Happy Now? A Foucauldian Analysis
of the *World Happiness Report 2021*

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Abstract

This article draws upon Foucauldian theory to consider the *World Happiness Report 2021* (WHR 2021) as a site of psy-professional power. By detailing the distinct overlap between pathologising and seemingly strengths-based psy-discourses, I argue that institutions dealing in dominant happiness discourse can coerce subjects into understanding their emotionality in the likeness of happiness technologists and economic theorists. Using the WHR 2021 as a case study in the dissemination of such psy-professionalised happiness discourse, the article will then demonstrate how the text is capable of informing the socio-emotional dictates of other institutional discourses, including the New Zealand Government's 2021 Wellbeing Budget as an example. The article concludes by calling for further interrogation of dominant happiness discourses using alternative theoretical frameworks, better illuminating the discursive influence of texts such as the WHR 2021 upon individuals and institutions alike.

Keywords: Foucault; happiness; mental health; positive psychology; well-being

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, happiness has emerged as a fundamental concern for both individuals and governments (Binkley, 2014). To discover why, many argue we should begin by interrogating the discourses shaping how the emotion has come to be understood (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019; Turner, 2018). The critically minded would note these discourses should never claim value-neutrality, despite many conservative researchers trying (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Sherman et al., 2021). Rather, research defending happiness (of which there is no shortage) inevitably disseminates select constructions of the emotion over others (Pilkington, 2016; Silverstein, 2000). One might consider this process a manipulation of emotionality, allowing institutions to curate happiness before it is ever felt by the individual (Adams et al., 2019). With these considerations in mind, a critical examination of dominant happiness discourses appears valuable (Veenhoven, 2008). Only then might their growing authority over what it means to be happy be contextualised.

Arguably the most pressing example of a dominant happiness text is the United Nations' *World Happiness Report 2021* (WHR 2021) (Helliwell et al., 2021; Neves, 2021). Ninth in a series of sociopolitically motivated texts grounded in realism, the WHR 2021 organises global data from Gallup (2021) to advocate for governments' close consideration of their populace's happiness. Despite claiming impartiality, the report uses narrow and remarkably generalised results that imply happiness should be a universal legislative goal. Here I query the functions of such a proposition and the incentives the WHR 2021 has to create consensus on this position. I will also interrogate what counter-perspectives are minimised by this approach, particularly when paired with the WHR 2021's methodologically narrow frame of happiness. And finally, I will employ critical sociohistorical analyses of psy-professionalism and happiness economics to dispel the illusion that the WHR 2021 stands separate from psychological and neoliberal actors.

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Consequently, this article outlines a sociological critique of the WHR 2021 through investigating: a) what institutions underpin the text's claim to value; b) what methodological stratagems allow it to secure attention from populations and governments; and c) the effects of Helliwell et al. (2021) guiding respondents and readers towards understanding happiness as they do (White, 2014). Together, these discussions hope to responsibly challenge an unopposed yet hyper-visible happiness discourse.

Happiness and diagnostic discourses: Birds of a feather

To contextualise the WHR 2021's sociohistorical position as a text dealing in specific happiness discourses, one should first acknowledge how the emotion emerged from a pathologising tradition (Binkley, 2011a). Detailing psy-professionalism is necessary to make this case, attending to its incentives to expand its diagnostic reach using happiness intervention (Frawley, 2015). Critically defined by Newnes (2016) as technicians in the management of emotion—namely, qualified psychologists and therapeutic practitioners—psy-professionals function as purveyors of various 'different' psychological and psychiatric discourses. Understanding the commonalities between these discourses will later help challenge the fallacious divide between happiness and other diagnostic labels that the WHR 2021 upholds.

Deconstructing illusory differences between psy-professionals concerned with mental illness and those interested in happiness can begin with an interrogation of their respective expertise. For example, both positive and clinical psy-professionals fortify their value by claiming a unique ability to categorise individuals' emotions, even if one offers pathological categorisations and the other strengths-based labels (Held, 2004). Furthermore, both discourses defend their expertise by deeming the various labels they call upon—be it happiness or depression—phenomena that can be empirically (if not objectively) understood (Alexandrova, 2005). Psy-experts' organising of psy-professional knowledge in this way arguably helps entrench their claims to expertise—provided that these claims cannot be refuted. Hook (2007) argues that the bases for psy-professional categorisations are couched within inaccessible scientific jargon for this reason, complicating their interrogation. More critically, neo-Foucauldian Nikolas Rose (1999) argues that the claim to realism underpinning psy-professionalism more broadly is anything but real. Rather, its ability to suppose objective expertise rests on its lexicon, which is complexified so as to only be decodable by other indoctrinated empiricist experts. With positive and clinical psy-professionals drawing from the same contended vocabularies to secure expertise aesthetics, their attempts at differentiation from one another can begin to appear similarly contentious.

Self-assertion of validity is not the only way strengths-based psy-professionals borrow from their more deficit-focused peers. Another is their mutual exertion of *biopower* through ever-expanding diagnostic categories (Nordberg, 2016; Rutter, 2012). First articulated in his book *The history of sexuality,* Foucault's notion of biopower suggests an exertion of control "that seeks to administer, optimize, and multiply [life], subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations" (Foucault, 1976, p. 139). Moreover, Foucault argues that biopower's nuanced controls over individuals interact at the macro-level, constructing "technolog[ies] of power" of which complex social discourses are a key example (Foucault, 1976, p. 147).

Unlike the direct and subtractive controls of *disciplinary power,* biopower has historically helped clinical psy-professionals externalise responsibility for producing subjects in their likeness (Binkley, 2011b). For instance, no shortage of literature explains how therapeutic practitioners have succeeded in constructing labels that individuals themselves both adopt and normalise amongst others (Nunkoosing & Haydon-Laurelut, 2012). Here, the clinical psy-professional's discursive power (arguably describable using Foucault's 'medical gaze') affords them the ability to ensure a client understands their body in a manner amenable to the clinician (Mcphie, 2019). Given the similarities in expertise aesthetics across psy-professional subdisciplines, it also appears logical that happiness experts can also use subjects' bodies as sites of such power (Cisney & Morar, 2015). Take the example of a rangatahi (youth) in COVID-19

lockdown who is prescribed a remote mental health application focusing on gratitude journaling—one of many positive psychological interventions (Flinchbaugh et al., 2012). By informing this rangatahi that the app boosts users' happiness, and that happiness is important, a strengths-based psy-professional can be assured the practice's value will likely be communicated to whānau (family) or friends. The subsequent dissemination of positive attitudes towards the intervention would therefore mark it a technology of power administered via the subjectified body. Here, one begins to see how biopower can leave one susceptible to positive psychological control—not just that of the deficit-based clinician. This, again, brings into question the proposed distance between each psy-professional's expertise, which allows the former to feign distance from the latter's stigmatising histories. Neo-Foucauldians might even argue that strengths-based psy-professionals are more capable of invoking biopower for this reason, projecting humanistic value-frames that appear to label individuals more benevolently than deficit-based clinicians (Mcphie, 2019).

While biopower appears to afford all manners of psy-professional a base of support for their constructed expertise, deficit-based clinicians have arguably experienced more resistance to date (Hopson, 2019). While this disparity could be attributed to the relative youth of happiness discourses, scepticism towards clinical experts nevertheless clarifies why happiness experts benefit from appearing separate. For example, Bhugra et al. (2015) reflect that histories of physical and emotional control associated with once commonplace psychiatric institutions still haunt contemporary views towards the modern therapist. While one might query this finding given that such institutions no longer loom so large, the ever-growing *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th edition; DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) demonstrates that categoric control remains an interest of clinical practitioners (Boysen & Ebersole, 2014; Wakefield, 2015). Specifically, the manual's expanding labels allude to psy-professionalism's transition from a site of institutionalised and reductive disciplinary power to one of biopower, ensuring the subject remains under the expert's control from a distance (Bang, 2015). Roberts (2005) would remind one that the aforementioned psy-professional sceptics have resisted such clinical control to varying degrees. However, this does not mean these same individuals would remain as resilient against a seemingly more humanistic inventory of emotional categories. Herein lies one incentive that positive psy-professionals have to propose that their expertise aesthetics are unique: it allows them to reach communities clinicians cannot. Subsequently, one might argue that the perceived divide between happiness and clinical discourse should be critically challenged for functioning as one way to disseminate psy-professionalism more widely.

While many subjects may resist one psy-professional aesthetic more than another, the sheer scope of emotionality that the field encompasses leaves one hard-pressed to resist all psy-professional discourses. Herein lies perhaps the most critical contextualisation of psy-professionalism's seemingly diverse expertise: their ability to cooperate in order to direct unsatisfied subjects towards other psy-professional experts. Take, for example, the proposition that a greater focus on one's happiness will somehow provide an antidote to depression—a widespread assumption met with abundant criticism (Duncan, 2013; Suissa, 2008). Such an argument demonstrates the powerful interactions possible between happiness and distress discourse, wherein one expert's labelling of subjects can necessitate intervention from both themself and other psy-professionals simultaneously. Let us return to the aforementioned rangatahi hypothetical. Despite regularly continuing to write down what they are grateful for, their unhappiness under COVID-19 lockdown persists. A positive psychologist now has licence to refer this rangatahi to a clinician, who may label them 'depressed' precisely because of their atypical engagement with gratitude journaling. Here, a depression diagnosis does not mean that the rangatahi can stop being concerned about their happiness; instead, their lack of happiness has now been deficit theorised across two different systems of psy-professional expertise. In this instance, strengths-based and deficit-based biopower can come to simultaneously inhabit one subject, facilitating one's self-policing of their happiness and unhappiness at the same time. At this point, the subject becomes deprived of any neutral state where psy-professionals cannot insist their utility. Non-Foucauldians might argue that the psy-professional's settlement of the entire

emotional spectrum in this way, co-opting all feelings as sites of power, is an intentional process. Not only because their premises together expand psy-professionals' ontological reach but because diverse expertise aesthetics can increase a subject's awareness of other pathological categories.

To summarise, the ability for happiness's construction to expand and deepen various psy-professionals' power should inform analysis of contemporary happiness texts and discourses. Despite being curated in the image of deficit-based experts, strengths-based psy-professionals have used humanistic characterisations that engender support elusive to the clinician (Cieslik, 2015; Vorhölter, 2019). Moreover, happiness experts have asserted their necessity alongside clinicians, creating emotional categories so broad that subjects cannot escape them. These contextualisations beg a more critical investigation of happiness texts such as the WHR 2021, given it could (and arguably already has) expand the international reach of psy-professional discourse (Helliwell et al., 2021). Before such analyses can begin, however, one should clarify why institutions historically indifferent to psy-professional tradition (such as the United Nations) are now willing to platform their understandings of happiness. Here, the critically minded reader is left to question what institutional actors standing outside the psy-profession benefit from emulating psy-expertise (Binkley, 2011b; Harbusch, 2022).

Happiness technicians and happiness economists: A perfect match

Perhaps the most important allies to psy-professionalism's dissemination of happiness discourse are hedonomic theorists (Hsee et al., 2008). Concerned with quantifiable, objective modalities for explaining happiness, *hedonomists* (otherwise describable as 'happiness economists') provide universalising theories for predicting happiness's emergence. While several happiness economists have proposed calculable methods for understanding happiness, arguably no other scholar has popularised the emotion's synthesis with economic theory more than 'happiness czar' Richard Layard (2011; Diener et al., 2009; Kahneman, 1999; Moloney, 2013, p. 140).

Layard's commentaries carry an apparent criticality towards the status quo at first glance, acknowledging the dysfunctional prioritisation of capital over happiness. Conceiving his position with a seminal text, *Happiness: Lessons from a new science*, Layard (2011) lists several arguments for why materialist economies thwart rather than nourish happiness. One such argument related to the finding that happiness born from wealth tends to relativise over time—a phenomenon described by positivists as the 'hedonic treadmill' (Diener et al., 2009). Furthermore, Layard arguably dabbles in faux-Marxism by suggesting capitalism diverts attention from more valuable wealths such as social capital, minimising public resistance towards money's systemic idolisation. These somewhat promising reflections lose their footing, however, given Layard's proposed resolutions to such issues fail to challenge the dominant functions of happiness or capital. Instead, Layard combines the psy-professional construction of happiness with the modality of capital, rendering it amenable to quantification as a legislative goal. Herein lies the conception of a 'positive psychological capital' (Binkley, 2016; Luthans et al., 2004).

The supposed dissonance between Layard's (2011) 'critical' happiness discourse and conservative advocacy for positive psychological capital echoes the arbitrary division of expertise used by psy-professionals to expand their diagnostic reach. Just as positive and clinical psychologists adopt separate aesthetics to access different groups, Layard posits an arguably cosmetic resistance of neoliberal tradition capable of reassuring the cautious reader (Shaw & Taplin, 2007). Psy-professionals have also benefited from identifying with critical aesthetics in this way, boasting 'critical' pedagogies without responding to the critiques they lay against psy-discourse's application (Gergen & Gergen, 1997; Parker, 1999). The term 'cosmetic' thus becomes appropriate here given that, even if a psy-professional can robustly draw from Foucault, Marx or other critical theorists, happiness discourses with more conservative underpinnings (such as Layard's) inevitably find greater integration with capitalist institutions (Fox et al., 2009). This is because

any discourse seeking to question the functions of power would challenge those organisations, rather than allowing them to borrow from psy-professionalism's 'objectivity' to construct expertise (Parker, 2007). Texts such as the WHR 2021 should therefore be interrogated when using critical languages, given how Layard (2011) demonstrates their ability to disguise conservative goals (Helliwell et al., 2021). Here, I would also note that Richard Layard is an author of the WHR 2021, abetting any scepticism that critiques laid against *Happiness: Lessons from a new science* (Layard, 2011) should not also inform an interrogation of the WHR 2021 (Helliwell et al., 2021; Layard, 2011).

The WHR 2021: A product of scientificity

Having explained both the critical collaborations of positive and deficit-based psy-professionals to assert power and happiness economists' co-option of psy-professionals' happiness discourse, the emotion's popularity is better contextualised. So too will be Helliwell et al.'s (2021) collation of worldwide happiness research using Layardian logics, thus inviting critique as both a psy-professional and economic technology. One might justify these criticisms by noting the numerous ways the WHR 2021 continues psy-professionalism's legacy of self-constructed expertise, co-option by neoliberal actors and use of critical aesthetics.

Foucault's concept of scientificity helps situate the WHR 2021's claims to expertise, which borrow from psy-professionalism's malleable use of empiricism to describe happiness (Lather, 2006). Concerned with modern science's conscious comprehension of its own functions, Foucauldian scientificity refers to the 'cloudy distribution' of systems and processes by which scientific validity can be self-constituted (Davidson, 1997; Foucault, 1970, p. 368). Scientificity, therefore, helps explain how a global happiness text like the WHR 2021 can engender positive receptions to its extraordinarily generalising analyses. Take the fact that the WHR 2021 uses Gallup (2021) samples of merely 1000 people per measured nation to propose recommendations for another seven billion people. Of course, many critics posit inherent flaws to quantifying happiness at all; even so, it remains the case that smaller samples afford researchers even greater liberty when organising data. For example, Helliwell et al. (2021) isolate the relatively stable mean happiness scores of Aotearoa/New Zealand, a nation they label "individualistic" (Helliwell et al., 2021, p. 61), to imply collectivised constructions of happiness are less relevant when cultivating reliable happiness worldwide. In other words, the WHR 2021's use of scientificity stands to homogenise how one understands happiness, using narrow sampling to discourage international respondents and readers from locating happiness within systems beyond psy-professionalism's reach. One can argue that collectivism functions as one such system, given that collective emotional intervention cannot be located solely within the individual body: the dominant site of psy-expert's control. Here, scientificity affords the WHR 2021 the ability to further psy-professionals' biopower at the cost of those who construct happiness in ways incompatible with its individualising categories (Brougham & Haar, 2013).

The WHR 2021 also uses scientificity to obscure its alienation of respondents most likely to be critical of psy-professionalism. For example, Helliwell et al. (2021) explain that those most likely to report poor happiness or resist the report's chosen measures were excluded from data collection. The elderly, hospitalised, imprisoned and homeless were all among those whose reflections were omitted, each representing demographics among those suffering disproportionate emotional burden from COVID-19 (Farkas & Romaniuk, 2020). Even more concerning is that, despite Helliwell et al.'s (2021) admission, the report still posits that the stable happiness trends born from its narrow sample are globally representative. Psy-professionals' historic defence of 'scientific integrity' pervades this claim to representativeness, allowing narrow empirical logics to frame happiness as stable (Whitaker & Cosgrove, 2015). Specifically, this stratagem allows the WHR 2021 to falsely mark any vulnerable individuals with low positive psychological capital caused by environmental factors as unhappy outliers.

As with Layard's (2011) *Happiness: Lessons from a new science,* the WHR 2021 employs critical aesthetics to posit distance between its advocacy for governmental happiness management and its neoliberal motives for doing so. This stratagem is not new, with the very first World Happiness Report echoing Layard (2011) by advocating for the replacement of gross domestic product (GDP) with a happiness index so as to minimise the adverse effects of neoliberal prioritisation (Helliwell et al., 2012). This same position pervades the WHR 2021—a proposition that appears critical of the prioritisation of economic growth over happiness. However, for this to be so, the reports would also need to cease integrating their recommendations on happiness intervention with neoliberal models of the construct. To be assured of the WHR 2021's alliance with Layard's neoliberal priorities, one only needs to consider the final chapter's WELLBY (Well-Being-Adjusted Life-Years) approach. Here, an economic model that assigns happiness a unit of GDP is used to encourage governmental consideration for how many years of happiness their existing budgets can afford citizens. Thus, it is argued GDP and happiness should be tied, creating a standardised measure through which policymakers can claim care for both population happiness and economic expansion. Such a proposition aligns well with what Pilgrim (2008) describes as the "Layard thesis", within which the pursuits of happiness and capital are merged.

The WHR 2021: A happicratic discourse

Having now established how the WHR 2021 organises its data and languages in a manner that frames happiness as psy-professionals and happiness economists do, one should interrogate what effects this approach has. To do so, one could begin by considering how the report's organisation of pandemic happiness trends stands to engender *psytizenship* behaviour (Cabanas, 2016; Helliwell et al., 2021). Describable as the successful assertion of power by psy-professionals, psytizenship speaks to the coercion of populations' emotional discourse in ways that produce further psy-professional dependence. Such coercion could include, but is not limited to, rendering happiness essential, individualised and dependent upon capital investment. Calling upon Foucauldian premises of biopower and governmentality, psytizenship helps situate psy-expertise as both a subjection mechanism, capable of shaping individuals' emotional discourse, and a governing force that asserts its power under the pretence of rationality (Rose et al., 2006).

One way the WHR 2021 arguably incites psytizenship is by implying that the COVID-19 pandemic should not negatively affect one's happiness. Specifically, Helliwell et al. (2021) claim Gallup's (2021) remarkably stable global happiness scores result not from their strategic organisation of sample data but from populations' remarkable individualisation of the emotion through the prioritisation of income and freedom. Here, it is implied that individual construction of happiness allows one to cultivate the emotion with greater ease—a prospect preferable to its location within external determinants.

Constructionist literature situates this argument sociohistorically rather than cognitively, speaking to psy-professionals' continuous separation of happiness from subjects' lived experiences (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019; Cederström & Spicer, 2015). Take the example of the mental health app *Relax: Master Your Destiny.* With the onset of 2020's COVID-19 pandemic, usership of the service increased 208 per cent under the premise that global turmoil was not an excuse for unhappiness (Perez, 2020). This trend echoes a broader uptake in commodified emotional resources (or *emmodities*) since the happiness movement began, in which adversity has become cause to invest in positive psychological capital (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019). One could contend the WHR 2021 fortifies this type of response to adversity, celebrating happiness's individualisation such that unhappiness comes to be understood as a similarly autonomous process. *Relax: Master Your Destiny* and the WHR 2021 thus both come to exemplify sources of psytizenship power, rendering happiness one's responsibility to untether from external influence.

Despite their functioning under the pretence of population care, select non-Foucauldians would be cautious of deeming such instances of psytizenship advocacy accidental or naïve (De La Fabian & Stecher, 2017). For instance, the WHR 2021's reductive happiness measures arguably secure an individualisable organisation of results, making no space for critical responses regarding happiness and its systemic determinants (Helliwell et al., 2021). Instead, purely quantitative life satisfaction scales and reports on smiling frequency ensure respondents reflect on their happiness using a frame narrow enough to be managed under scientificity. Here, one could argue the WHR 2021's respondents must report on their emotionality as if psytizens, ensuring results convey to readers the value of practising psytizenship when understanding happiness themselves.

More importantly, theorists such as Cabanas and Illouz (2019) and Latorre (2021) would argue that the dissemination of psytizenship behaviour through happiness discourses does not cease at the first train of ideological transmission. Rather, one should consider how the WHR 2021 co-opts readers and respondents into further normalising positive psychological capital on their behalf. Cabanas and Illouz's (2019) concept of 'happycracy' defines this process, referring to a population's belief that their idolisation of happiness was democratically and autonomously asserted. Drawing from histories of psy-professional biopower, Cabanas and Illouz (2019) speak to happycracy as a technology that allows psy-expertise to be passively fortified. To find evidence of such happicratic processes in action, one need only look to the vast emmodity industry born in the wake of Layard's neoliberalisation of happiness (Binkley, 2016). Taking the aforementioned example of the *Relax: Master Your Destiny* app (Perez, 2020), happycracy provides a useful framework to understand the app's sharp uptake as resulting from more than only its own assertion of value. Rather, its popularity also arises from subjects' internal sense of obligation to invest in happiness in accordance with their happy peers—and with an increasingly omnipresent psy-discourse. The WHR 2021 serves as one such discourse, fortifying the emotion's individualisation so that emmodity merchants such as *Relax: Master Your Destiny* can claim value. Here, happicratic subjects and discourses become complicit in normalising the notion that happiness requires investment—and that subjects decided so independently from the forces of biopower.

Seldom discussed within critical happiness literature is the ability for happicratic subjects to govern other institutions towards normalising psytizenship on the psy-professional's behalf. To this end, Davies (2015) explains how increasing population consciousness of positive psychological capital has led subjects themselves to rally governments and policymakers to acknowledge its importance within their research and reports. Subsequently, one can argue that institutions such as the United Nations have come to echo psy-discourse in service to an increasingly happicratic public through texts such as the WHR 2021 (Helliwell et al., 2021).

Binkley (2011a) would describe these processes as the doubling of 'governmentality', which refers to the ensemble of procedures and techniques through which human behaviour is managed—among which sit institutions, procedures and modes of analyses (such as scientificity) (Burchell et al., 1991; Rose et al., 2006). Additionally, Foucault would uphold that governmentality seeks to ensure subjects administer these governmentalising techniques upon themselves, helping to realise a governmentalised state. Binkley (2011a) extends this premise when describing governmentality as doubled, alluding to a process in which various institutions are co-opted into dispersing other institutions' biopower in order to appease their own governed subjects. One consequence of governmentality's doubling is that psy-professionalism's reach is multiplied through the discourse of organisations that would be apathetic to happiness if populations were as well (Binkley, 2016). The WHR 2021 readily exemplifies one such organisational discourse, responding to the public's newfound fascination with happiness while also amplifying it. Herein begins an arguably exponential dissemination of power begun by the psy-professional, within which the WHR 2021 is both a product and proponent.

The WHR 2021: An international discourse

Now that I have clarified the WHR 2021's propagation of psytizenship and happycracy as well as its emergence as both a site and source of psy-professional biopower, in this section I will examine how its 'universal' reflections have placed themselves internationally—and to what effect (Helliwell et al., 2021). Exploring an example of how the WHR 2021's advocacy for happiness policy has succeeded will, among other things, reveal which other global happiness discourses have inherited Layard's legacy of neoliberalising happiness and its interventions. It is worth noting that the WHR 2021 is ninth in a series of reports with similar sociopolitical origins and goals. This helps to contextualise how happicratic technologies, mirroring the WHR 2021's methodological flaws and logics, have already become so widespread.

One example of WHR's decade-long happiness discourse leaving an international footprint can be seen in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2021, with the Labour Government's conception of a flourishing-focused 'Wellbeing Budget' (WB) (Helliwell et al., 2021; New Zealand Treasury, 2021). In exploring this document, one sees the same techniques used to assert happiness's value in the WHR 2021 remerge. For example, critical aesthetics again find use in the 2021 WB, allowing the document to posit opposition to success indicators such as GDP while nevertheless expanding commodifiable state happiness interventions. Specifically, the 2021 WB organises its budget as an upstream, prevention-based document focused on challenging unhappiness at its source (Mckinlay, 1979). Defined as interventions that seek to prevent diagnoses and thus do not depend upon symptom identification, upstream interventions create a near insatiable mandate for moral entrepreneurs to normalise psytizenship in subjects. This is because prevention-based stratagems can invite happiness education in schools and youth communities irrespective of whether youth have different yet functional understandings of the emotion beforehand.

Take the example of rangatahi-tailored well-being initiative Mana Ake (New Zealand Treasury, 2021). By teaching students and educational institutions how mental health should be empirically understood, Mana Ake again brings homogenised notions of wellness into popular culture under the guise of realism. Here arises yet another way that the 2021 WB builds upon the WHR 2021's advocacy for happiness, securing happicratic subjects through interventions that expand psy-professionalism's reach. Given that these upstream preventions are also commodifiable, one can argue that the Layard thesis finds a home in the 2021 WB (Pilgrim, 2008). Specifically, the 2021 WB uses the same 'critical' positioning to obscure the merging of happiness discourse and economic theory at a systemic level (Binkley, 2011b; Shaw & Taplin, 2007).

Moreover, Binkley (2011b. p. 373) argues that the Layard's thesis has invited governmental engagement with happiness's 'economising techniques' far beyond Aotearoa/New Zealand, standardising the emotion within international policy ecosystems, too. Here, one might argue Helliwell et al.'s (2021) reductive frames of happiness set the stage for governments to conscript psytizens without resistance. Webb and Gulson (2015) would describe one instrument governments use to achieve this end as policy scientificity. Expanding upon the self-constitution of scientific validity evident in the WHR 2021's use of scientificity, policy scientificity relates to governmental resources being able to 'objectively' assert their own interventional efficacy. Here, institutional actors can use their own discursive authority to falsely argue that psy-interventions serve populations and not just their aspirations for economic growth.

Take the local example of Māori and Pasifika health outcomes in Aotearoa/New Zealand, which the 2021 WB admits are significantly more likely to be poor than Pākehā health outcomes (New Zealand Treasury, 2021). Given that happiness remained stable across the pandemic even when health did not, the Budget is able to claim that investment in psy-professional interventions increases the resilience of individuals' happiness. More concerning is that the Global Happiness Council (2018) explains that China, India, Israel and Bhutan all report similar interventional 'successes', with the latter even creating a *Gross*

National Happiness Curriculum to use when educating young people as to how their happiness might be individualised and strengthened as a skill. Such claims reveal these governments to be institutions dealing in psytizenship in the likeness of the WHR 2021, implying the separation of health from happiness is an appropriate governmental endeavour.

Beyond happycracy

Foucauldian and neo-Foucauldian concepts of biopower, scientificity, psytizenship and happycracy help locate the WHR 2021's happiness discourse within a rich and historic set of psy-professional and neoliberal power relations (Binkley, 2014; Cabanas & Illouz, 2019; Lather, 2006; Rose, 1999). However, many argue that the capacity for Foucauldian discourse to be critical enough to challenge these systems is lacking. For example, Tellman (2010) argues Foucault's construction of the subject is a non-essentialist one, meaning its considerations minimise attention to more urgent modalities of power. Additionally, select theorists call into question the functions of governmentality-based analyses without paying closer attention to the affective rationalities of populations that governmentalising processes interact with (Binkley, 2006; Dean, 2007). Subsequently, Foucauldian critique offers descriptions of power relations that are either incomplete or too diffuse to be used to propose tangible resistance. For example, a Marxist might argue psytizenship serves class sovereignty by normalising the separation of emotions from external reality, thus minimising working class resistance (Parker, 2007). Similarly, one might also argue that the WHR 2021 comes to embody an international ideological state apparatus (ISA), furthering psy-professionalism's reach to ensure its discourse becomes hegemonic in nature (Althusser, 2014). While Foucault would certainly locate the WHR 2021 and its dissemination of psytizenship within a network of power, he would not do so with the same interrogation of its top-down nature.

Equally, Foucault's reflections on biopower are too broad to fully accommodate critical race theory, or the proposition that institutional racism shapes how happiness might be best understood. For example, Foucauldian analyses would not account for the Whiteness inherent in psy-professional technologies and how their assertion of biopower carries Eurocentric norms designed to marginalise colonised emotional traditions (Baima & Sude, 2020). To this end, Butler (2016) would remind one that the dominance of psy-professional discourse delimits what counter-perspectives are intelligible amidst a White hegemony. This is because the various ways of understanding happiness are not assessed according to their cultural significance but against how they compare with colonised norms.

Compared with both Marxist and critical race theory, it is clear the present critique of the WHR 2021 could label the text's exertions of power more directionally (Helliwell et al., 2021). Therefore, it is irresponsible to argue that these critiques are final or complete without further consideration of neighbouring theories and their criticisms of happiness. What remains is that the WHR 2021 stands as a text with global reach, and one which draws from a diagnostic tradition that understands happiness narrowly. It is thus more than possible that the WHR 2021 holds the ability to exercise multiple marginalising powers at once. For this reason, further analyses of happiness texts from different theoretical viewpoints only stand to deepen resistance to the influence that happiness discourses assert globally.

Conclusion

The United Nations' *World Happiness Report 2021*'s co-option of psy-professional and economic traditions help contextualise its rise to international influence (Helliwell et al., 2021). By critically investigating the report's ability to render happiness objective and individualised, it becomes clear that happiness discourses are far from separate from its psy-professional lineage. WHR 2021's merging of happiness with economic theory also helps one understand the emotion's institutional integration as a sociopolitically motivated process. Finally, the report's exertion of biopower to conscript psytizens and normalise happicratic

behaviour brings the power of the psy-expert over their subjects and neighbouring institutions into view. Together, the present article's reflections on happiness's sociopolitical saturation carry with them a caution directed at those who employ the concept, unaware of the forces they both subject themselves to and perpetuate.

Even with its seemingly benevolent aspirations in mind, one should also be cautious of deeming the power Helliwell et al. (2021) assert through the WHR 2021 as passive or naïve of its international visibility. More multi-theoretical research is necessary here, exploring the sociopolitical contexts underpinning the text's exertion of discursive influence—and indeed, that of all governments and institutions concerned with happiness. Only then might the continual and critical identification of happicratic actors and their discourses continue, and the increasing grip happiness holds over our lives be further questioned.

Acknowledgements

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