

Data ownership, despotism, happiness

Maria Chiara Pievatolo

Università di Pisa

pievatolo@dsp.unipi.it

October 27 2023

COMMUNITY OVER COMMERCIALIZATION - OPEN SCIENCE, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DATA

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons by-sa license

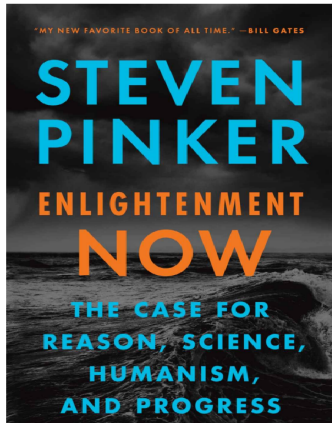


Sommario

- 1 Objectively happy
- 2 The "measure" of happiness
 - Political consequences
- 3 Data and private happiness
- 4 Political happiness



We are happy without knowing it: the data say it!



And here is a shocker: The world has made spectacular progress in every single measure of human well-being

Here is a second shocker: **Almost no one knows about it.**

Information about human progress, though absent from major news outlets and intellectual forums, is easy enough to find. The data are not entombed in dry reports but are displayed in gorgeous Web sites, particularly Max Roser's Our World in Data, Marian Tupy's HumanProgress, and Hans Rosling's Gapminder.



Pinker à la (Max) Catalano

Most people agree that life is better than death. **Health is better than sickness.** Sustenance is better than hunger. Abundance is better than poverty. Peace is better than war. Safety is better than danger. Freedom is better than tyranny. Equal rights are better than bigotry and discrimination. Literacy is better than illiteracy. Knowledge is better than ignorance. Intelligence is better than dull-wittedness. Happiness is better than misery. Opportunities to enjoy family, friends, culture, and nature are better than drudgery and monotony. **All these things can be measured.** If they have increased over time, that is progress.



Kant, KpV Ak 5, 20 = Catalano

Tell a man, for example, that he must be industrious and thrifty in youth, in order that he may not want in old age; this is a correct and important practical precept of the will.



Kant transcends Catalano

But it is easy to see that in this case the will is directed to something else which it is presupposed that it desires; and as to this desire, we must leave it to the actor himself whether he looks forward to other resources than those of his own acquisition, or does not expect to be old, or thinks that in case of future necessity he will be able to make shift with little.



"Most people" is not enough

Reason, from which alone can spring a rule involving necessity, does, indeed, give necessity to this precept (else it would not be an imperative), **but this is a necessity dependent on subjective conditions, and cannot be supposed in the same degree in all subjects.**



"Most people" has nothing to do with freedom AK VIII, 290-91

As for the freedom [of every member of a state] as a human being I express its principle for the constitution of a commonwealth in the following formula: **No one can coerce me to be happy in his way (as he thinks of the welfare of other human beings); instead, each may seek his happiness in the way that seems good to him, provided he does not infringe upon that freedom of others** to strive for a like end which can coexist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a possible universal law (i.e., does not infringe upon this right of another).



Imperium paternale = despotism

A government established on the principle of benevolence toward the people like that of a father toward his children - that is, a **paternalistic government (imperium paternale)**, in which the **subjects, like minor children who cannot distinguish between what is truly useful or harmful to them**, are constrained to behave only passively, so as to wait only upon the judgment of the head of state as to how they should be happy and, as for his also willing their happiness, only upon his kindness - is **the greatest despotism thinkable**.



"Most people" can only be the basis for advice, not for orders (AK VI, 215-216)

All apparently a priori reasoning about this comes down to nothing but **experience raised by induction to generality, a generality (secundum principia generalia, non universalia) still so tenuous that everyone must be allowed countless exceptions** in order to adapt his choice of a way of life to his particular inclinations and his susceptibility to satisfaction and still, in the end, to become prudent only from his own or others' misfortunes.



Paternalism and data absolutism

- I have collected a lot of data (capta) about you, according to my interests and criteria, and belonging to me de iure or de facto and I use them to determine your happiness.
- Something partial and provisional is used as it were complete and definitive, without giving us the opportunity to debate about it.
- My experience, however subjective and partial, and the way in which I select and organize the data (capta) from it are more theoretically sound than yours.



ZeF: second transcendental principle of the public right

'All maxims which *require* publicity if they are not to fail in their purpose can be reconciled both with right and with politics.'



Happiness as a public project

With this in mind, I now put forward another transcendental and affirmative principle of public right. It might be formulated as follows: 'All maxims which *require* publicity if they are not to fail in their purpose can be reconciled both with right and with politics.'

For if they can only attain their end by being publicised, they must conform to the universal aim of the public (which is happiness), and it is the particular task of politics to remain in harmony with the aim of the public through *making it satisfied with its condition*. But if this end is to be attained *only* through publicity (i.e. by dispelling all distrust of the maxims employed), the maxims in question must also be in harmony with public right; for only within this right is it possible to unite the ends of everyone. I must, however, postpone the further elaboration and dis-



Citizen science - in more than one meaning

- Shared project
- FAIR data
- Citizen science (made understandable to citizens)
- Public use of reason

