

# The Right to Urban Happiness and Indexes of Happy Cities\*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to show the importance of urban happiness as a right of social welfare and what are the indicators of international measures that countries must comply with. The research question is: How to achieve happier cities? To answer the question, from the inductive method, a bibliographic search will be made of the concept of urban happiness and of the most relevant health, education and governance indicators proposed since 1979 by the different countries and research centers. Similarly, a contemporary count of the countries with the best indicators of urban happiness and their reasons will be made. Finally, some exemplifying cases of countries with better inter-subjective happiness indexes will be given. The article concludes with the importance of developing countries for achieving more social economies, capable of integrating growth in production (Economic growth) with general welfare and the enjoyment of public values.

## KEYWORDS

Urban happiness; intersubjective happiness; general well-being; economic development; Social and Economic.

## JEL CLASSIFICATION

A13, I31, Z13

## CONTENT

Introduction; 1. Urban happiness as a right; 2. Urban Happiness Indexes; 3. The most important social happiness indexes from 1979 to 2020; 4. Exemplary cases; 5. Conclusions; References.

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# El derecho a la felicidad urbana e índices de ciudades felices

## RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es mostrar la importancia de la felicidad urbana como derecho a la salud social y cuáles son los indicadores internacionales que los países deben cumplir respecto a ella. La pregunta de investigación fue la siguiente: ¿Cómo lograr ciudades más felices? Para responder esta pregunta, desde el método deductivo, se llevó a cabo una búsqueda bibliográfica sobre el concepto de felicidad urbana y los indicadores más relevantes relacionados con salud, educación y gobernanza que han sido propuestos desde 1979 por diferentes países y centros de investigación. De manera similar, se hizo un conteo de los países contemporáneos con los mejores indicadores de felicidad urbana y las razones detrás de ello. Finalmente, se mostrarán algunos casos ejemplares de países con mejores índices de felicidad intersubjetivos. El artículo concluye con la importancia de obtener economías más sociales y capaces de integrar el crecimiento de la producción (crecimiento económico) en los países desarrollados en conjunto con bienestar general y el disfrute de los valores públicos.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Felicidad urbana; felicidad intersubjetiva; bienestar general; desarrollo económico; solidaridad.

## CLASIFICACIÓN JEL

A13, I31, Z13

## CONTENIDO

Introducción; 1. La felicidad urbana como derecho; 2. Índices de felicidad urbana; 3. Los índices de Felicidad urbana más importantes desde 1979 hasta 2020; 4. Casos ejemplares; 5. Conclusiones; Bibliografía.

# Direito a felicidade urbana e índices das cidades felizes

## RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é mostrar a importância da felicidade urbana como direito à saúde social e quais são os indicadores internacionais que os países deve cumprir com respeito a mesma. A questão de pesquisa foi a seguinte: Como fazer cidades mais felizes? Para responder essa pergunta, a partir do método dedutivo, foi realizada uma pesquisa bibliográfica sobre o conceito felicidade urbana e os indicadores mais importantes relacionados com saúde, educação e governo que foram propostos desde 1979 por diferentes países e centro de pesquisa. De maneira semelhante, se fez uma contagem dos países contemporâneos com os melhores indicadores de felicidade urbana e as razões por trás deles. Finalmente, serão mostrados alguns casos de países que são exemplos com os melhores índices de felicidade intersubjetiva. O artigo conclui com a importância de obter economias mais sociais e capazes de integrar o crescimento da produção (crescimento econômico) nos países desenvolvidos em conjunto com o bem-estar geral e o disfrute dos valores públicos.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Felicidade urbana; felicidade intersubjetiva; bem-estar geral; desenvolvimento econômico; solidariedade.

## CLASSIFICAÇÃO JEL

A13, E61, F02, H41, O11

## CONTEÚDO

Introdução; 1. A felicidade urbana como direito; 2. Índices de felicidade urbana; 3. Os índices de Felicidade urbana mais importantes desde 1979 até 2000; 4. Casos exemplares; 5. Conclusões; Bibliografia.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of economic science, there has been a constant concern for general welfare, that is, how to achieve the greatest possible social happiness. In other words, what should governments do to achieve greater economic prosperity and happier citizens? Before the publication of the *Research on the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776, Adam Smith wrote the *Theory of Moral Senses* in 1759, he was a professor of jurisprudence, logic and moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1751. For the father of economic science, every human being has the natural capacity to rationalize experiences and is therefore driven, thanks to feelings of sympathy, to the pursuit of the common good, to unite his personal interests of well-being with those of the general welfare. To be a maker of prosperous cities, to do what is good for all, for he prefers the pleasure of what is good to the suffering caused by the dissatisfaction of needs due to lack of sympathy and solidarity action.

In the autumn of 1826 John Stuart Mill asked himself the following question:

If I suppose all my goals in life had been achieved; that all the social transformations that I seek in public institutions and its opinions could take place at this very moment: would this be a source of great joy and happiness for me? And my conscience, unable to repress itself, answered me clearly: No! (Mill, 1986, p. 141).

The idea of social welfare cannot be contemplated from the teleological vision of the Christian world. Progress in technology and knowledge means that the ceilings of social happiness are getting higher, that is, that the population's expectations are growing, that is not constant. Hence, for John Stuart Mill, his concern for the improvement of humanity is present in all his work, which is always in continuous evolution; in other words, it covers a larger number of people. For example, as the economy progresses, social distribution systems improve: abolition of privileges and abuse by governments, recognition of basic human dignities, gender equality, abolition of racism, freedom of sexual taste and an end to extreme poverty.

Understanding how to achieve happy cities and reach the wealth of nations have been constant concerns of economic science throughout its 244 years of existence. In 1979, for example, the country of Bhutan, faced with the challenges of social change brought about by the use of computers, established the Domestic Happiness Index (DHI) as the best macroeconomic index of growth that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The main reason is that the first index measures the general welfare of the population while the second index only measures the growth of business production.

For the monarchy of Bhutan, the goals of all good governance rest on the welfare of all its citizens, so the best growth rate for a nation is one that not only measures employment and production, but also takes into account: governance, the enjoyment of natural resources, cultural identity, transparency as an end to the use of public resources, the use of citizens' free time in the construction of their life projects, and community vitality. In other words, how, among all citizens, they build the country they want to have. The fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, called this integrated method of indicators the Domestic Happiness Index (DHI).

France itself conducted studies on urban happiness with ex-president Nicolas Paul Stéphane Sarközy through the Economic Development Commission. The Israeli Yuval Noah Harari has proposed the same thing from his book *Animals to Gods* and the Belgian Philippe Van Parijs with his experiment on basic income in Nordic countries. In the same way, there are studies on urban happiness have been carried by the universities of: Harvard, Oxford and the Superior School of Public Administration on Antioquia among other governmental and non-governmental institutions (Muñoz, 2019a; 2019b; Muñoz and Quintero, 2020; Muñoz and Martínez, 2020).

This research article is based mainly on bibliographic sources, consultation of international indicators on quality of education, quality in health services and countries that are better governed or have better indicators of public values. The methodology followed is inductive, and starts from the question: how to make cities happier? To solve the question, the importance of urban happiness as a right will be shown from the international vision promulgated by the United Nations. Later, the most relevant urban happiness indexes in the international field and in Colombia will be shown. Finally, some exemplifying cases of countries with better inter-subjective happiness indexes will be given.

The research concludes that there is an urgent need for economic science and contemporary society to replace or complement the GDP economic growth indicator with the Domestic Happiness Index (DHI). That is, an indicator that includes: social welfare, public values of transparency, social justice, and good local government.

## **1. URBAN HAPPINESS AS A RIGHT**

If happiness is a supreme good as stated by the United Nations (A/RES/65/309) and is in turn one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and is one of the main concerns of the governments of democratic countries, then: How to guarantee it? How to make happiness a fundamental right of every inalienable human being?

Epicurus in his book *On Happiness* (1995) states: "worshiping the gods is a waste of time because there is no existence after death, therefore the only purpose of each man's life is happiness, which has to become an individual quest". However, for Aristotle it is a social quest that is achieved through sympathy between human beings (Aristotle, 2018, 2004), in other words, it is a collective project as Yuval Noah Harari states it: "Without government planning, economic resources and scientific research, individuals will not get very far in their quest for happiness" (2018, p. 42). From there, Muñoz (2017) affirms in the *Ethics of Citizen Responsibility*: "the concept of government must also be understood as an institution that is the product of popular elections that, through their development plans, are set up as a structured administrative form for the good of all citizens". What the classical school of utilitarianism with Jeremy Bentham called general happiness, which is nothing other than the greatest ethical concern of governments, the economy and the scientific community to make it ever wider and more inclusive.

Politicians should encourage peace, businessmen should promote prosperity and the wise should study nature, not for the greater glory of the political leader or a God, but so that citizens may enjoy a happier life (Bentham and Mill, 2003, p. 122).

From Bentham and Mill's perspective, it is the duty of state investment expenditure to guarantee the right to happiness of citizens, that is, economic efficiency in its use. Public spending is not done for a nation to be great but for citizens to live well within nations. Individuals do not exist for the capricious use of governments, on the contrary it is the governments of nations that must serve their citizens because they are elected and paid to do so; this is the reason for all the institutions serving society that are designed and improved over time for the welfare of all.

Likewise, the purpose of public spending is not to maintain the bureaucratic quotas of the political parties, but the welfare of society, of all citizens with quality of life. Nor is the life of every human being that of being exclusively a consumer, but that of being happy. The products on the market satisfy desires, but they are not the source of happiness. The basis of happiness is the other, it is the social encounter, the mutual recognition of existence (Muñoz, 2017). It is the sympathy that invites to social union for the construction of the well-being of all (Smith, 1997a). This is why we talk about the domestic happiness index (DHI), in addition to gross domestic product GDP. According to Harari (2018, p. 47),

[The] roof of happiness rests on two great pillars: psychological happiness and biological happiness. Psychological happiness depends on expectations and not on objective living conditions, that is, as people achieve their objectives, new goals are set, new expectations are forged.

Recent studies on happiness in young and adolescent populations by Muñoz (2018) show how inhabitants of poor municipalities in the Colombian Chocó are happy to know only that environment in which they were born and raised, but when they know and live in other municipalities with greater socio-economic development their demands and expectations increase. In other words, as living conditions improve, both politically and economically, social demands increase.

Biological happiness is related to the natural feeling of pleasure and pain, as stated by the school of classical utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill (2003) and even Adam Smith in the Theory of Moral Senses (1997a). "The search for what is pleasant is a condition of the biological nature of the human being, to move away from pain and to always want to live what is pleasant is part of the natural biochemistry of man, so it does not depend on the economic", he says (Harari, 2018, p. 47). Hence the importance of Lenina in "A Brief New World", who always had to take "soma" pills to feel pleasure of living, that is for not feeling depression, stress or lack of sexual appetite or boredom (Huxley, 2006).

In contemporary society it is common to produce medicines to control stress levels, depression, lack of sleep, fears of loneliness, food cravings, lack of sexual appetite or hyperactivity in children. Including the use of alcohol or amphetamines. In countries like the United States, marijuana and coca use became medicinal and clinical because they are also antidepressants. Even people, no matter how poor they are, say they are happy when their favorite football team wins, when they listen to music on weekends with friends, when they play extreme sports and go on blind love dates. When they go to shopping malls and take a selfie next to a beautiful sports car and then put it on WhatsApp or upload it to websites. That is to say, everything that allows them to perceive pleasant sensations.

Perhaps the key to happiness is not the race or the gold medal, but combining the right doses of excitement and tranquility; but most of us tend to jump straight from stress to boredom; back to excitement, and then back to stress and boredom (Harari, 2018, p. 51)

Faced with this social dilemma between pleasure and pain, in January 2018 the British Prime Minister, Theresa May, stated that the British government had created the Ministry of Solitude, which will attend 13.7 % of the total population, nearly 9 million people, including young people, adolescents and the elderly, who are suffering from this social problem as a result of technological advances and high economic development. Facts of social transformation that are relevant, but how to achieve the combination of the right dose of excitement and tranquility for the achievement of social happiness?

For the English economist Arthur Cecil Pigou, the economic growth of countries cannot be used as a barometer or index of development (1946); this means that economics is a social science that cannot base its explanations of social welfare exclusively on macroeconomic indicators, such as GDP per person or good results in controlling inflation and the exchange rate. The economy must also contemplate the welfare of the population that contributes to the production of wealth, such as quality in health and education services, in the formation of capacities, in the enjoyment of a full life. The same is true of Sen (1997), who contrasts the neoclassical concept of human capital with that of human capacity. In the first concept, man is another resource of production for the purpose of wealth, in the second concept he is a sentient being with the capacity to forge a dream and achieve a life project.

Man as human capital is primarily a financial instrument of optimization, in other words, a means of wealth. But man seen from the perspective of the expansion of his capacities is an end in itself, inasmuch as his individuality is valued in order to lead a freer and more dignified life (Sen, 1997, p.67-73). It is a being with skills to earn its freedom, that is, its self-control and self-determination or self-government.

According to Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1997, p. 18) and in *The Theory of Moral Senses* (1997a), human beings cannot be considered uniquely from the point of view of their economic utility because it would be to belittle their nature, as Adam Smith claims:

For first of all, it seems impossible that the approbation of virtue should be a sentiment of the same kind with that by which we approve of a convenient and well-contrived building; or that we should have no other reason for praising a man than that for which we commend a chest of drawers<sup>1</sup> (Smith, 1984, p. 188).

The human being as a thinking and creative being demands the power of the functions of his capacities for self-realization that allow him to lead a freer and more dignified life (Sen, 1997, p. 70). This is where all government education spending efforts must go for ever wider population coverage. Coverage not in terms of the number of literate people but in terms of training in the skills needed to perform pleasant jobs, which serve to strengthen human competencies and a dignified life.

Sen recognizes that through education, learning and training of human capital, people can be much more productive, however, human capacity focuses on the rational possibility that people have to achieve and lead a better life through training

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<sup>1</sup> Hume must have had an objection of this character put to him, for he attempts to reply to it in a footnote appended to *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Vi, first paragraph; ed. Selby-Bigge, § 17z. The footnote is in all editions of the *Enquiry*, including the first (XTSX) (Smith, 1984, p.188).

in solidarity, in the community union of wills for the achievement of certain common goods. In the consensus of knowing how to listen and argue, in the mutual respect for difference; what Adam Smith called the impartial spectator, which is present in the citizen's conscience or in the altruism of solidarity for the achievement of common goods (1997a, pp. 75, 77). In other words, in the natural sympathy of the feelings of what must be approvable and what cannot be socially acceptable.

Economic growth must be broader, it must be a concept capable of going further, of expanding human capacities for solidarity to achieve a freer and more dignified life, as Aristotle put it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. For Hernandez, from Sen's social ethics, it could be stated "that poverty is an absolute notion from the sphere of the absence of capabilities, and is relative from the sphere of basic minimum consumption or commodities" (2012, p. 147). The absence of these capacities deprives the human being of self-determination, self-government and self-control, in other words, freedom to decide rationally as a being of a social and civilized nature by experience on what is best for him and his environment.

The general absence of capacity building makes the individual a being transcended by all the precariousness of poverty. A slave unaware of his or her passions and of the scarce labor market, so contested by political patronage and electoral favor payments. A being with little knowledge of what is socially good, of the importance and of the meaning of democracy. A selfish being, with few initiatives for the construction of better conditions of valuable life. This distinction, says Hernández, "between economic growth as a goal or an end, and growth as a means to achieve development, forces us to think within a framework of moral and social values different from the usual ones" (2012, p. 147); as Adam Smith had already stated in *The Theory of Moral Sentences* and even Alfred Marshall when he defined political economy as the study of wealth, but even more important the study of man (Marshall, 1920).

Hence, for the Indian economist, the general freedom of people to live the way they wish to live is determined by a number of instrumental freedoms, such as: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities and protective security. In other words, they depend on the appropriate institutional agreements to make and choose (Hernández, 2012, p. 148). It depends on social justice in the distribution of resources, that it serves more people to get out of their extreme conditions of poverty by themselves, that is without losing their dignity as autonomous and independent human beings, as Mill had stated (1834, p. 361). Beings with the capacity to be disciplined and making their own life projects a reality for the good of themselves and the whole community.

Amartya Sen understands in Smith what the latter understood from Aristotle (2004), that man is a social being by nature and as a social being man demands the help of other beings of his species; therefore, he must be well trained in his working abilities and know how to communicate with others to achieve the progress that everyone demands. In other words, the natural division of labor. Hence, man is mainly a social being, with the capacity to feel sympathy and be supportive, rather than an exclusively selfish being; as stated by Polanyi (1947).

Amartya Sen emphasizes that what creates well-being in the individual is not material goods but functional opportunities and capacities for development, in other words the achievement of having abilities, love and taste for what he does and allows him to discover how to be useful to himself and others. But in turn, other external variables play a role that must be guaranteed by the system of government, such as: freedom, equal pay for equal work, respect for privacy, no sexual exploitation in the pursuit of employment, the quality of basic public services such as education, quality health and access to clean water.

It is not only the personal satisfaction provided by the consumption of some public goods and services but also the satisfaction of being able to contribute to the social improvement of the community, to the construction of the habitat, that gives us happiness. Psychological well-being that allows the individual the sense of belonging or to be valuable, in Abraham Maslow's terms, feelings and human capabilities that give value to existence and to the community vitality as stated in Bhutan's domestic happiness index.

Contemporary society, immersed in the social state of law: Businesses-University-State and community, work together for the benefit of local development through projects such as: recreational centers, hospitals, aqueducts, environmental sanitation, rubbish collection and agricultural regeneration. All thanks to the existing control of non-governmental organizations, universities and community action boards, companies and governments improve the quality of their final products and services with the environment and the society. All citizens are more aware of the use of non-renewable natural resources. This has led to the formation of social interest groups or Stakeholders that differ from corporate or individual Shareholder interest groups (Díaz, 2015).

Social interest groups or stakeholders, in the words of the economist Michel Porter, quoted by Díaz (2015), serve local development both in terms of territorial planning and in the social distribution of profits by financing works of common interest in the locations where companies are based. Interest groups

lobbying for the creation of foundations as a mechanism for distributive justice or democratic socialization of profits.

Many projects in various countries have emerged from the different alliances between interest groups or stakeholders, ranging from the redesign of roads, pedestrian pavements, signposting for the blind and people with reduced mobility, to gymnasiums in open spaces and cultural centers which awaken the imagination and public interest in research into the manufacture of products useful for social welfare (Campbell, 2007; Muñoz 2017). In this way, says Hernández: "companies must connect their success with social progress, through greater sensitivity to the needs of the community (...) For their part, public administrations must learn to regulate in a way that promotes shared value, rather than working against it" (2012, p. 152), and educational institutions, in the words of Smith (1984), must show their worth as social institutions created for the unity and progress of society.

In the words of Bauman (2003), universities as social institutions must take up the challenges and opportunities of today's complex and multidimensional, global, interconnected and changing society. Furthermore, the building of appropriate institutions must start from the local level as a basis for regional progress. Political institutions with community vitality, such as social and community associations in the localities, gain meaning if they are social constructions that mark the joint progress of the territory, solidify the union and, therefore, are at the service of the people who live in the neighborhood (Hernández, 2012, p. 162). How, then, can urban or social happiness be measured?

## **2. URBAN HAPPINESS INDEXES**

The first things to keep in mind when measuring happiness are the very concepts of subjective happiness and intersubjective happiness. In this research essay emphasis is placed on intersubjective happiness, because it is a macroeconomic concept, that is, because it depends on everyone as a society for its achievement.

Subjective happiness implies the individual valuation that each consumer gives to the enjoyment of the goods he or she demands, a microeconomic valuation that can change with the person's moods or wealth, as the Pemberton Happiness Index does. Noah Harari states: "The subjective is something that exists in terms of the consciousness and belief of a single individual and disappears or changes if this particular individual changes his or her beliefs" (2015, p. 136). On the contrary, intersubjective happiness gives an account of the social relations that are characteristic of social states of law; of the capacity for association that individuals have in order

to achieve the common good. As Noah Harari states, "The intersubjective is something that exists within the communication network that connects the subjective consciousness of many individuals" (2015, p. 136).

For some social researchers there is a positive correlation between human capabilities and general happiness, which has been reflected in the decrease of diseases and increases in average life ages, for example:

Modern medicine has succeeded in reducing infant mortality from 33 % to less than 5 % over the past two hundred years. Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, with the nuclear threat, the world has experienced a certain stability of peace. Confrontations are less frequent; international bodies and state associations intervene in favor of reconciled solutions, reductions in conflict. Preventing the world from being destroyed in a staggered way. (Harari, 2015, p. 414)

Other researchers, such as Dussel (1998), see in the correlation of the variable human capacities and happiness a negative relationship; a selfish wager of power in which stronger nations and communities seek to subdue others, expropriating them of their natural wealth. They see development and underdevelopment as colonization, in other words as the plundering of the mineral and hydrocarbon wealth of the latter in favor of the former. Riches of productive exploitation that make citizens of a few countries happier than billions of citizens of other countries who lose everything, even the hope of a future or a better life.

Oviedo (2016) also sees irrational consumption as the source of human rivalries and the destruction of all natural resources. Ambitions, which threaten the future habitat of the human being, lead him to suffer feelings of unhappiness, not being able to buy and enjoy everything he sees and is in fashion. To feel envy and desire to obtain by sacrifice, or by force or by deception those goods which are a source of pleasure. Relationships that deepen the social gaps of development and economic underdevelopment.

However, political economy, from the classical school, sees general happiness in terms of improvements in the quality of life conditions of all citizens, as the English economist John Maynard Keynes proposed in the crisis of the 30s (Martínez and Soto, 2012). An increasing number of citizens empowered by their local economies enjoy many more public and private goods that provide security, comfort, recreation and speed of communication; this becomes characteristic of contemporary economies typical of social states of law (Muñoz, 2019; Muñoz and Quintero, 2020).

The economy has grown exponentially, and today humanity enjoys the kind of wealth that used to be the stuff of fairy tales. Science and the industrial revolution

have given humanity superhuman powers and virtually unlimited energy. The social order has been completely transformed, as have politics, daily life and human psychology (Harari, 2015, p. 412).

The new classical theorists of contemporary society affirm that the human capacities of learning and understanding, of dialogue and consensus, facilitate the moral senses of sympathy and solidarity. Hence, of the most widely used indices to measure the degree of intersubjective happiness of countries is the Happy Planet Index produced by the New Economics Foundations (NEF), to which others have been added such as the Social Progress Index, by the economist Michael Porter.

Recently, contemporary economists and philosophers of utilitarianism or social utility understand the concept of community welfare as the satisfaction of dignified living conditions, in other words what they call general happiness, so they see in the Domestic Happiness Index (DHI), proposed by the country of Bhutan, compared to the economic growth indicator of the Gross Domestic Product, one of the most complete indicators, as shown in the Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Development designed by the economists Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi (2015).

### **3. THE MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL HAPPINESS INDEXES FROM 1979 TO 2020**

Bhutan's Index of Domestic Happiness (DHI), created in 1979, measures the quality of education with governance and community vitality. That is, how happy are the citizens with the public investment works carried out or how happy are the citizens with the government and their neighborhood? Bhutan's DHI evaluates broadly:

1. The health and quality of access to health services;
2. The quality of education as preparation for life or work, personal satisfaction and community life;
3. Environmental diversity -access to environmental services and the population's knowledge of environmental benefits and the number of trees planted per person;
4. The Living Standard which measures household consumption -quality and frequency of food consumption-, the number of owned and rented houses, type and quality of housing, households with a lack of basic household services, enjoyment of pavements and paved streets;
5. Governance, which assesses the quality of public services offered by the State, the trust in government institutions -both public administration and security agencies;
6. Welfare of the population in terms of feelings of job security and mobility, generosity, preservation of cultural values and peace of mind;
7. Use of time, which quantifies the quality of the time that people spend sleeping, working, enjoying themselves with their neighbors, educating themselves, their family, playing games, doing sports and meditating, among others;
8. Community

vitality, which refers to how trust and social support among the members of a community for the achievement of common goods are valued, as well as the socio-economic support provided by all; 9. The culture. Evaluates the knowledge that the inhabitants have about the country's culture, its symbols, its history and its most important festivals (see table 1).

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) launched the Better Life Index (BLI), which takes into account: disposable income per household, unemployment and employment rates, number of bedrooms per household, life expectancy at birth, mortality rate by age range, level of education, air quality, homicide rate, voter turnout, households with internet, social networks and satisfaction with life. The index is calculated for 34 OECD countries.

The BLI reopened the international discussion of welfare economies on the differences in the meanings of economic growth and social progress. A community can have economic growth due to the concentration of capital, but it can suffer from social development due to the absence of distributive and commutative justice. Hence, when calculating GDP per capita as an indicator of social welfare, it is necessary to take into account other variables such as: the quality of the environment, community life, quality of living conditions, in other words, quality of life in general (see table 1).

The Happy Planet Index HPI, created in 2006 and calculated by the New Economics Foundations in developing countries in Asia and Latin America, assesses: social welfare, life expectancy, inequity in income distribution and the ecological footprint left by citizens on future generations and on the enjoyment of present generations. In line with Nicolas Sarkozy's approach, the HPI also assesses social participation in government decisions (see Table 1). It asserts the following:

indicators of happiness, such as use of people's free time, psychological well-being and community vitality contribute to addressing the social breakdown that some of our cities experience in their localities. Happiness is measurable from the population's perception of control to corruption and the effective use of public expenditure, from governance or social support among members of the same neighborhood to improve life expectancy, GDP per capita growth, generosity and the enjoyment of natural resources in the present as well as in the future (ICI, 2011).

**Table 1. International indicators of happiness**

<i>Variables and Indicators</i>	DHI	BLI	HPI	MW	QLI	SPI	UHI	IHI	NHI
1. Health with quality.	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
2. Quality education.	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
3. Environmental diversity.	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
4. Level or cost of living.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
5. Governance and transparency.	x	x	x	x			x	x	
6. Welfare of the population.	x					x	x	x	x
7. Use of leisure time.	x					x	x	x	
8. Community vitality and inclusion.	x	x		x		x	x	x	
9. Culture.	x							x	
10. Income Level.		x	x	x			x		x
11. Unemployment and Employment.	x	x		x		x			x
12. Unsatisfied Basic Needs.		x		x	x	x	x		x
13. Satisfaction with life, Life project.		x				x	x	x	
14. Life expectancy.		x	x		x				x
15. Mobility and security.		x		X	x		x	x	x
16. Price of property.					x				

**Note 1. Research Group: Government, Territory and Culture. Domestic Happiness Index DHI. Better Life Index BLI. Happy Planet Index HPI. Multidimensional well-being MW. Quality of Life Index QLI. Social Progress Index SPI. Urban Happiness Index UHI. Integral Happiness Index IHI. National Happiness Index NHI.**

**Note 2. The fields in the columns with the letter X show the variables evaluated by the indicator in the corresponding row.**

Nobel Prize winners Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz, together with Jean Paul Fitoussi, proposed the MW, Multidimensional Welfare Indicator, in which they evaluate themselves: material living conditions -income, consumption and wealth-, health with quality, education as a trainer of real capabilities, personal activities in leisure time, work, participation in political life and governance, social relations, the environment -present and future-, lack of physical, economic or occupational security (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2015).

Contemporary utilitarianism, like the MW index, evaluates people’s satisfaction with governments, that is, with the transparency of public institutions in charge of the administration of public resources, with the enjoyment and conservation of natural resources, as stated by Stiglitz in Public Sector Economics (2002). Happiness from the point of view of welfare economics or the Index proposed by the Multidimensional Welfare Commission, focuses on improvements in the living conditions and good life

of the population that is access to fundamental public goods, habitat or relationship conditions with neighbors, opportunities for self-fulfillment and satisfaction with the government (see table 1).

The QLI, Quality of Life Index, is a socioeconomic indicator whose use began to become widespread at the end of the 1990s with the study reports of the Inter-American Development Bank under the direction of economist Eduardo Lora. This indicator takes into account: cost of living, indices of unmet basic needs, property prices, crime rate, health care, vehicular traffic, pollution levels, access to and quality of basic public goods.

Among the QLI's study variables are: the price of the housing market and people's satisfaction with their lives. In the market prices of the quality of the housing; it takes into account, the type of neighborhood, the tranquility and the security that it offers to its inhabitants, such as: the state of the platforms, the proximity of commercial centers, the offer of children playgrounds, the facilities of transport, the availability and readiness of the public force for the citizen attention, the proximity of schools and colleges, the cleanliness of the air, the levels of noise and of green zones. These variables help to explain the low mobility, in other words, the wide demand and low supply of housing triggered by housing or rental prices in the sector (Lora, Powell and Sanguinetti, 2010).

Another of the most important variables proposed by the Inter-American Development Bank is the level of satisfaction with life that individuals possess; this has to do with the environment or habitat in which the citizens live and with the facilities for achieving their life's project. The level of satisfaction with life can be calculated on a measurement scale of 1 to 5, with five being the maximum level of satisfaction. In this item the following aspects are evaluated: the climate of security, the proximity and the quality of the programmed offered by the cultural and sports centers for adolescents, young people and the elderly; the relevance of community actions or State entities in favor of the preservation of peace and healthy coexistence; the level of education in respectful treatment among neighbors, the levels of tolerance, the quality of public services and cleanliness in the region; the expectations of personal improvement aided by the quality of training centers -schools and colleges- present in the sector (Lora, Powell and Sanguinetti, 2010)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> It is the duty of schools and colleges to train children and adolescents in the civic awareness of respect for neighbors and the community. This includes teaching them, for example, love for the environment and the quality of the habitat, due respect for public space, such as not throwing rubbish into nearby water sources, not listening to music at high decibels, smoking marijuana or consuming drugs in public areas or at the porches of neighbors' houses, schools and colleges.

Local policies for the monitoring of quality of life is another way of measuring the effectiveness and relevance of public spending in terms of the transferral of general happiness expenditure, mainly to populations that are more affected by insecurity, intolerance and loss of coexistence.

The Social Planet Index (SPI), designed by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute in 2010, assesses the degree to which countries are meeting the social and environmental needs of their citizens. The Social Progress Imperative Organization study center for the measure of index SPI assesses: the social basic needs—basic medical care, water and sanitation, shelter and personal safety—, access to basic knowledge, access to information and communication, well-being, health and quality of environment, personal rights, access to education, tolerance, and inclusion. All of this related to what Gehl (2010) calls cities for people or what Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn (1994) call development on a human scale, both of habitat conditions and of interpersonal relations with neighbors, or what Maslow (2008) calls opportunities for self-realization. The SPI is based on the theoretical approaches of the economists Douglas North, Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen.

Rey (2015) comments on happiness as a global indicator: annual country reports on happiness encourage countries to improve the living conditions of their inhabitants in all fields; or as the UN states in its annual reports: social happiness is an indicator of the Millennium Development Goals MDGs:

In times of economic, social, ecological and political crisis, such as the one we are currently experiencing at a global and national level, it becomes very important to monitor the perception of happiness by citizens, not only to establish development goals, but especially to determine public policy decisions that allow participants to carry out their lives within a framework of inclusion and equity, and to monitor the impact of the measures taken (Rey, 2015).

The IHI, Intersubjective Happiness Index, and the UHI, Urban Happiness Index, of the Superior School Public Administration on Antioquia were born out of the concern of the Aburra Valley Metropolitan Area about the quality of urban life of its inhabitants, i.e., how to design a better city or how to achieve better cities for people. Questions that gave way to the design of learning and innovative cities.

Cities are the scene of the most important debates that society has in its struggle to survive, in making them more habitable, better distributed in their public spaces, cleaner, less polluted by the excess of greenhouse gasses. To this end, cities need to further promote the use of public transport, the employment of their citizens' skills, housing and decent public services (Stiglitz, 2014).

Cities must be concerned with improving their education system to enable young people to survive in an increasingly changing economic world. Or as they state (Díaz et al., 2006: p. 1301), human well-being is an experience that includes the basic materials for a good and quality life: freedom of action and choice, health, good social relations, feelings of cultural identity and economic security.

Gehl (2010: p. 20-30) argues that the problems of a poorly planned growing city are suffered most by the poorest. They are the ones who face the most problems of lack of pavements for mobility, transport costs and pollution, lack of public parks for family recreation, inequality and segregation leading to political instability and economic weakening in the countries. Because not only is there a lack of equality in terms of wealth, but also in terms of opportunity.

Any neighborhood, any municipality must have not only good pavements and access roads but also good cultural centers, good public safety facilities and good recreational areas. Transferring happiness through public spending, in addition to solving the security problems of a neighborhood, improves the transfer in the distribution of wealth, and generates feelings of belonging and love for the environment; this helps to preserve the community's investment in its young people (Muñoz, 2019a; 2019b).

Community leaders must push from citizen' agendas to territorial and government agendas for the inclusion of public policies that build young people's loyalty to their localities while discouraging brain drain. Motivate them to fight for the progress of their localities and be a model for others to follow. Motivate young people to fight for the progress of their localities and become a model for others to follow.<sup>3</sup> To this end, it is necessary that social control organizations do not allow the misappropriation of public resources, nor the loss of these. Lack of public resources leads to disenchantment, loss of social capital and quality of life (Muñoz, 2019).

The Urban Happiness Index (UHI) is proposed by the economist and postdoc in public economy Angel Emilio Muñoz Cardona of the Superior School Public Administration of Antioquia. UHI evaluates the well-being of the young population of the last university semester in the capital cities or the last year of high school in the municipalities of the metropolitan area of Antioquia: Aburra Valley, Manizales,

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<sup>3</sup> It is necessary to overcome the internal problems of organization and convening power that social and community organizations have in the localities and in the community that the National Council of Economic and Social Policy document raises (CONPES 3661, 2010), National Policy for the strengthening of community action organizations. Bogotá, DNP, p. 27-28.

Pereira and Quindío. That is to say, young people and adolescents with good levels of academic training from the same culture<sup>4</sup>.

The survey instrument has three variables: Socio-demographic characterization, Satisfaction with resources and Community membership. The three variables bring together a total of 44 questions asked in 4250 questionnaires. The research study on urban happiness starts from the hypothesis:

The more young people migrate from a municipality due to a lack of opportunities for self-realization, the less likely the municipality is to develop and grow. On the contrary, the lesser the migration of the young population of a municipality due to abundant opportunities for self-fulfillment, the greater are the possibilities of development and growth of the municipality and its localities. (Muñoz 2019a)

Based on subjective well-being as the axis of happiness, the integral happiness index (IHI) for the city of Medellín evaluates, through eight dimensions and 22 categories, the subjective happiness of the people of Medellín. These are: 1). Life: it measures standards of quality of life, satisfaction with life, emotional experiences, uses of free time and equal opportunities; 2). Experience of Happiness: it measures the experiences of happiness felt by citizens and the distribution of happiness in terms of the equity of public spending; 3). Environment: cultural and sports participation, satisfaction with the public real estate or city facilities offered, natural resources, public space; 4). Health: the state of health of the person and the healthy activities of the population, psychological wellbeing and assessment of the health system by citizens; 5). Security and Coexistence: citizens' perception of security, victimization and coexistence; 6). Education: school attendance and relevance of education; 7). Good governance and active citizenship: citizen participation, governance, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and trust in government; 8). Urban Mobility: assessment of pedestrian and vehicle mobility (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016).

The IHI and the UHI of the ESAP of Antioquia evaluate social welfare in terms of the enjoyment of common goods, and satisfaction with democratic institutions as shapers of future welfare. In other words, they assess community vitality: altruism or solidarity work for the achievement of community welfare (Muñoz and Quintero, 2020).

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<sup>4</sup> The Paisa culture is located in the most developed cities of Colombia. They represent an entrepreneurial culture, more than 77% of Colombian industry is from Antioquia, they have the most important business group in Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 80% of multinational companies are from Paisa. Both the financial system and aviation were developed by them. Cities with a paisa culture are the most organized in terms of city facilities, have the highest level of satisfaction of basic needs among their population and have been catalogued as cities of innovation and learning. Through paisa culture, Colombia has achieved improvements in social inclusion, justice with social equity, commercial development and territorial political integration - metropolitan areas and provinces.

The National Happiness Index (NHI) of the Department of National Statistics DANE was born as a response to the Resolution 66/281/2012 of the United Nations Organization. For the UN, social happiness is a subject of national political reflection. It is not a holiday, but a day when citizens come together to ask themselves how to improve their living conditions; for political reflection on the quality of policies undertaken by local governments for the well-being of communities. The UN declared March 20th as an international day for reflection on social happiness.

In the Resolution A/RES//65/309 the UN affirms that the indicator of growth of the gross domestic product, GDP, does not reflect the happiness and well-being of the people of a country, nor does it reflect sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, the happiness and well-being of all peoples, and therefore recommends to all member countries, in the interest of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, to extend the calculation of GDP, through:

1. The development of new indicators of social happiness, as an objective and universal aspiration, which is the manifestation of the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals.
2. To understand the importance of the search for general happiness and social welfare as a guide to the economic development of nations and their public policies.
3. The pursuit of personal happiness as a fundamental human objective, in other words, as an inalienable right and a compulsory duty of governments to pursue it.
4. Acknowledge with appreciation the offer of reflection on the gross domestic happiness achieved by the country of Bhutan.

This is why the Republic of Colombia, as a member country of the UN, adopted under Law 1583 of October 30th, 2012 the UN Resolution A/RES//65/309, approved in the United States on July 19th, 2011, under the title: *Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development*.

It states:

The National Government shall generate information on the indicators and initiatives in this area, as a contribution to the well-being of the Colombian people, to the agenda of the United Nations and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Article 2, Law 1583 (30/10/2012)).

In response to a previous request from the UN, the National Department of Statistics (DANE) carried out the first national happiness survey (NHI) in August 2016, with 9710 people in the four largest cities in the country: Cali, Medellín, Barranquilla

and Bogota. The survey measures four variables: Happiness, Satisfaction, Worry and Depression (DANE, 2016).

#### **4. EXEMPLARY CASES**

In the World Happiness Index and from 2017 to 2019, Finland has been recognized as the third richest country in the world, with the best level of education and the least corruption, the second most socially progressive and the third most socially just, according to Mark-Rice Oxley's report (17/02/2018; Kanerva. 18/02/2018) in the European newspapers *The Guardian* and *El País*.

The first main reason for the high social happiness in Finland is that, unlike other countries in the developing world, the politicians who govern it have high levels of university education, are highly competent and transparent in the use of public incomes, and are not demagogues. The second reason is that Finns do not look at others as superior or inferior, they are all looked within the same level, as equal human beings (Oxley, 17/02/2018). The last reason is that Finnish rulers are aware that government policies on investment in social and economic growth must have continuity, hence successive governments make responsible decisions on large industrial and infrastructure investments whose social benefits greatly multiply the effort. André Chaker says that, "Corruption and organized crime are virtually non-existent, which fuels the business environment: things are done here faster, more safely. It is this confidence that generates security and a willingness to innovate" (Oxley, 17/02/2018).

Happiness in Scotland and Denmark is mainly measured by human development indicators in the social, environmental and economic fields, which together define the degree of happiness. In other words, happiness not only in terms of material well-being but also in the design of cities for people, for cordial encounters, for the mobility of human beings and their pets, for environmental enjoyment. Friendly cities in which the satisfaction and well-being of citizens take precedence over private or corporate utility. In these countries the achievement of the welfare of citizens is the main focus of political activity carried out by government representatives, social leaders and the community at large. This does not mean the abandonment of market economies; on the contrary, it is the strengthening of market economies for the benefit of all, in other words with better distributive and commutative justice.

In Antioquia, since 2013 the large city of the Aburra Valley metropolitan area has been recognized by Citigroup, Wall Street Journal, and the Land Urban Institute as an innovative city, for its investments in city facilities, in Metro Culture, and Electric

Ladders that benefits residents in vulnerable neighborhoods. Four of the 10 cities in the metropolitan area have the first places as the best quality of life index among the 1102 municipalities in the whole country: Medellín, Itagui, Sabaneta and Envigado.

In the year 2019, the great city of the metropolitan area was again an international example of Discovery City, for its continuous advances in infrastructure for mobility with intelligent and inclusive transformation in cultural works that integrate: family, children and the elderly. For its innovations in the use of urban space with environmental sustainability. From the year 2018, the city of Manizales has been working to be recognized internationally as a city of knowledge. It is the university city of Colombia, has the best university indicator per inhabitant and has a high quality of life together with the city of Pereira.

Among the main reasons that explain the differential progress between Paisa culture municipalities and the rest of Colombia's municipalities are: first, the administrative union of municipal governments with the business sector and the church. Institutions that have always worked together for the good of the city in basic public services -health, education, drinking water, environmental sanitation- which have facilitated the quality of life and the culture of inter-municipal union: provinces and metropolitan areas (Muñoz 2019c, p. 179-180). Second, the culture of conserving business ownership and the willingness to learn in order to improve, which facilitated the competitive capacity and the permanence of large Antioquian companies in the environment. Third, the strength of regionalism which, added to the love for the territory, has made the department one of the most prosperous.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although happiness is not an easy concept to define because of the various forms of subjectivity present in individuals, it is possible to look for a social way to achieve it, in other words, to be achieved or reached in its political character by communities and cities. Happiness in community life is related to social union, that is to say, to social state of law, for the achievement of common objectives, in forms of life in solidarity, which also includes the strengthening of citizens' capacities to work, live in community and find happiness in being able to show their abilities and skills to others.

How can we make our cities happier? The new contemporary society, which is the product of continuous and great advances in infotechnology, robotics and biotechnology, demands social welfare indicators based on human progress, both economically, politically and socially. In economic terms there is mainly job security, the enjoyment of basic public goods with quality and culture. In political terms: citizen

participation in local development through works of general interest and strengthening the public values of governance: transparency, honesty and public accountability. In terms of the social aspect, there is the quality of education and the co-responsibility of citizens with study grants and scholarships. The above strategy reduces the migration of qualified young people and revitalizes community life. In other words, without the existence of gift economies that wipe out freedom and the lack of civic responsibility.

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