides a means by which socio-cultural influences on emotion (such as 'feeling rules' and 'emotion management') can be detected.

We propose an alternative methodology – an Emotion Time Diary - for measuring happiness and other emotions. This aims to rectify all of the problems that have been encountered in studies using both survey measures and the Experience Sampling and Day Reconstruction Methods. It takes the diary-like structure from these two methods but it also has its differences. Specifically, the design will enable the accounting for socio-cultural influences on emotion, such as emotion management, that are discussed in the sociological literature.

Approximately fifty respondents, from a variety of educational and occupational backgrounds, would fill out the diary for a period of two days (either weekdays or weekend days). The emotions they record in the diary will be attributed to both the activities being done whilst the emotion is being felt, as well as activities or events in the past. Extensive pilot work will be undertaken with a small number of respondents, in order to develop techniques to avoid recall bias and ensure the accurate and timely recording of activities and emotions in the diary. Respondents will be asked to attribute a cause to each emotion (such as the present activity, who they are with, what they may have been thinking about, and so on) as well as about the appropriateness of these emotions for the circumstances in which they were felt (that is to say, whether Hochschild's 'feeling rules' are being adhered to), and how emotions or activities may have changed as a result of any (in)appropriateness (so, whether they engaged in any emotion management). Thus, this diary method will generate measures of happiness that take emotion management into account as well as providing information about the micro-level factors that bring the feeling(s) about. Time diary information would enable data to be gathered on the amount of time respondents spend feeling happy, as well as the causes of this. It would also be able to capture any emotion management that may affect respondents' feelings of happiness, and would shed light on the extent to which emotion can be shaped by social factors; this is completely overlooked by conventional survey measures.

Prior to filling out the diary, respondents would fill out a short questionnaire, which would be given to them alongside the diary. This will contain a generalised happiness question like those usually found in large-scale attitude surveys, as well as demographic questions and questions on other emotional states and on major events experienced recently. It would be expected that the distribution of responses to this generalised happiness question would be similar to that found in samples of large-scale surveys in which it is commonly asked. Respondents would fill out a further questionnaire at the end of the two-day period, in which they will be asked the generalised happiness question again. They will then be asked whether they felt that filling out the diary (and thus, possible awareness of any emotion management they may have undertaken during the diary period) affected their response the second time. The overall data (from both the diaries and questionnaires) should provide insights into the meaning and validity of conventional survey measures of happiness.

The Emotion Diaries will be followed up by qualitative, unstructured interviews, which will be administered to twenty randomly selected members of the diary sample at the time of the researcher's collection of the diary. These will comprise a variety of questions, asking particularly about why responses to the generalised happiness question may or may not have changed after filling out the diary. Questions will also be asked about their experiences of 'emotion management' and awareness of 'feeling rules' whilst filling out the diary. The qualitative interview data would provide richer supplementary information about the extent to which social factors shape and even constrain people's emotional experiences on a day-to-day basis. This information would consolidate the quantitative data generated by the time diaries.

The diary and its supplementary components would be administered on a small scale. However, with more resources, it could in the future be incorporated into a large-scale national survey, and the data could be aggregated to the country level in order that national accounts of *particularised* happiness are obtained. Results from the diaries would also contribute to a better understanding of the meaning of happiness and its multi-dimensional nature. It could play a role in the future development of more valid, particularised survey measures of happiness. This could in turn be of benefit to policy-makers, who would have a better understanding of the meaning and validity of happiness data which is used to inform policies concerned with the advancement of national well-being and societal progress.

## Conclusion

In conclusion then, a number of social scientific studies have been undertaken that have looked at the relationship between 'objective' and 'subjective' social indicators of societal progress, such as that between income and happiness (Easterlin, 1974, Layard, 2005). The finding that happiness levels have not risen alongside increases in income has led them to conclude that it is necessary to have measures of happiness (and subjective well-being) alongside that of GDP and income, in order that both dimensions of well-being – both objective and subjective - can be monitored.

Happiness is commonly measured in large-scale social surveys using responses to 'generalised' questions, along the lines of "*Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are, 0 being extremely unhappy and 10 being extremely happy?*" Such measures must be treated with caution for various reasons – firstly, they are unable to account for the different contexts in which happiness can be felt. That is to say, they cannot reflect the extent to which people's happiness levels vary according to activities they may engage in. Secondly, the generalised measure cannot account for socio-cultural factors – highlighted in the sociological literature - that affect the way people feel. People feel (happiness or other emotions) in accordance with social norms, or 'feeling rules'. They may then engage in 'emotion management' in order that their feelings comply with what the feeling rules 'prescribe' for the situation in which they may find themselves (Hochschild, 1979). For example, a bride may persuade herself to feel happy on her wedding day, as this is the appropriate emotion for one to feel on such an occasion. It has also been argued that individuals work to bring about positive emotions that are classed by contemporary western society as desirable, and to minimise suffering, or negative feeling, that is undesirable (Rose, 1998). Generalised survey measures are unable to measure the extent to which feelings of happiness are affected by such social factors.

The correlation and regression analyses of the European Social Survey data show that the generalised and particularised survey measures of happiness tell quite different stories; this indicates that the generalised, all-of-life measure does not necessarily stand as an 'average' of all the particularised happiness felt within shorter time periods. This suggests that particularised measures are necessary to act as measures of subjective well-being that are of a higher level of precision.

However, the information provided by particularised survey measures of happiness is still too generalised to really examine the 'what', 'why' and 'if', in trying to understand happiness. We propose an Emotion Time Diary method for generating happiness estimates of greater precision. This will allow information to be gathered about the specific situations in which people are likely to feel happy (as well as any other emotions) and will be able to uncover some of the causes of feelings of happiness. The design of the diary will also enable the accounting for socio-cultural influences on emotion, such as adherence to feeling rules and engagement in emotion management, that are discussed in the sociological literature; it shall attempt to reveal the extent to which people's experiences of happiness are affected by such factors.

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