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# **‘Unhappy News’: Process, Rhetoric and Context in the Making of the Happiness Problem**

## **Abstract**

Drawing on a study of UK national broadsheets, this paper examines the emergence and spread of happiness as a social problem in the UK by drawing on the theoretical insights of social problems constructionism and related social movement theory in terms of the processual, rhetorical and contextual factors involved in the construction, transmission and institutionalisation of new social problems. In particular, issue ownership in the realm of process and flexible syntax, experiential commensurability, empirical credibility and narrative fidelity in the realm of rhetoric, are argued to have played an important role in the successful institutionalisation of the happiness problem. A socio-political context hospitable to de-politicised and highly personalised constructions of social issues is argued to have played a major contextual role in the construction of the ‘happiness problem’.

**Keywords:** happiness, well-being, social problems, social construction, master frames

## **Introduction**

In 2010, the UK government launched the Measuring National Well-being (MNW) programme. This ‘pivotal moment’ (Bache & Reardon 2016:7) was preceded by a long process of claims-making by a variety of interested parties, arguably stretching back to the post-war period (Bache & Reardon 2016:7; Author 2015a). By the early 2000s, the growth of happiness as a focus of academic scholarship, popular books, and proposals for social and economic policy had become difficult to ignore. A number of studies have attempted to account for the rise of ‘happiness’ to the forefront of academic, political and public debate. While there is a tendency to situate analyses in variously distant pasts, as recent as the American Declaration of Independence or as far back as Ancient Greece, sociologists have suggested there is a need to account for the much more recent sociogenesis of the phenomenon and its range of signifieds (Duncan 2005; Jugureanu et al. 2014; Author 2015a). Some have situated it within the context of a decline of shared norms and values and the implicit acceptance of an ‘end of ideology’ ethos in the West (Duncan 2007; Miller 2008; Author 2015a). Seeing the primacy of positivity as a distinctly American phenomenon, Ehrenreich (2009) roots its emergence in the country’s post-Calvinist reaction and obsession with self-improvement. This privileging of positive emotions is further strengthened by a deeper shift from industrial to white collar work and from intellectual to emotional labour and the need to present an ‘acceptable’ and ‘likeable’ self to employers and clients (ibid:96). Burnett (2012) also emphasises the significance of capitalism’s shift toward the personal and cultural as well as the congruency of happiness discourses with modern ‘myths’ of individualism, humanism, instrumentalism and rationalism (see also Sugarman 2007; Slife & Richardson 2008). Others have similarly pointed to technological changes through which it appears both possible and profitable to measure and manipulate happiness (Binkley 2011; Davies 2015).

Drawing on agenda-setting literature (Kingdon 2011), Bache (2013) and Bache and Reardon (2013, 2016) offer important analysis of the processual factors involved in the emergence of the well-being agenda by examining the policy, politics and problem streams through which the concern for well-being was diffused. However, Bache and Reardon (2013:909) note, ‘What the “problem” is that demands the measurement of well-being is not particularly well articulated [...]’. Drawing on constructionist approaches to social problems, this paper asks how happiness was both implicitly and

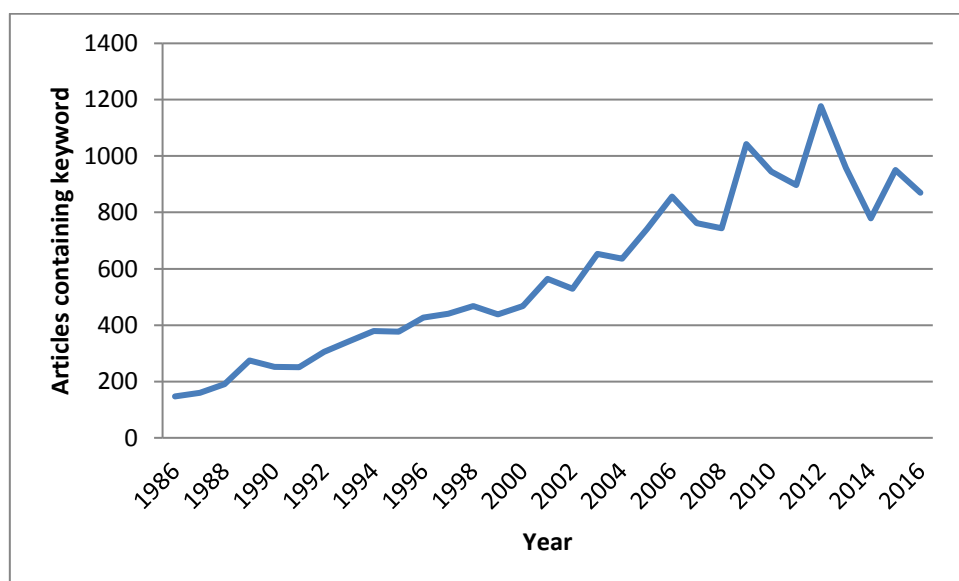
explicitly constructed as a problem in UK newspapers in the years leading up to its institutionalisation into UK policy. It does not aim to offer an exhaustive account of the issue's social construction, but rather contributes both a case study in the news media construction of a new social issue and broader literature cited above examining the emergence of happiness onto the public agenda. It does so by focusing on key processual, rhetorical and contextual factors involved in the construction and transmission of the issue as it played out in this particular arena of claims-making. The most significant processual factor is argued to be issue ownership (Gusfield 1984; Best 1999), while flexible syntax, experiential commensurability, empirical credibility and narrative fidelity (Snow & Benford 1992) are examined as key to the rhetoric of claims and a tendency toward de-politicised and highly personalised constructions of social problems is examined as key aspects of the broader socio-political context with which claims resonate.

## What's the problem?

While interest in happiness is certainly not new, that the late twentieth century saw a marked rise in interest is difficult to ignore. The sources of this particular articulation of the issue are varied and go back at least to the 'social indicators movement' of the late 1960s (Andrews, 1989). However, in spite of myriad claims made about happiness in research, philosophical and other discourses, very particular claims have emerged as significant in the realm of news media claims-making. Thus their emergence and debate in other arenas of claims-making bear some review.

Figure 1 shows an increase in the number of articles containing the keyword happiness in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* (via Nexis)<sup>i</sup> since the 1980s, reaching peaks in 2009 and 2012. Yet this growth does not simply represent a shift toward focusing on the 'brighter side' of the human condition. Beginning in 2004, newspaper headlines proclaimed the existence of an 'epidemic of unhappiness' (*Times* 25/03/2004; *Daily Telegraph* 25/06/2004; *Sunday Times* 09/09/2007) and that unhappiness is 'Britain's worst social problem' (*Independent* 12/09/2005). From the perspective emerging initially in the 1990s and rapidly gaining ground in the early 2000s, not only do people need help when things go wrong, they also need help for things to go right.

**Fig. 1. Articles containing keyword 'happiness' in *The Times* & *Sunday Times* (via Nexis)**



Central to claims about happiness in the news media has been the drawing of an antagonistic relationship between happiness and material progress, variously defined. In Seligman's (1999:560) inauguration of positive psychology, he states:

Standing alone on the pinnacle of economic and political leadership, the United States can continue to increase its material wealth while ignoring the human needs of our people and of the people on the rest of the planet. Such a course is likely to lead to increasing selfishness, alienation between the more and the less fortunate, and eventually to chaos and despair.

Facing this, Seligman asserts, 'psychology can play an enormously important role' in articulating an empirical vision of 'the good life' (ibid.). Interest from economists shares similar concerns. For instance, Richard Layard's (2005) *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* begins by asking, 'What's the problem?' (3). He responds, 'There is a paradox at the heart of our lives. Most people want more and strive for it. Yet as Western societies have got richer, their people have become no happier' (ibid.). Such claims are often accompanied by a series of graphs, the most ubiquitous being a line graph depicting happiness survey data registering little change plotted against a steadily climbing GDP.

As the ensuing sections show, this combination of growing claims to specialist expertise on behalf of psychologists and economic arguments about the shortcomings of GDP accelerate the diffusion of a 'paradox' of happiness. This paradox is frequently traced to Easterlin's (1974) comparison of life satisfaction data between developed and less developed countries and conclusion that happiness is adaptive and relative, only transiently relating to objective conditions. Yet, it is significant that public debate about these conclusions did not emerge until nearly three decades after initial publication. While there has been considerable academic debate about the relationship between income and happiness (Easterlin 1995, 2001; Hagerty & Veenhoven 2003; Easterlin 2005; Veenhoven & Hagerty 2006; Johns & Ormerod 2007; Stevenson & Wolfers 2008; Easterlin et al. 2010), the existence of critique did not slow the issue's ascendance. As Ormerod (2007:6) observes, 'Despite these shaky foundations, the relative income happiness hypothesis [...] has nevertheless been seized upon for policy recommendations'.

Cieslik (2015) has suggested that happiness has also been unwittingly problematised by a range of parties, including sociologists. However, it is significant to examine which of these problematisations tend to diffuse and be repeated across numerous public arenas including and especially the competitive arenas of the mass media. Few studies have attempted to examine in detail claims made about happiness in the news media and account for their resonance there (cf Duncan 2014; Author 2015a). Thus, emergent questions concern why these particular claims made such an impact on public debate relatively recently. Answers are complex and the literature cited toward the outset of the paper construct important pieces of the overall puzzle. However, it is important to consider key aspects of the successful diffusion of this problematised orientation to happiness.

## **Constructing social problems**

Developing upon Spector and Kitsuse's (1977) approach to social problems as collective and socially situated definitional activities, Best's (1990, 1993, 1995, 2017) 'contextual constructionist' approach stresses the significance of claims-makers, claims, and the cultural context with which these resonate, to the process of making and sharing meanings in social life. In this section, I introduce several

important processual, rhetorical and contextual factors pertinent to the present study and attempt to demonstrate their significance in the context of news media claims-making.

In the realm of process, a key moment in the life course of new social problems is the existence of dedicated claims-makers who take 'ownership' of issues and become invested in their success (Gusfield 1984:10; Best 1999:46). Their effectiveness greatly depends upon the degree to which they are in possession of resources like money, access to the media, high level of organisation, commitment, base of support and adherents, status, knowledge, expertise, skills and legitimacy (Randall & Short 1983:411). It also works best when there is 'a symbiotic relationship between different types of claims-makers' (Nichols 1997:325), as for instance between members of the professional media and mass media, wherein the former 'pump new information' to the latter, keeping an issue fresh and warranting further coverage (Nelson 1984:51). The ensuing sections illustrate key moments of issue ownership that represented a turning point in the history of the problem.

It is important to note that this claims-making process plays out across numerous public arenas including the research community, professional societies, government branches and social movement organisations. Indeed, the current reconstruction of happiness claims in this article is an element of claims-making on the part of the author. However, news media coverage has been recognised as an important part of successful mobilisation around new social problems, potentially attracting attention, rallying public action, and influencing or expanding policy debates (Nelson 1984; Hilgartner and Bosk 1988; Gamson 1990; Best 1990; McCarthy et al. 1996). While challenged by the advent of social media, at least during the timeframe under consideration (leading up to 2010), news media continued to play an important role in problem recognition, particularly for policymakers. Moreover, potential access to the 'largest possible audience' transforms news media into an intensely competitive social problems 'marketplace' (Hilgartner & Bosk 1988:57). Competition for the scarce resource of public attention to new social problems makes news media claims-making particularly rhetorical. Rhetoric operates within a particular cultural context that renders some claims believable and others out of bounds (Best, 1987; Altheide, 2009). While examining constructions in the news media will inevitably fail to encapsulate all public discussions of the issue, identifying claims that survive and indeed thrive in this sphere provides a window into at least some of the taken for granted meanings and relationships of the historical and cultural contexts that produced them.

The news media also contribute to the broader cultural availability of particular frameworks for making sense of social issues emerging from other more closed arenas. As will be discussed in greater detail below, frames selectively emphasise aspects of perceived reality to make them more salient or encourage particular interpretations over others (Snow & Benford 1992; Entman 1993; Gitlin 2003). Borrowed from studies of social movements, constructionist studies of social problems have utilised the concept of a 'master frame' to elucidate how particular frames become pervasive devices for making sense of a range of social issues (Snow & Benford 1988, 1992; Best 1999; Best & Furedi 2001). These do not necessarily emerge organically from a particular set of circumstances, but rather precede characterisations of new social problems and act as resources drawn from the broader cultural repertoire (Furedi 2007:242). As Best (1999:178) describes, 'the visibility of social-problems claims fosters the emergence of master frames. Successful claims receive widespread promotion in the media, and they become generally familiar. This encourages advocates trying to promote new problems to model their claims on existing orientations.' This helps to explain how new frames like 'happiness' can snowball; initially successful in gaining a public hearing, they become available for others to draw upon in hopes of shedding light on their own issues. In this way, such frames can become widely evoked significations, even by groups that might otherwise be opposed.

## Methodology

The discussion to follow draws on data from the Nexis database for four major UK newspapers, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and their Sunday editions. These particular sources were chosen as the main focus of sampling and analysis as they are considered the 'quality press' and thus carry minimal expectation of reportage on major social issues and ostensibly represent a spread of right to left wing viewpoints. Although circulation numbers have declined, they have nonetheless routinely ranked among the most widely circulated newspapers in the UK. At the time of data collection, all of the above had been included in the database since at least their 2002 publications, with *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* stretching back to the 1980s. The *Times Digital Archive* was used as a historical source and emergent themes were also investigated in the entirety of the Nexis database to find, for example, the first appearance of a particular claim or claims-maker in other publications.<sup>ii</sup>

Following identification of an emergent trend toward normative and problematised claims about happiness, articles were screened for applicability and imported into NVivo to create a database of relevant articles. Given the relatively commonplace nature of the keyword, searches produced several thousand potential articles. Results were sorted by relevance and the first 200 screened for applicability.<sup>iii</sup> Applicability depended on satisfying any one of: happiness as the main focus; normative claims about happiness; claims about happiness as a problem; use of claims about happiness in support of other problem claims. Thus articles were excluded mentioning happiness in passing including discussions of events and experiences like winning a sporting competition, responses to good news, and irrelevant film and book titles. This produced an NVivo database spanning 1985-2010 containing 1219 articles. Two samples were drawn from this database—sample A which sought to identify claims-makers and sample B which sought to identify frequently appearing claims.

The period of 2003-2009 (765 articles) was judged most significant from which to identify claims-makers since, as the ensuing sections describe, 2003 marked the first successful campaign to institutionalise happiness claims. The 2010 announcement of the ONS MNW initiative marks this campaign's success as it was its first clear institutionalisation into UK policy. Thus, sample A sought to identify key claims-makers during the lead up to institutionalisation. In order to be manageable by a single researcher, 40% were stratified by year and selected in the order they originally appeared as sorted by relevance in Nexis, producing a sample of 306 articles.

Sample A was analysed for the names of individuals appearing as sources, making, or disputing claims. A name was recorded in NVivo using Free Nodes producing a list of names that could be investigated and searched in and beyond the news media. Individuals were also categorised in the manner by which they were most frequently described in order to grasp from where claims have tended to emerge. The results give a sense of the prominence of particular individuals and types of claims-maker while an investigation of organisational activities and interconnections between them elucidates their role in the construction of the problem. Auxiliary materials relating to individuals and organisations included official/personal websites and publications, books and scholarly articles, archival information from Nexis and other historical and print archives.

Sample B required greater detail and sought to identify frequently repeated claims about happiness. A sample was drawn from the NVivo database for the years 2003 to 2010. This sampling included 2010 to include not only the lead up to institutionalisation of happiness claims into UK policy, as was the focus of the previous sample, but also to potentially capture some of the reaction to institutionalisation. Longer articles with more substantial focus on happiness were selected. Selection of the following attributes produced 506 articles: >301 words; more than half of article relevant to happiness; happiness claims in headline. Given the average time required to analyse a single article

and the time frame available for analysis, the 506 articles were stratified by year and 20% randomly selected using an electronic list randomiser. This produced sample B consisting of 100 articles.<sup>iv</sup>

## **The changing significance of happiness**

Throughout most of the twentieth century, appearances of ‘happiness’ in the historical archive of *The Times* are references in passing, used as an indistinct rhetorical amplifier or ‘floating signifier’ with a ‘vague, highly variable, unspecifiable or non-existent signified’ (Chandler 2007:78). These early usages illustrate Ahmed’s (2010) assertion that happiness signifies an ‘alignment’ or association with the ‘good’. For example, a scheme designed to provide part-time work for pensioners is described as ‘an extremely good investment in public happiness’ (*Times* 02/05/1957), with ‘public happiness’ acting as an indicator of the scheme’s goodness rather than literal objective.

It is not until the late 1980s that specialised expertise which takes happiness as its literal object begins to appear in the UK news media. While scientific expertise is a key resource drawn upon by claim-makers in later phases of the problem, what is notable about these initial appearances is that they conspicuously lack the problematised orientation evident later. The results of polls and surveys are sporadically reported proclaiming, for instance, Britain is ‘one of the happiest nations in the world’ (*Times* 11/07/1985), ‘nine out of ten Britons are content with their lives’ (*Guardian* 13/08/1987), and only 3% of people in the UK are “very unhappy” (*Times* 16/10/1991).

Initially, it was simply the novelty of claiming happiness was objectively identifiable and measurable, the legitimate domain of scientific expertise, that was considered newsworthy. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘flow,’ Michael Argyle’s Oxford happiness questionnaire, and David Lykken’s studies on the happiness of twins are among the first expert ideas to be repeated several times across news media publications. While forwarding happiness as something ‘far more stable, understandable and universal than most people have ever suspected,’ in the words of psychologist Michael Fordyce (*Guardian* 27/04/1998), early happiness experts appearing in the news media largely fell short of positing a problem toward which this new expertise should be directed. Psychologist Michael Argyle is even reported as having travelled to Australia claiming, ‘Australians [rank] high in the happiness stakes’ while at the same time collaborating with Melbourne psychologists in developing ‘happiness training courses’ and divulging advice on how to be happy (*Hobart Mercury* [Australia] 29/08/1988).

## **The discovery of a ‘paradox’**

While the previously cited article pointing to only 3% as ‘very unhappy’ views this result optimistically, comparing it with a Mori poll conducted a decade earlier and noting little had changed (*Times* 16/10/1991), from the perspective making its first appearance in the early 1990s, it is precisely this *lack of change* that forms the basis of a claim about the existence of a social problem.

Not only do most of these early claims forward happiness as the legitimate domain of scientific knowledge, but they also posit the existence of a problem this knowledge has uncovered. Combined with statistics relating to a range of phenomena, steady, unchanging ‘happiness rates’ are alleged to evidence a ‘paradox.’ 29% of articles in Sample B alleged the existence of a ‘paradox’ of happiness. An article from 2009 typifies the format of this claim: ‘[T]here is mounting evidence that, beyond a certain point, greater prosperity does not make us feel any better. Over the past 50 years, western standards of living have soared, yet survey after survey shows that Britons and Americans are no happier now than they were half a century ago’ (*Guardian* 23/03/2009). While the claim made about the happiness

of the population is the same, what have changed are the interpretations and objectives toward which these data are mobilised.

As a rhetorical strategy, this paradox represents a relatively flexible syntax, consisting of a comparison between ‘stagnant’ (or sometimes ‘declining’) happiness rates and another variable the claims-maker wishes to problematise. As Snowdon (2012:98) observes, ‘National happiness surveys offer little hope to anyone wishing to demonstrate that anything has made people more cheerful in the last half-century,’ but for anyone ‘wishing to prove that something has not made us happier, [...] the relentless straight line can embellish almost any narrative.’ This paradox is sometimes further dramatised with reference to additional statistics to create a picture of a situation rapidly in decline. A piece by Richard Layard argues that since the 1970s, not only has there been ‘no increase’ in happiness, but also ‘well-documented increases in depression, alcoholism and crime’ (*Independent* 09/03/2003).

While the first such claims emerging in the 1990s are far less streamlined, the essential elements of the paradox are nonetheless clear. Table 1 shows the claims-makers behind the first 10 such claims appearing in UK broadsheets and the sources of information on which they draw.

**Table 1. First claims-makers problematising happiness**

Author of Article and Description	Claim	Source of Information
James Le Fanu Physician and frequent social commentator; has done work for the right-leaning UK think-tank, the Social Affairs Unit	‘Nothing can disguise the gradual slide in the happiness of nations in the West over the past decade. Despite dramatic increases in real wealth, data from the United States show no increase in ‘happiness’; according to one sociologist, the average American has become less happy since the war’ ( <i>Times</i> 08/06/1993).	American ‘data’; unnamed sociologist
Robert Lane American political scientist	‘Studies in advanced economies show, as one would expect, that for every thousand pounds increase in income there is, indeed, an increased sense of well-being –but only for the poorest fifth of the population. Beyond that, there is almost no increase in people’s satisfaction with their lives as income levels increase’ ( <i>Guardian</i> 09/08/1993).	‘studies in advanced economies’
Jonathan Dimbleby Political Commentator	‘So we should now all be very much happier. We have better health, longer lives, and greater prosperity. And yet self-evidently we are very far from happy’ ( <i>Guardian</i> 29/10/1993).	personal observations
Will Hutton Policy Expert/Advisor	‘Choosing has not led to either happiness or economic welfare, and the more reflective economists have begun to wonder whether economics’ famous dodge works. What if individuals do not possess the mental equipment to be rational about why and what they choose?’ ( <i>Guardian</i> 8/11/1993).	recent Happiness Conference at LSE
Hamish McRae	‘In the past 20 years there has been no reported increase in happiness in either Europe or the US. This seems a little odd because this seems to conflict with the general principle that if people get richer, they	‘wealth of work’ accumulated over 30 years;



Journalist (also member of LSE Policy Committee)	also tend to become happier or—to employ a more specific title—experience higher social well-being, or SWB' ( <i>Independent</i> 15/12/1994)	Centre for Economic Performance at LSE
Will Hutton Policy Expert/Advisor	'[...] lifting consumption, either through raising the growth rate or lowering personal income taxes - the economic response of pundits and rightwing Tory backbenchers—will not improve well-being. [...] one index of well-being ranks the principal source of satisfaction as family (especially for men). Financial security follows, and then 'having fun'. Acquisition of goods and services ranks below even one's chance of getting a good job' ( <i>Guardian</i> 27/09/1994).	Robert Lane
Geoff Mulgan Policy Expert/Advisor	'Since then, however, the link between growth and happiness has been broken. In the UK and the United States, while GDP has doubled over the past 30 years, people's reported happiness levels have remained roughly constant. In some European countries they have fallen, sharply in the cases of Belgium and Ireland' ( <i>Independent</i> 27/02/1995).	economists James Tobin, William Nordhaus, World Bank's Herman Daly
James Cusick' Journalist	'The head of the NEF's indicators programme, Alex MacGillivray, said: "Now that tranquillity has been given a value, maybe happiness is next." The NEF argues that with concern over the quality of life, the old-style gross national product measurement of monetary flow is misleading and offers no guide to the state of the environment' ( <i>Independent</i> 15/11/1995).	UK Department of Transport (DoT); NEF's Alex MacGillivray
Hamish McRae Journalist (also member of LSE Policy Committee)	'This LSE work has unearthed some wonderful nuggets of information, such as the fact that there has been little or no rise in reported happiness in Europe or the US during the past 20 years [...]' ( <i>Independent</i> 16/11/1995).	LSE economists working in area of happiness
Polly Toynbee Journalist and frequent social commentator	'Running faster up the down escalator, all we get is a more miserable, overworked, sick and anxious workforce. Along with the monthly economic indicators, there should a contentment indicator, reminding us what the money is for. Professor Robert Lane, of Yale, studying quality of life surveys, concludes that apart from among the very poor, there is no correlation between happiness and income' ( <i>Independent</i> 11/11/1995).	Robert Lane

The majority are what Best (1990:13) describes as 'insiders,' characterised by more direct links to media and policymakers, and who do not need to wait until their claims produce 'social or moral disorder news' in order to be heard (Gans 2004:81). Many are members of the 'polity,' or 'set of groups that can routinely influence government decisions and can insure that their interests are normally recognized in the decision making process,' including experts and professionals charged with conducting research and recommending solutions, government officials, policy institutes and various interest and organised lobbying groups (Useem and Zald 1982:144).

While many early claims-makers would continue to use happiness claims in other arenas, this period failed to produce dedicated issue owners and public claims-making about happiness registered little effect throughout the remaining decade. This is until early 2003 when a number of articles appears describing a December research report on 'Life Satisfaction' produced by the Cabinet Office's Strategy Unit, headed by then recently appointed director, Geoff Mulgan. The report, authored by Nick Donovan and David Halpern, summarises 'the state of knowledge and implications for government' of life satisfaction research including many ideas prominent in an earlier Demos publication entitled *The Good Life* (1998), including the paradox that, 'despite large increases in national income (and expenditure) over the last 30 years, levels of life satisfaction have not increased commensurately' (Donovan and Halpern 2002:2).

Two months later, economist and labour peer Richard Layard began the most dedicated and ultimately successful claims-making effort with a series of lectures at the London School of Economics. Accompanying the series was a lengthy *New Statesmen* article in which Layard set out his claim for the existence of a problem and what should be done about it. Clearly intending to make an impact, he begins by asserting 'a paradox at the heart of our civilization' and reveals that new developments in 'happiness research' had finally made it 'entirely practicable to make happiness our goal' (*New Statesman* 03/03/2003). The memorable phrasing seemed to prove successful. His slogans reverberated throughout the news media: 'People are no happier than 50 years ago in spite of being much better off' and the 'pressure of "keeping up with the Joneses" is to blame' (*Times* 04/03/2003). Headlines announced, 'We can't get no satisfaction: Despite the massive rise in wealth, self-reported happiness has not increased in Britain' (*Guardian* 05/03/2003), and 'Money might make the world go round, but earning it is making us increasingly miserable' (*Observer* 09/03/2003).

The radical and subversive nature of happiness claims was emphasised in 27% of sample B. Layard was often described as a rebel, challenging the 'fundamental principles of his own discipline, including the centrality of GDP' (*Guardian* 06/03/2003), and 'quietly effecting a revolution in this miserable, materialistic, overworked country' (*Guardian* 24/06/2008). Yet in spite of their ostensibly subversive nature, his claims were swiftly affirmed. David Cameron, then shadow education secretary, cited Layard as an influence while describing the Conservative Party's education policy (*Sunday Times* 24/06/2005), and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs launched a document on sustainable development which, after citing Layard, affirms well-being as lying 'at the heart of sustainable development' (HM Government 2005:23). Announcements were made that happiness would appear in the educational curriculum (*Independent* 19/04/2006), and Ed Balls, then Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, affirmed that, 'teaching happiness, wellbeing and good manners to secondary school pupils can be done,' before announcing the introduction and expansion of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) across England and Wales (*Times* 12/09/2007).

While the paradox was not a new idea, it was Layard's lobbying that was noticed and which seemed to put the issue once and for all on the public agenda. A number of commentators noted his *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (2005) seemed to have a profound effect on political discussions (e.g. *Independent* 20/04/2006; *Guardian* 24/06/2008). In sample A, Layard's name appeared three times more often than the next closest name. With one foot in the door of several arenas, Layard was well-placed to diffuse the issue. As founder and director of the Centre for Economic Performance at LSE, he was able to raise its profile within economics and had been forging partnerships in an attempt 'link economists with psychologists' on projects dealing with happiness since at least the mid-1990s (*Independent* 15/12/1994).

Like the claims-makers of the 1990s, the majority of research Layard championed was not his own. He also had close ties with public policy and had been moving between various insider organisations since the beginning of his career. When he first began his claims-making for happiness as a social problem,

he was, among other positions, a consultant for the Prime Minister's Forward Strategy Unit and a member of the House of Lord's Select Committee on Economic Affairs. Moreover, where previous attention had been sporadic, Layard was one of the first to take ownership of a campaign to place the issue onto the public agenda.

The success of the problem is not entirely attributable to insider lobbying. Once emerging into the public arena, expert claims about happiness rapidly proliferated. Claims-makers categorised as 'experts' (predominately psychologists and economists) comprised the largest single proportion (44%) of individuals identified in sample A, but most appearances were second-hand references. Nonetheless, it is important to note the dissemination of the largest part of happiness expertise, stemming from positive psychology, was also a conscious project in itself (Linley et al. 2006; Author 2015a:127-130) with international taskforces aimed at impacting 'education, social policy, urban planning, and law' (Seligman 1998).

In this way, a reciprocal relationship emerged between experts and well-connected issue owners. For issue owners, research is an invaluable resource as it not only offers 'empirical credibility' (Snow & Benford 1992) (discussed below), but can also open up new angles, refresh claims, and warrant further coverage. In turn, experts benefit from involvement with a new social problem, offering a 'fresh, neglected topic for study, opportunities to receive research funding and publish results, the chance to exhibit one's knowledge regarding a visible issue'; they may 'find themselves courted by the press, by social movements and consulted and supported by governments' (Best 1999:68). Over time, they become increasingly important as they affirm and reaffirm the problem, 'track progress toward controlling it, and offer more refined ways to think about [it]' (Best 1999:68). The net result is to produce increasing numbers invested in the problem's continued importance, and for whom claims-making is 'just another day at the office' (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988:57).

## **A fledgling master frame**

The fact that the issue was initially embraced by insiders meant the path toward institutionalisation was little impeded. However, particular aspects of happiness as a framework for claims-making contributed to the likelihood that it would transcend its original owners, and indeed, that it would compel ownership in the first place. This directs attention to particular aspects of the rhetoric of happiness that contributed to its potency as a frame for claims-making about a variety of social problems. Snow and Benford (1992:137) define frames as 'an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment'. While some frames are 'rigid', or not easily amplified or extended, others are more 'elastic' (ibid.:139-140). The latter are characterised by greater syntactic flexibility, allowing 'numerous aggrieved groups to tap it and elaborate their grievances in terms of its basic problem-solving schema' (ibid.:140).

We have already seen how the 'paradox' offered a relatively flexible and exploitable rhetorical trope. Even bank press releases and anarchist graffiti have unintentionally echoed it (Author 2015a:144). In addition, nearly any social problem can be reduced to core a concern with happiness. As Layard puts it, 'Everyone is concerned with avoiding poverty, ill health, conflict and enslavement. But these things are nothing but versions of unhappiness. So what we're all really concerned with, although we might be afraid of the simplicity of the term, is happiness' (*Times* 08/02/2010). The more inclusive and flexible the frame, the more likely it is to be adopted by two or more movements and function as what Snow and Benford (1988, 1992; Benford & Snow 2000) call "master frames". As we saw above, the concept of a 'master frame' has been used to understand broad orientations to claims-making that 'can be easily adapted for application to many issues' and which represent a 'cultural opportunity' for

claims-makers who tap into them (Best 2017:82; see also Best, 1999). Indeed, once happiness claims became culturally available, they were broadly adopted in claims observed in sample B relating to a variety of issues from anxieties about the current state of childhood (34%), to social inequalities (13%) and in the last years of the sample, even the economic crisis (4%).

Only a handful of frames become master frames. Snow and Benford (1992) suggest that, in addition to a master frame's elaborative potential, three interrelated factors account for their varying resonance: empirical credibility, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity. The degree to which one or more of these is satisfied contributes to the master frame's potency. In the sections that follow I explore the ways happiness claims fulfilled each to varying degrees. However, it was not 'happiness' per se that went on to become the master frame for claims-making and banner for policies, but rather 'well-being'. While the two signifiers are often used interchangeably, as a banner for social problem claims, the experiential resonance of 'happiness' pushed up against its empirical credibility, weakening its staying power as the main sign vehicle for the overarching master frame. But where happiness fell short, similar signifiers emerged as new sign vehicles through which very similar claims were expressed.

## **Experiential commensurability**

Experiential commensurability refers to the degree to which the construction of a problem strikes a chord with the phenomenology of individual experience (Snow & Benford 1988). Not only is media attention limited, but there is also a limited amount of 'surplus compassion' audiences can muster for causes beyond their immediate concerns (Hilgartner & Bosk 1988:59). Against this background, happiness offers an answer to the question, 'Why should anyone care about my problem?' that connects with people at the lowest common denominator of individual subjective experience.

Indeed, claims focused upon the more salient features of everyday life and personal feelings to the explicit detriment of material phenomena like economic growth, which can seem technical, dry, or out of touch with individual experience. In the words of David Cameron: 'It's time we admitted that there's more to life than money, and it's time we focused not just on GDP, but on GWB—general well-being. [...] Well-being can't be measured by money or traded in markets. [...] It's about the beauty of our surroundings, the quality of our culture, and above all the strength of our relationships' (*Guardian* 22/05/2006).

10% of articles in sample B attempted to explicitly define what happiness is. The majority of articles allowed the signifier 'float' and appear 'empty', connecting with audiences' own visceral response or personal meanings. Asked to define happiness, Layard is quoted deflecting to the paradox: "Happiness is inversely related to income at higher levels of income because of the declining marginal utility of getting richer" (*Guardian* 24/06/2008). Maintaining a degree of ambiguity means 'observers can pour almost any meaning or desire' into the signifier (Smucker et al. 2012: 234). Its intuitive familiarity is also a key part of its positive valence. As one claims-maker begins, 'It is so obvious that happiness is what we want that very few people bother to say it' (*Observer* 09/03/2003). In this way, happiness shares a rhetorical advantage with other floating signifiers such as 'hope' or 'freedom': their positive valence promotes acceptance and affirmation even if people may not necessarily agree on their contents.

Definitions and broader descriptions of happiness reveal a distinct unease with identifying happiness with positive affect. As one advocate claims, 'as moral beings, our happiness is not just about "feeling good but being good"' (*Guardian* 22/07/2006). The depth of happiness' experiential commensurability becomes both a benefit and a drawback in this respect. Its familiarity means not only that audiences will have their own ideas about its meaning, but it also breeds a certain unease with expert or policy proclamations on the topic. "I'm from the Government and I'm here to make you happy." Now that

is scary', one commentator writes (*Times* 27/07/2016). This puts limits on the range of potential signifieds and the degree to which its rhetoric can be stretched to accommodate claims-makers' more expansive concerns. As one critic warns, 'most of the happiness gurus don't mean what you mean by happiness at all. They want you to be the right sort of happy' (*Times* 11/04/2009). Another article points out that of 3000 respondents to an online survey, a majority defined happiness in terms quite different from experts and policy thinkers (*Times* 27/03/2010). They talked 'about the concept in individual rather than social terms. Few defined happiness as a land of equality and solidarity. Many defined it as a smile from their children or a kiss from their partners' (*Times* 27/03/2010).

Yet other signifiers do not have this issue. 50% of articles in sample B contained the term 'well-being'<sup>vi</sup> and less frequent terms included 'life satisfaction,' 'flourishing,' 'eudaimonia,' 'hedonics,' and 'quality of life.' By employing different signifiers, claims-makers were able to more clearly assert empirical credibility (see next section). But they also allowed for the expansion of the problem to include broader domains of experience and, once happiness claims had already gained a foothold, to subtly distance themselves from a concern with happiness alone. Anthony Seldon, headmaster at Wellington College, claimed, 'There's too much emphasis on happiness, I think. I'm interested in the meaningful or virtuous life, what the Greeks called eudaimonia' (*Times* 19/02/2008). Using the term happiness risked confining claims to the limited domain of positive affect, which for many claims-makers was not enough. Indeed, Martin Seligman's later gravitation toward 'well-being' (Table 2) illustrates this trend toward expanding the purview of claims through recourse to additional terminologies.

**Table 2. 'Authentic Happiness' versus 'Well-Being Theory'**

<b>Authentic Happiness Theory</b>	<b>Well-Being Theory</b>
Topic: happiness	Topic: well-being
Measure: life satisfaction	Measures: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment
Goal: increase life satisfaction	Goal: increase flourishing by increasing positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishment

(Adapted from Seligman 2011: Chapter 1)

Moreover, while many claims-makers referred to 'stagnant' happiness rates over periods of time, by subsuming more areas of human experience under the umbrella of the problem, claims utilising 'well-being' were able to additionally assert the existence of a steadily worsening situation. As one advocate argued, 'young people's wellbeing has declined over time, reflected in an increase in mental health problems, drug use and suicide' (*Guardian* 05/06/2007). These activities not only expanded the potential scope of those able to 'piggyback' (Best 2017:48) their claims onto the happiness concern, but also expanded the scope of those who might feel personally affected, connecting a broader array of personal problems as incidences of a public issue.

### **Empirical credibility**

Empirical credibility refers to the 'apparent evidential basis for a master frame's diagnostic claims' (Snow & Benford 1992:140). Happiness claims routinely draw on the authority contemporary Western culture attributes to scientific reasoning. However, as Gamson (1992:69) points out, 'whether a master frame seems plausible to the observer is itself an accomplishment of successful signifying work'.

Previous sections described how the first claims were not necessarily about a problem, but about the acceptance of happiness as a kind of expertise or science in its own right. However, this later becomes a more explicit problem claim: it is the lack of practical know-how on the part of laypeople that constitutes a problem. That laypeople do not understand happiness is a claim explicitly forwarded in 19% of sample B. One begins, ‘Everyone wants to be happy, but most of us don't know how to do it. We tend to assume that happiness should be an easy, natural thing. However, happiness is a set of skills you must learn’ (*Daily Telegraph* 25/05/2009). People are described as ‘hamsters on a treadmill’ (*Sunday Times* 31/07/2005) and neuroscientific discoveries as shedding light on the ‘pursuit of happiness’ and ‘why we get so much wrong’ (*Times* 08/07/2006). Making a case for happiness education, Layard claims, ‘Learning hard things takes an enormous amount of practise. [...] How can we expect people to learn to be happy without massive amounts of practice and repetition?’ (*Sunday Telegraph* 06/05/2007).

Recourse to scientific terminology and emphasis on academic credentials supports these claims. 41% of articles in sample B emphasised the scientific rigor of happiness claims and/or the academic credentials of those making them. Table 3 illustrates the ways by which the scientific nature of claims was underscored.

**Table 3. Claims signifying empirical credibility**

Examples	Academic Credentials	Strength of Evidence	Scientific Language
<b>Keywords &amp; Phrases</b>	‘leading neuroscientist’ ‘pre-eminent body of scientists’ ‘international array of Nobel Laureates’ ‘eminent’ ‘leading’ ‘distinguished researchers’ ‘renowned’ ‘leading happiness economist’ ‘leading neuroscientist’ ‘wizards of economics’ ‘world’s top psychologist’ ‘leading academic expert’	‘wealth of hard scientific evidence’ ‘serious scientific research’ ‘plenty of unambiguous research’ ‘rigorous’ ‘firm body of psychological research’ ‘ground-breaking’ ‘science as hard as rocks’ ‘brain scans now prove’ ‘new scientific movement’	‘hedonics’ ‘biomarkers’ ‘hedonic calculus’ ‘endorphin (happiness) levels’ ‘neural pathways’ ‘psychological wellbeing’ ‘subjective wellbeing’ ‘eudaimonic wellbeing’ ‘eudaimonia’ ‘general wellbeing’ ‘thalamus and medial prefrontal cortex (Brodmann's area 9)’ ‘science of wellbeing’

However, again this often self-conscious attempt to forward happiness as a ‘real’ science speaks to a tension between experiential commensurability and empirical credibility. Many claims-makers seemed aware the term ‘happiness’ was vulnerable to charges of being unscientific, ‘gimmicky,’ and shallow. Indeed, many criticisms were not detailed attacks, but flippant rejections, for instance referring to ‘happiness classes’ as ‘Labour’s latest gimmick’ (*Sunday Times* 09/09/2007), or jokingly describing a ‘Shangri-La primary school report’ from the ‘Office for Happiness in Education (OfHed)’ which issues a ‘Notice to Cheer Up’ (*Guardian* 20/05/2008). The use of less ‘frivolous’ sounding signifiers like ‘subjective wellbeing’ evoked a sense of scientific depth. However, while they added credibility, they lacked the same resonance. ‘Happiness (or in academic-speak, “subjective wellbeing”) matters,’ proclaimed one article (*Sunday Telegraph* 06/03/2011). Journalists even sometimes overrode claims-makers’ attempts to use different signifiers. One journalist, describing an interview with the economist Alan Krueger in which, ‘He preferred to speak about “subjective

wellbeing” [...] because “happiness sounds a bit frivolous,”” concluded, ‘Oh for goodness’ sake, Professor, cheer up’ (*Sunday Times* 09/08/2009).

The constellation of signifiers around happiness constitute a powerful ‘rhetorical idiom’, or ‘moral vocabulary’ that offers advocates ‘value-laden themes and narrative formulae capable of endowing claims with memorably expressed significance’ (Ibarra & Kitsuse 2003:27). Signifiers like ‘subjective wellbeing’ and ‘eudaimonia’ have their own benefits and drawbacks<sup>vii</sup> in this respect, but one of their key offerings is the construction of a critical distance between experience and expertise. Each has an ability to ‘evoke the ethos implicit in the claim’ (ibid.)—that this is something that personally matters, but also that requires know-how and technical expertise.

## Narrative fidelity

Narrative fidelity refers to ‘the degree to which proffered framings resonate with cultural narrations, that is, with the stories, myths, folk tales that are part and parcel of one’s cultural heritage and thus function to inform events and experiences in the immediate present’ (Snow & Benford 1988:210).

Happiness claims tended to imbue the emotional realm with considerable explanatory power, viewing many problems as reducible to an essential emotional vulnerability on the part of the public. Some of the most commonly repeated claims located the sources of unhappiness in susceptibility to pressures like consumerism and advertising (18%; some specifically alleged ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ was to blame (4%). Many problems were attributed to mistaken ideas about happiness, remediable through the inculcation of scientifically credible happiness methodologies. It was claimed that happiness education could ‘immunise’ young people against future problems (*Sunday Times* 07/09/2008), improve exam performance (*Independent* 19/04/2006), and prevent depression (*Independent on Sunday* 16/03/2006). The economic crisis was attributed to the misguided pursuit of happiness through money on the part of both individuals and governments (*Observer* 10/01/2010), and bankers who had become ‘addicted’ to a ‘power game that keeps them happy’ (*Daily Telegraph* 07/02/2013). Nicolas Sarkozy is described as claiming ‘the world could have predicted the economic crisis if it had looked at happiness, wellbeing and sustainability’ (*Daily Telegraph* 15/09/2009).

Such narratives also construct compellingly simple lines of cause and effect. ‘If we genuinely cared about personal and societal happiness in this country,’ one economist alleged, ‘we probably wouldn’t allow our elected representatives and powerful unelected civil servants to obsess about the opinions and sensibility of foreign bond holders so much,’ nor ‘carry on borrowing billions of euros every month to keep afloat the zombie banks [...]’ (*Sunday Times* 22/04/2010). Complex issues like the workings of the capitalist economy are explained as the result of mistaken beliefs and incorrect understandings about the true causes of happiness that must be rooted out in culture or individual minds.

It is significant that while 56% of sample B problematised wealth, and economic growth in particular, as inconsequential or even as causing unhappiness, very few actually advocated putting an end to the latter. Given the likely centrality of growth to the functioning of capitalism (Smith 2010), it is notable how little claims denigrating growth were contested and how little debate focused on the feasibility of ‘zero’ or ‘de’ -growth in a market system. Rather, proposed interventions and changes predominately focused upon shifting attention away from economic and other objective indicators toward subjective conceptualisations of progress and prosperity. This is in keeping with a tendency for public narratives to acknowledge that ‘the state of affairs can be disturbed and unsettled,’ but in which there is promise, ‘that they will return to a state of equilibrium which is prior and natural and therefore inevitable’ (Hodge & Kress, 1988: 230). Table 4 shows the most common categories into which proposals for change were observed to fall in sample B and the most common claim within each category.

**Table 4. Most common proposals for change**

<b>Policy (38%)</b>	<b>Lifestyle (35%)</b>	<b>Education (27%)</b>	<b>Work (16%)</b>	<b>Parenting (15%)</b>
Happiness should be the goal of policy	Re-examine negative thoughts and beliefs	Education should teach happiness skills	More attention and resources to improving work-life balance	Change parenting styles

Happiness claims were frequently described as radical challenges to orthodoxy, but that there was little in the way of concerted opposition speaks to their fidelity with existing narratives about the causes and solutions to social ills. Underpinning these narratives are distinctive views of what it means to be human and the potentials and limitations of human action. Happiness narratives have a fidelity to a cultural context that is intensely preoccupied with the state of emotion. All cultures subscribe to systems of meaning that encompass particular explanatory modes of cause and effect. Since at least the mid-twentieth century, social theorists have described a growing tendency to imbue life with ‘therapeutic’ explanations (Rieff 1966; Sennett 1977; Lasch 1979; Nolan 1998; Chris 1999; Furedi 2004; Bellah et al. 2008 [1986]). In this context, emotions are imbued with unique explanatory power. ‘Our culture has fostered a climate where the internal world of the individual has become the site where the problems of society are raised and where it is perceived they need to be resolved’ and in which, ‘the state of emotion is often represented as the key determinant of both individual and collective behaviour’ (Furedi 2004:24-25).

However, the cultural preoccupation is not so much with emotion, but with ‘emotional deficit’. The concern for self-esteem, for instance, was with its ‘low level’ (Furedi 2004:4). Similarly, much of the problematisation of happiness is implicit. For instance, Thin (2014) has argued that where psychology and economics have monopolized the happiness industry, social scientists should ‘develop their own ways of paying “positive” attention to the social facilitation of wellbeing.’ But if happiness and well-being are not a problem, one wonders why they need to be ‘promoted’ or ‘facilitated’. Many claims-makers also lamented the traditional disciplinary focus upon negatives. However, the emphasis upon the removal of barriers implies belief that doing so would allow people to ‘get on with things,’ whereas arguing that experts must also focus on the facilitation of happiness betrays a doubt that left to their own devices, they actually can.

As Author (2015b:65) observes, ‘Lacking collective forms of meaning-making once supplied by tradition, religion, or political ideology, there seems an increasing appetite for discourses that can connect with people at a deeper, more individual level’. Political vocabularies having so narrowed, emotion narratives of social problems present issues not as partisan campaigns but ‘neutral programmes of scientific enquiry and professional practice’ (Wainwright 2008:81). An increasing array of problems comes to be explained in terms of ‘the individual’s inability to satisfactorily govern his own emotional and mental life,’ so that idioms like ‘low self-esteem’ or indeed ‘happiness’ become potent folk myths ‘invoked to explain virtually all social problems’ (Wainwright 2008:83).

It is interesting to note that as self-esteem began to wane, happiness, conceived in very similar ways (Smith, 2008), began to take root. Presaging the rise to prominence of happiness as the explanatory power of self-esteem began to dwindle, Furedi (2003) notes, ‘If the concept of self-esteem did not exist, other ideas that posit the condition of fragile subjectivity and connect it to a wider network of social problems would have emerged.’ Burnett (2012) anticipates happiness’ eventual ‘usurpation’ by new ‘culturally validated ideas’ (6). Indeed, as the explanatory power of the fledgling happiness



frame was stretched beyond its breaking point, there was no shortage of new emotional signifiers waiting to take its place as the cause and solution to a wide variety of ills.

## Conclusion

This article is one of the first to attempt a systematic exploration of the construction of happiness as a social problem in the UK news media in the years leading to its institutionalisation in UK policy. However, the simplicity of the preceding analysis belies the complexity of problem construction, which plays out in several arenas across society. Within the intensely competitive public arena of news media claims-making, several key factors emerge as significant including dedicated issue ownership by insider claims-makers, an interest in dissemination on the part of experts, and key rhetorical aspects of its resonance as a fledgling master frame including experiential commensurability, empirical credibility and narrative fidelity.

These latter rhetorical aspects of claims depend on the larger context in which they are articulated. Frames that go on to be adopted by a variety of causes do so because they successfully resonate 'with the symbolic culture of the frame's historical context' (Swart 1995:448). This larger cultural context has significant effects on rhetorical work, as claims must achieve a sufficient 'fit' with the plausibility structures of the broader culture and prevailing discourses of acceptable evidence (Altheide 2009:77; Best 1987:118). While it was crucial that key claims-makers took the issue on and made it their own, these efforts were only successful within a particular context in which problems framed in emotional terms were especially likely to make an impact.

In many ways, the rise of happiness was, as Duncan (2007:87) argues, a 'key signifier of third-way ideology, reflecting the loss of the alternative utopian vision supplied by socialism, on one hand, and a loss of confidence in unfettered capitalism, on the other'. While governments have always been concerned with the management of the public mood, the widespread appeal of emotional frames for social problems becomes possible long after the passions that once incited people to act have been tamed. As Furedi (2004:37) writes:

Keeping emotions out of politics was dictated by the recognition that in a polarised environment, anger and resentment could provoke instability and social unrest. Today the political situation is radically different. The political passions that were associated with twentieth-century revolutions and social strife appear exhausted.

Happiness became politicized long after this dramatic transformation had taken place, after the unchallenged ascendancy of the market had effectively restricted the scope of the political imagination. In the absence of meaningful alternatives, therapeutics becomes one way of attempting to imbue politics with meaning, bypassing uncertain political identities and connecting with people at the individual level. This shift 'from politics to the personal' was precipitated by a deep disillusionment with meta-narratives that promised to explain societies and which could be wielded to radically change them for the better (Furedi 2004:54). In this context, big ideas must be small enough to fit into the constricted space left behind.

Future research may consider the apparent growing centrality of emotional signifiers in the framing of new social problems. Happiness itself appears to have given way to other signs. This may be because all social problems eventually run their course. There is also evidence that while retaining many of the same features of the problematisation of happiness, the discourse of well-being began to supersede it. This is partially because, while having many benefits, it also has a number of drawbacks which 'well-being' circumvents. It is possible that the discourse of wellbeing too, will give way to a new emotional

idiom. However, like many successful problems, there are now records being kept and policies in effect. Regardless of whether or not claims-makers and the media continue to focus on the issue, it has made a crucial transition: it is now an object of public policy.

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<sup>i</sup> These sources were chosen for having been included in Nexis archive since 1986 (first fully indexed year) whereas holdings for other broadsheets begin later.

<sup>ii</sup> As this paper is not focused upon detailing historical usages of happiness, only results in *The Times Digital Archive* are used for illustration here. For a more detailed discussion of historical usages of happiness in the news media throughout twentieth century see Author (2015a).

<sup>iii</sup> Nexis determines relevance by proximity of keyword(s) to the headline and number of times they appear in full-text.

<sup>iv</sup> When selecting 20% of articles stratified by year, it was necessary for each year to round up or down, thus producing a total selection of 100 articles rather than 101.2 (20% of 506).

<sup>v</sup> In this case the author is a journalist passively reporting claims of others and is thus not a claims-maker himself. This differs from the case of Hamish McRae who compiles the primary claims of unnamed economists into a secondary claim for the existence of a problem.

<sup>vi</sup> All searches and comparisons have been carried out using both hyphenated and non-hyphenated spellings.

<sup>vii</sup> Author (2015a:142-153) offers a detailed rhetorical analysis of these signifiers.