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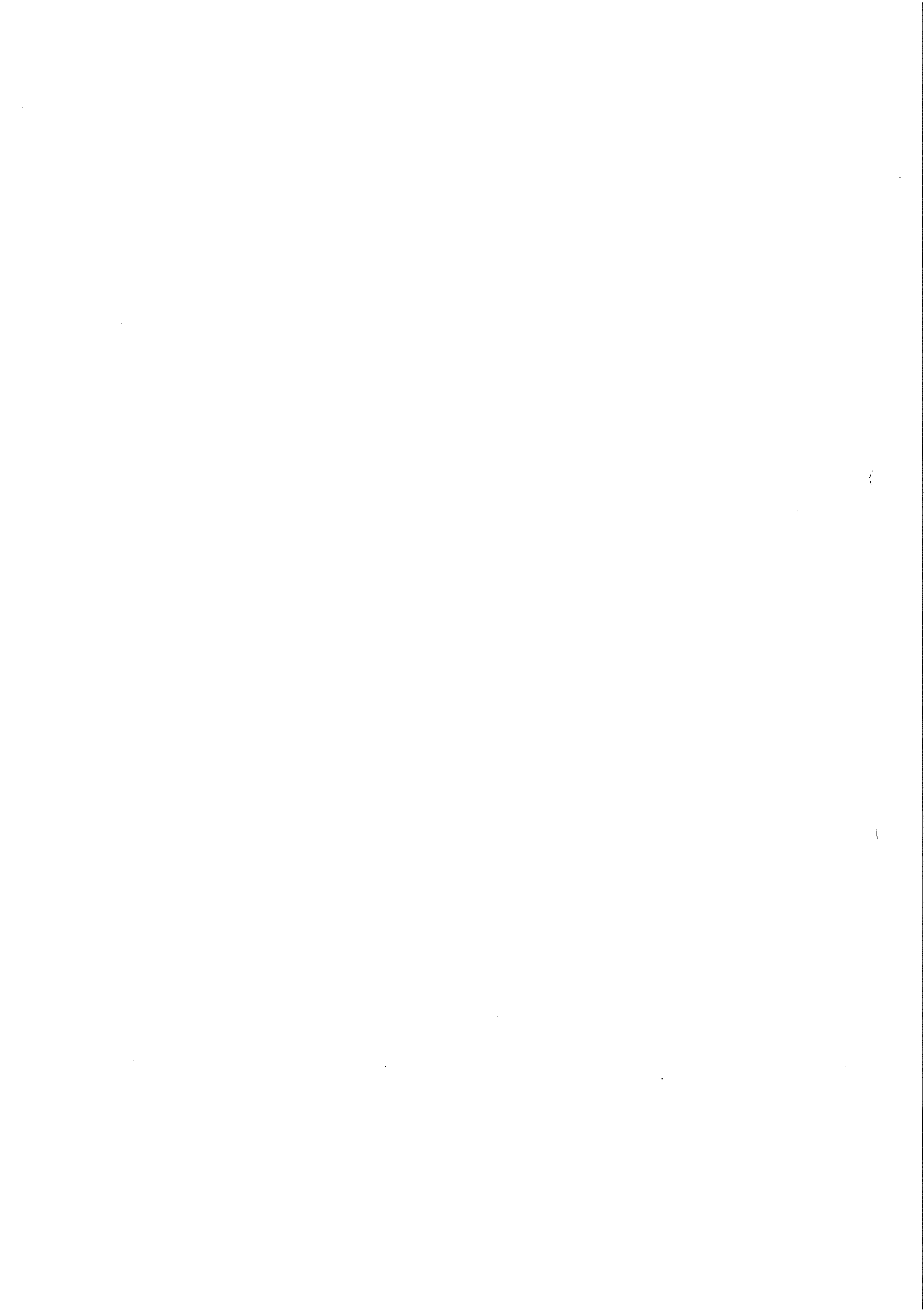
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**Unhappiness in South Korea:
Why It is High and What Might be Done About It**

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Why It is High and What Might be Done About It

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I. Introduction

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people evaluate their lives, including thoughts (e.g., life satisfaction, job satisfaction) and feelings (e.g., positive feelings such as enjoyment and negative feelings such as anger, sadness, and anxiety). In reporting SWB, people appraise whether their lives, either long-term or at the moment, are going well versus badly. As we will see, such evaluations have important implications not only for how people experience the quality of their lives, but also for health, relationships, and work. For reviews of research on SWB, see Diener (1984) and Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith (1999).

In our recent writings we suggest that governments should have national accounts of well-being to assess the SWB of their citizens, and to help in policy making (Diener & Seligman, 2006). We argue in *Well-Being for Policy* (Diener, Lucas, Schimmack, & Helliwell, 2009) that governments primarily measure indicators related to economic well-being – GDP, unemployment, inflation, and so on, while neglecting assessments related to subjective well-being. The issue is not that the economy is unimportant; the issue is that there is much more to quality of life than the economy. By focusing so much on measuring the economy, we tend to overlook other important areas.

What is measured by a society is what people attend to, including what leaders give attention to and discuss. Thus, if SWB is measured nationally, and the results are available to citizens and journalists, more attention will tend to be focused on this aspect of quality of life. SWB can reflect the quality of life of a society in multiple domains, such as the quality of the environment and the quality of work life, because these affect SWB. In this paper we present an overview of why measuring SWB in nations, in businesses, in cities, and in schools, will improve societies, and give leaders a valuable tool for improving policy decisions. This argument is made in much more detail in the citations above. We also present data showing that South Korea is not flourishing in terms of SWB, and we suggest possible ideas about how to improve SWB.

South Korea is Low on SWB

Before we delve into why SWB is central to quality of life, we should ask about where the Republic of Korea (ROK) stands relative to other nations. The data are based on the first wave of the Gallup World Poll, in which the Gallup survey organization collected representative samples from major nations of the world. Altogether, a total 137,214 individuals from 130 countries were polled. Individual-level survey weights were applied to ensure that each country's sample composition conformed with the latest census data.

- 1) C-BW/k/sq/1/1/c
 2) A-AB/yd/wq/v/2/

Is South Korea high or low in SWB, and higher or lower than other similar nations with similar income? In Table 1 we present several measures of SWB for South Korea and several other nations. We show data for the USA because it is the wealthiest nation in the world, and we show Zimbabwe because quality of life there has been declining steadily, and is now among the worst in the world. We present data for Denmark because it is known to be one of the happiest nations on the globe, and we present data for Japan because it is close to Korea and has a similar income that has grown, like South Korea's, immensely over the past 50 years. Thus, we present the SWB of South Korea with benchmarks from other societies.

Table 1

Subjective Well-Being of Selected Nations

<u>Subjective Well-Being</u>	<u>South Korea</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Zimbabwe</u>
Life Satisfaction Ladder (0 - 10)	5.3	7.2	8.0	6.5	3.8
Percent Enjoyed Much of Yesterday	64	86	92	71	68
Percent Depressed Much of Yesterday	29	15	3	12	23
Angry Much of Yesterday	32	22	13	13	23
Percent Enjoyed Minus Depressed Yesterday	35	71	89	59	45

Note: Scores for the Life Satisfaction Ladder can vary from 0 (worst possible life the respondent can imagine for him or herself) to 10 (the best or ideal possible life). The other figures are for feelings, and represent the percentage of respondents in each nation who said they experienced that feeling much yesterday. We used "yesterday" to reduce the memory biases that can contaminate reports of feelings over long time periods.

As can be seen, Denmark is very high in life satisfaction and high in positive feelings as well. Most people in Denmark say they enjoyed yesterday, and few felt depressed. In contrast, SWB in Zimbabwe is low -- people evaluate their lives badly, and many are miserable.

The United States is very wealthy, and yet does not have the highest SWB. Other nations -- Scandinavia, Canada, and Northern Europe -- do better. The USA, however, does pretty well -- most people are satisfied and enjoying life. However, more people felt depressed and angry than in Denmark.

What about S. Korea? In many ways the ROK looks like Japan, but lower. The life satisfaction scores are just below neutral (which is 5.5), signifying mild dissatisfaction with life, and relatively large numbers of Koreans feel angry and depressed. Although South Korea outscores Zimbabwe in life satisfaction, it does not do so for feelings. Indeed, in this group of five nations, S. Korea scores highest in negative feelings. These are not the worst scores in the world, but they are troubling.

An even more troubling picture emerges when South Korea is compared to a list of nations of the world (see the Appendix). For Feelings Balance the difference between positive and negative feelings, S. Korea is tied for 15th from the bottom, out of 130 nations. Thus, S. Korea is very low

compared to most other nations. For life satisfaction, S. Korea ranks in the middle, with as many nations above it as below it. This is not encouraging because S. Korea is much above the world average in terms of wealth, normally a major factor in nation-level life satisfaction. Furthermore, a quarter of Koreans felt angry and depressed much of yesterday. With income in the upper ranks of nations of the world, it is surprising that feelings of well-being are in the lower ranks of the world.

II. Issues in Using the SWB Scores for Policy

The low SWB scores in S. Korea point to some areas where changes are needed to improve quality of life. If we want to use SWB scores for policy, however, and want to raise the low SWB scores of South Korea, several questions arise.

Is Money Enough?

Some economists argue that GDP and other similar statistics tell us everything we need to know about a country. These statistics reflect how many people are working and how much they are earning. But the data in Table 1 show that there is more to quality of life than income because the USA and S. Korea score lower than we would expect based on their incomes. On the other hand, nations such as Costa Rica, with income much lower than S. Korea's, score much higher than expected based on income alone. Our research shows that income does influence happiness, but much more is involved – factors such as social support and having work in which one can use one's talents and learn new things are crucial as well.

Is SWB Just a Personal Affair?

Some have argued that SWB is due to personality and relatively unchangeable, and others have argued that SWB is personal and should not be the concern of the government. Although genetics and inborn personality do exert an influence on SWB, with some people born happier than others, circumstances and the way people live their lives are also of immense importance. When we compare SWB in the Scandinavian nations to that in most African nations, the differences are huge. These large societal differences are not likely due to innate temperament differences between nations. We now have longitudinal data of individuals that shows that people's long-term SWB can change in response to events such as unemployment (Lucas, 2007; Lucas et al., 2003). There is now no doubt that the circumstances of people's lives matter for SWB, and many of these are societal circumstances that can be influenced by business and government policies and practices.

The second issue is whether governments should intervene regarding SWB, because it is a personal matter. The argument is that governments should not interfere with people's personal choices and lives. But modern governments already intervene in the economy, in education, in healthcare, and in virtually every aspect of life. In addition, in order to take SWB into account in policy decisions, the government need not become autocratic. Indeed, SWB is an aspect of democracy because it allows people's thoughts and feelings to influence their leaders' decisions. In policies ranging from the environment to education to health, knowledge about where SWB is flourishing versus floundering in a society can help policy leaders see where needs exist and where changes should be made. Governments need not interfere with freedoms in order to improve SWB.

Is SWB A Good Thing?

Some people believe that "happiness" is shallow, and that the important things in life lie elsewhere, for example in success, achievement, hard work, health, and loyalty to one's family. Of course these things are important. But most people in modern nations believe that happiness is quite important as well (Diener, 2000). After all, if people are dissatisfied with their lives – they judge that their lives are not good by their own standards for what a good life entails – how can we say that

theirs is fully a good life? If most people in a society do not enjoy life and feel miserable most of the time, then despite high income and good health, or high achievement, the society is failing in a major way. We find that students in S. Korea and around the world rate happiness as very important, and most rate it as more important than money.

Another issue with SWB is that some people think happy people are stupid; they don't understand the world (Veenhoven, 1988). They believe that happiness makes people silly and shallow, and leads to less motivation for achievement. As we will see below, quite the opposite is true – happy people have better health and longevity, better social relationships such as good marriages, are better employees and citizens, and earn more money (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Veenhoven, 1988).

In “post-materialistic” modern societies where basic material needs are met, people want more from life than to simply earn a lot more money. Back in the time when people were fighting to meet their basic needs for food and shelter, economic concerns were paramount. But now people want income as a way of leading a more fulfilling and meaningful life. A fulfilling life means much more to people than having money – it means good social relationships, growing as a person, contributing to society, having happy children, experiencing a clean environment, and doing interesting work (not just high paying work).

Health and Longevity

We recently reviewed the research on the association of SWB to health. It turns out that not only does health influence SWB to some extent, but that SWB has a beneficial effect on health (Diener & Chan, 2010). In longitudinal studies spanning many decades, people who begin with high SWB tend to live longer. People who are depressed after a heart attack are much more likely to have another heart attack, and people who are chronically angry have a greater risk of heart disease. Research suggests that high SWB makes people healthier. For instance, people with lots of positive feelings have stronger immune systems, and can resist viruses better.

People who are angry and unhappy are more likely to have narrowing of their arteries, and earlier death due to cardiovascular disease. The research is now extensive, and includes not only longitudinal studies, but experimental animal research, quasi-experiments in natural life, and studies of mood and physiology. We estimate that high versus low SWB could mean about 10 years difference in length of life. Not only do happy people tend to live longer, but they tend to be happier and healthier than unhappy people during those years. Thus, high SWB should be a defining characteristic of a good society, not only because it feels good, but because it is beneficial to health. Nations and policymakers should very much want happy citizens, because they are more likely to be healthy and live longer.

Social Relationships

High SWB also benefits social relationships. These and other benefits of SWB are reviewed in Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005). When people experience positive moods, they are more sociable. When people are depressed, they tend to withdraw from others. Not only are happy people more sociable, but the quality of their social relationships is higher. They are more likely to help others and be cooperative. They are more likely to marry and stay married, and their marriages are of better quality. A surprising finding is that women who smile more in their yearbook photos when they are students are more likely to get married and stay married (Harker & Keltner, 2001). The link between positive emotions and moods and social support is strong. Recent Korean data suggests that happy teenagers form better social networks over the course of a semester (Koo, Lee, & Suh, 2009).

Citizenship and Work Life

High SWB seems to lead people to be better citizens. They volunteer more, help others more, have more cooperative and pro-peace attitudes (Tov & Diener, 2008). Thus, in the workplace people high in job satisfaction and other forms of SWB are likely to be better "organizational citizens." Research reveals that employees who are high in SWB are more productive, but the biggest effect of SWB is on organizational citizenship (George & Brief, 1992), helping the business through activities that are not the employee's specific job assignment. Good organizational citizens are more likely to help others at work, not take unnecessary sick days, speak positively about their workplace, and not steal from the business. Thus, happiness at work seems to be most beneficial in terms of leading employees to help the organization in ways that are not required of them.

Income

It is interesting that people high in SWB tend on average to earn more income. We found this in a study in the U.S.A., and now the finding has been replicated in other nations. Why might happier young adults later earn more money? It may be that they are more social, and therefore others like working with them. And because happy people tend to be on average more social, they might have a larger professional network so that they come across more potential opportunities. It might also be that they are more optimistic, full of energy, and approach-oriented. A third factor involved in earnings and well-being is that positive emotions seem to assist creativity. People in laboratory studies, as well as in the workplace, are more creative when they experience positive feelings of enjoyment, and this creativity may be rewarded monetarily.

Not only are happy individuals likely to earn higher incomes, but work units with high SWB are more likely to be productive and effective. Harter et al. (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2002) studied a large number of work units across large businesses, and found that a measure of engagement at work, including job satisfaction, predicted lower turnover (quitting to go to a new job) for business units, and also predicted greater customer satisfaction. These two factors, in turn, led to greater productivity. Thus, business leaders should very much want satisfied and happy workers, because they are more likely to be productive, good organizational citizens, and be sick less.

SWB and the Flourishing Society

It is clear that high SWB is central to a flourishing and thriving society. In the first place, SWB indicates that people are enjoying their lives, and see them as successful. This is a key component of quality of life in modern democratic societies. Second, we see that high SWB contributes to productivity in the workplace, to health and longevity, to supportive social relationships, and good citizenship. Thus, high SWB is essential to the good life and good society, and we must inquire how to raise this key characteristic in South Korea.

III. Explaining the Low SWB in South Korea

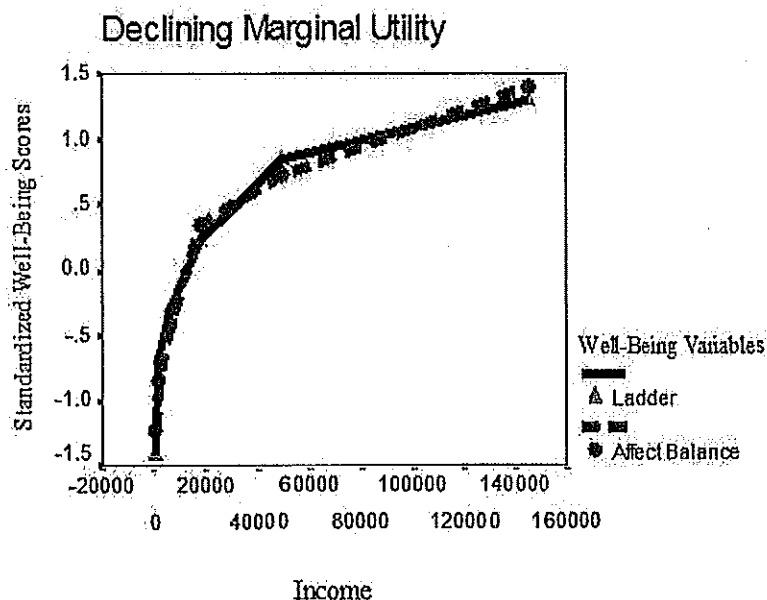
Is Low SWB Due to Money Problems?

South Korea is performing very well in terms of the economy. Although it is not yet up to the levels of the wealthiest nations, it has shown amazing economic growth. Its citizens can all be fed, and they own modern conveniences. Thus, material prosperity is not likely to be the root cause of low SWB in Korea, especially in light of the fact that poorer nations such as Costa Rica have high SWB.

<u>Material Well-Being</u>	<u>South Korea</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Zimbabwe</u>
2005 GDP/Capita PPP US Dollars	28,000	46,400	36,000	32,600	200
GDP/Capita in Log 10 Units	4.45	4.67	4.56	4.51	2.3
Not Enough Money for Food	15	17	9	8	74
Percent Owning Television	99				29

Would Koreans be happier if they had more money, perhaps the level of income in the USA? We do not believe this is a cause of low Korean SWB, and would like to make our reasons for this very clear, as money is the first thing that politicians and citizens alike think is their major problem. First, it must be remembered that the effects of money on SWB follow "declining marginal utility," meaning that it requires increasing amounts of income to have an effect. This pattern is shown in Figure 1, which shows how increasing income coming out of poverty raises both life satisfaction and emotional well-being, but after a certain level, increasing income buys smaller and smaller amount of life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Income is shown in USA dollars, and Affect Balance refers to how much greater positive emotions are than negative ones. At the income levels of South Korea it would take very large increases in income to raise SWB only a small amount.

Figure 1



Environment and Circumstances

The first dollars coming out of poverty make a large difference to SWB, but after that point, it requires a lot of money to make a difference. Thus, the poorest people in the ROK are likely to profit in SWB from greater income, but those higher in the income scale, despite wanting more income, are not likely to receive sharp rises in SWB when they obtain more wealth.

Table 2 also shows the comparison of nations in terms of log 10 income. The log of income is used by economists because it reflects the declining marginal utility of income. For logs we see

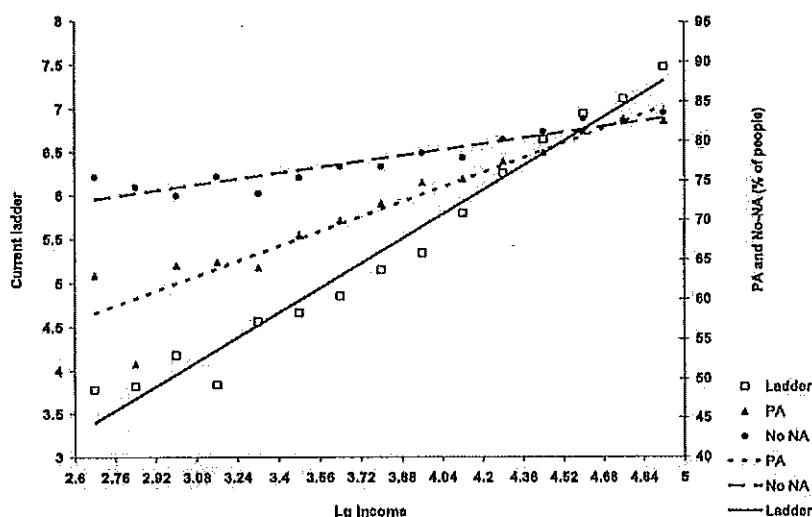
units that reflect percent increases in income, which is how people respond to income changes, not to absolute increases per se. For instance, going from 100,000 dollars income to 120,000 dollars income per year is not like moving from 20,000 to 40,000, but is like moving from 20,000 to 24,000 dollars. What can be seen is that the four wealthier countries in the table do not differ very much in log income. If a nation could move from the level of Zimbabwe to the level of S. Korea, that would be a huge psychological increase in income, coming out of dire poverty. However, moving from the level of S. Korea to the USA will not have a large impact. Thus, it is very unlikely that continuing economic growth by itself can solve the SWB problems of Korea.

One problem with rising income is that people's aspirations also rise – they want more and more – and these rising desires can even outpace their incomes (Easterlin, 1974). Thus, paradoxically, SWB can decline even as incomes rise. Graham et al. (2010) found that what she called “frustrated achievers” have rapidly rising incomes, but are disenchanted because their desires and expectations rose even faster. Thus, more money is no guarantee of more happiness.

Another issue has to do with having what one wants versus wanting what one has – in other words, life satisfaction versus positive feelings. In Figure 2 we show the association of income (in log 10 units) and three types of SWB. As can be seen, income has little association with people's feelings such as anger and depression. Life satisfaction, in contrast, shows a steep association with income, and positive feelings show a moderate relation to income. But what can be seen in the figure is that if Korea were to move from its current income to the income of the USA, it would make only a slight difference in positive feelings. Thus, we conclude that the evidence does not support the idea that economic growth will make a large impact on South Korean enjoyment of life, and is not likely to reduce negative emotions.

Figure 2

Income's Association with Types of SWB



The Negative Influence of Materialism

If it is not the case that Koreans would be happier if they had more money, we can ask the question, would Koreans be happier if they weren't so materialistic? It has been found that high levels of materialism – wanting money more than love or other values – is associated with low well-being (Diener & Oishi, 2000). It is not bad to want money, because it is necessary to obtain the necessities and other values we desire. What seems harmful is the toll that the pursuit of materialism can take on other values, such as close personal relationships, morality, and enjoyment in using one's skills.

Psychologists speak about two broad types of culture – individualist and collectivist (Triandis, 1995). Individualists, such as Americans, are those who think of the individual as primary. They have a distinct sense of self, pay careful attention to their own feelings, and like to emphasize their own uniqueness. Collectivists, in contrast, such as Koreans, are those who think of the group as primary. They are more likely to be focused on social approval and often place group harmony before their own wants and needs. In a study comparing collectivists and individualists, Suh and his colleagues (1998; Suh, Diener, & Updegraff, 2008) examined the factors that predict a person's life satisfaction: emotional experiences versus social norms. Does a person's emotional state determine the degree to which they are satisfied, or do social norms for correct behavior determine a person's life satisfaction? The researchers discovered something very interesting. People from individualistic cultures were more likely to use their emotions to determine their own "happiness," whereas collectivists used both emotions and social norms. This attention to external cues is what Suh (2007) calls the "context-sensitive self."

According to Suh, context sensitivity can be disadvantageous because it is associated with higher rates of materialism, higher need for social approval, and lower rates of subjective well-being. Collectivists' orientation to close others, which can help in-group harmony, can lead to an external focus that heightens status-seeking and social comparison, which can decrease SWB. By focusing attention outward a collectivist can be more concerned with appearance, visible luxury goods, and other competitive signs of doing well. Because these factors are zero-sum in a society and relative, they do not improve the SWB of society as a whole as they rise – there are always winners and losers. Thus, the very collectivism that led to in-group harmony in traditional times might now at times lead to dissatisfaction because people are competing to look good in the eyes of others. In support of Suh's explanation, Scollon and Wirtz (2010) found that taking an external perspective on oneself makes people more materialistic.

It appears that South Koreans are high on materialism, placing a very high value on the attainment of material wealth, much higher than in the other four nations. This finding is based on reports from college students on materialism in many nations of the world. In this study, the students were asked to rate how much they value material wealth, from 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely).

Table 3

<u>Material Well-Being</u>	<u>South Korea</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Zimbabwe</u>
Value Material Wealth	7.24	5.45	--	6.01	5.77

Shown in Table 3, South Koreans are the highest of the five nations in valuing material wealth. Even Zimbabwe, which is quite poor, does not place as high of a value on material wealth as South Koreans do. Research shows that having financial goals can negatively impact satisfaction in some domains (Nickerson, Schwarz, Diener & Kahneman, 2003). When people put great importance on being financially well-off, this has negative consequences for how satisfied people feel with the domains that are perhaps most important to attaining SWB. The more importance people placed on financial success, the less satisfied they were with their family life, regardless of how financially successful they were. And for people who were not financially successful, valuing financial success also negatively predicts satisfaction with friendships, as well as satisfaction with jobs. Thus, valuing material wealth has negative repercussions, especially in the domain of interpersonal satisfaction, which is an important aspect of social capital, as well as job satisfaction.

Keeping in mind the marginal utility of money, the fact that money does not have a strong influence on positive and negative feelings, as well as problems with materialism and rising aspirations, one must conclude that rising income will not be the answer to enhancing SWB in South Korea. Although a strong focus is usually placed by politicians and citizens alike on the economy, in fact there are other aspects of society that deserve equal or greater attention once a nation has reached the level of material prosperity that is seen in the ROK.

SWB and the Environment and Work

In the Diener et al. (2009) book on SWB and policy, environmental factors that can influence life satisfaction are reviewed. It has been shown that green space, flowers and plants, enhance people's moods and quality of life, whereas poor air quality and long commuting to work lowers life satisfaction. In Table 4 we present several variables that shed light on how South Koreans view their country and jobs. As can be seen, S. Korea is generally low – just a bit lower than Japan, but substantially lower than the USA and Denmark. Koreans like their country and jobs better than citizens of Zimbabwe, but their scores are low. It could be that part of this low job satisfaction is related to materialism, as previously discussed. However, part of the answer could be due to lengthy commuting, and other environmental aspects of South Korea. It could be that arranging cities so that commuting is easier, and doing more to clean up the air, as well as adding green space to cities just as Singapore has done, would help improve quality of life in the ROK.

Table 4

Environment and Circumstances in Nations

<u>Quality of Life</u>	<u>South Korea</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Zimbabwe</u>
Country Satisfaction	5.2	6.0	7.2	5.4	3.1
Environment Good	.44	.61	.66	.47	.51
Perceived Air Quality	.71	.84	.95	.72	.80
Job Satisfaction	.76	.87	.95	.78	.51

What about job satisfaction? As mentioned earlier, businesses need satisfied and happy workers because they tend to change jobs less, customers like them more, and they are more creative, thinking up novel approaches to problems. In Denmark almost all workers are satisfied with their work, whereas in S. Korea almost one-quarter of workers are dissatisfied with their work.

Psychological and Social Wealth

We know that psychosocial factors are very important to positive feelings, including enjoying life. They are also important to creativity and sociability. There are at least two factors that should be kept in mind here – supportive social relationships and mastery, using and developing one's skills. We know that it is important to positive feelings to have social support, to be able to trust others, and to be a person who supports and helps others. We also know that learning new things and using one's skills, for example at work, lead to positive feelings. The Gallup World Poll shows that using one's skills and learning new things are some of the strongest predictors of positive feelings. Where does Korea stand on Social and Psychological Wealth?

Table 5

Psychosocial Wealth of Nations

<u>Social Capital</u>	<u>South Korea</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Zimbabwe</u>
Percent Can Count on Others In Emergency	78	96	97	93	82
Percent Feel Safe Walking Alone	67	77	82	62	44
Percent Feel Respected	56	88	94	66	72
Low Corruption (World Bank)	.2	1.8	2.4	1.2	-1.0

The social data for South Korea are disturbing, even shocking, because in two categories it is the lowest, and in one category only Zimbabwe is lower. One out of five people in the ROK say they do not have anyone that they can count on in an emergency. As discussed above, part of this could be due to the high value placed on materialism and viewing others, most often, as an object of competition. Research showed that valuing materialism has negative repercussions on satisfaction with family and friends. It's possible that not feeling happy with family life and friendships can result in not having anyone that you can count on in an emergency. One-third of Koreans do not feel safe, and almost half do not feel respected as persons. If others do not respect a person, how can he or she feel good about life?

The World Bank ratings of corruption ("Transparency International" publishes the corruption index every other year also; see http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table. South Korea is ranked 39 out of 180 in 2009, New Zealand is 1, Denmark 2, Singapore and Sweden 3, Japan 17, and the USA 19). Corruption is a severe problem because it reflects an underlying approach to life in which people cannot trust each other, especially strangers. Thus, S. Korea's relatively high rates of corruption compared to other prosperous nations are worrisome. This is a very troubling pattern because it shows low levels of "social capital." Trust is strongly related to the happiness of nations (Tov & Diener, 2008). Low levels of social support and trust, combined with corruption, not feeling respected, and feeling unsafe are all severe social problems that almost certainly are placing strong downward pressure on SWB in S. Korea. Indeed, these social aspects of life will need to be improved before true rises in SWB are likely to be seen.

IV. What can be done?

Clinical Practice

Traditionally psychology's largest applied focus has been on mental illness and therapy, and it is natural that some interventions should come from that direction. An active mental health program in schools might be possible, in which students are routinely checked for common problems such as depression. Besides pushing for broad mental health coverage for the population, clinical psychologists can have a central role designing interventions for the broader population, especially populations where problems are widespread. Not all can be solved with more one-on-one or group therapy, however, and additional interventions must be carried out through programs and advertisements to the broader community. Broad solutions to the problem of low SWB in S. Korea will need to come from society-wide changes.

Public Health Campaign

Suh (2007) pointed to the problem of an "overly context-sensitive self," for example, being too concerned about external appearances and status, which might characterize Koreans. When people seek to feel good about themselves by gaining high status, and out-competing others, an unending "game" of one-upmanship can occur in the society. As everyone becomes richer and more successful, however, the society gets no happier because some are still on top and some still on the bottom. It can be much healthier to adapt an internal standard for what a good life should be, including close friends and gaining pleasure from using one's skills, and be less concerned about external appearances and trying to out-do other people. The over-concern about how one appears to others can lead to eating disorders such as anorexia in order to remain ultra-thin, and buying high-status luxury goods whose primary appeal is that they are expensive and not everyone can buy them. Ultimately these are self-defeating pursuits that can lead to unhappiness.

The media can work against these influences in several ways. For instance, responsible television programming can show more young people of normal weight, not just very thin and beautiful people. Similarly, television drama writers can show people gaining happiness from social relationships and personal growth above status-seeking and materialism. The media can be wonderful in terms of helping social change, or they can be a destructive force, and they need to be aware of the influential role they play.

Public campaigns in the media can also be used to communicate good values – for example the desirability of being physically fit and eating healthily, and avoiding being overly-thin. Just as the problem of obesity has become a public campaign in the USA, positive values can be communicated in Korea for the issues that are important there. Public health campaigns could send messages about helping others, including strangers, for example in doing small acts of kindness for others. Diener and Tay (2010) find that in societies where people help others more, it is not just the recipients of the help that benefit. The helper and society as a whole benefit as well. The SWB of the entire society is raised to some degree by helping, even for those who did not directly receive or give the help. Interestingly, giving support to others is probably as important to SWB as receiving it.

The types of public health campaigns needed in South Korea must be decided by Korean leaders and behavioral scientists, and so the above are merely ideas that could be considered. Ultimately, however, public health campaigns designed by Koreans for Korea could help institute desirable social and psychological changes. Furthermore, such changes could help strengthen the fabric of society by bringing even strangers closer together in terms of loyalty and support. If public campaigns and the media could communicate the message that all Koreans can prosper together, rather than always competing with each other, they might be able to foster a group spirit of teamwork rather than status seeking.

Medicine

Physicians in the USA have begun routinely asking their patients about lifestyle health practices, such as wearing seatbelts, getting exercise, and smoking. Patients are admonished to watch their weight, as modern diets have begun to raise levels of obesity. Physicians can now add to their list questions on the patient's SWB, and make referrals for those individuals who are depressed or angry. Making these questions a routine part of health care can also take the stigma out of seeking help for mental health problems. Health organizations can set up group programs to help people with various problems related to SWB.

Organizations

There was a time when employers saw employees as adversaries who had to be carefully watched and controlled. That approach becomes less effective as the work and work force becomes

highly complex and specialized. What is needed in these conditions are employees who love their work, and who are committed so that they work hard even when not being watched. People who love their work are better organizational citizens, as reviewed above, and workers in a positive mood are more likely to be creative. Furthermore, happy workplaces will tend to attract more creative talent. Naturally, happy workers alone are not enough for success, but they are an important element in success.

Cities and Provinces

Local governments can play a key role in increasing the SWB of citizens. For instance, they can sponsor events to bring the community together and work together. They can enact zoning laws which help bring neighbors into contact with one another. Strict laws against corruption are helpful because they can increase trust, especially trust among strangers. Programs for exercise at the neighborhood and community levels can be helpful.

Societal Interventions

Public health campaigns in modern nations have brought major gains in health and longevity that characterize societies. Clean water and streets, and attitudes and knowledge about cleanliness been the primary reasons life expectancy has increased so dramatically, with smaller advances also coming from medicine. At the measurement level, simply instituting national measures of SWB will bring greater attention to factors responsible for raising it. At the behavioral level, interventions in nations such as the USA show that societal programs can increase healthy behaviors. For instance, smoking was combated in the US with cigarette warnings and anti-smoking advertisements, bans on smoking in public places, steeper cigarette taxes, physicians monitoring the smoking of their patients, and more television and movies showing smoking in an unfavorable rather than favorable light. These efforts have been quite successful, greatly reducing the percent of Americans who smoke.

A similar public health campaign regarding SWB might be possible, although it has not yet been tried in a broad way on a societal level. For instance, more zoning laws could create places where people live closer to their work in order to reduce commuting, and more zoning laws could influence the design of neighborhoods and apartment buildings so that people automatically came in more contact with each other. Environmental laws can be used to reduce air pollution, and create more green space. For instance, green parks are very desirable and should be increased rather than reduced. Also more greenery inside and outside of buildings is possible. Public service campaigns could be used to stimulate the idea of helping others beyond one's family, and social skills can be more frequently taught in the schools. A long list of programs is possible, but needs to be discussed and instituted by Koreans who understand both the culture and the problems. Behavioral scientists in Korea should provide leadership and education in this endeavor.

V. Conclusions and Needed Future Research

South Korea has been a miracle in terms of economic progress, but it is now time to turn more attention to progress in other areas such as stronger social relationships, including both within and outside of the family, so that people in Korea feel that they are a "team" and can trust each other. Corruption at all levels needs to be eradicated. A norm needs to develop that people are trustworthy and helpful, even with strangers, not just with their families and close friends. People need not just close bonds with their in-group family and friends, but they need to form more strong bridges to others in the society. More attention needs to be given to health issues such as exercise, not smoking, adequate sleep, and diet, especially for the young. In addition, workplaces need programs designed to enhance quality of life in the workplace, including matching workers' skills to their jobs so that they can use their strengths.

What is needed in Korea is an all-out program to improve quality of life and subjective well-being. Such a program would be large, and larger than the level of intervention that most psychologists are familiar with. However, the size of the problem and the opportunities available in Korea, mean that such a program could make Korea a world leader and an example to other nations. South Korea became a model to other nations when it showed it could dramatically raise its economic wealth. Raising SWB in Korea is a similar opportunity and psychology must play a central role. South Korea could again become an example to other nations. However, psychologists must move beyond their traditional customary roles of helping individuals only one-on-one, to become advocates and designers of program that can broadly improve SWB in South Korea.

South Korea appears to have a problem in terms of low SWB, and this might reflect other problems in the society such as corruption and weak social support for many citizens. Koreans are a bright and energetic people with a vibrant society, and thus they can solve the problems just as in earlier decades they solved the problem of economic development. Korean leaders and behavioral scientists should work together to pinpoint the problems that lead to low SWB in the society, and work on solutions to solve them.

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Appendix: Subjective Well-Being of Nations

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Table Why It is High and What Might be Done About It

Ed Diener
University of Illinois (Psychology) and the Gallup Organization

Eunkook M. Suh
Yonsei University

Chu Kim-Prieto
College of New Jersey

Robert Biswas-Diener
Center of Applied Positive Psychology and Portland State University

Louis Sien Tay
University of Illinois
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A-AB/aya/mg/2/jb

Country	Life Satisfaction	Positive Feelings	Negative Feelings	Feelings Balance	Social Support	N
Armenia	4.29	.49	.43	.06	.68	1000
Palestine	4.72	.49	.40	.09	.82	1000
Sierra Leone	3.63	.50	.35	.15	.56	1000
Georgia	3.68	.42	.24	.18	.65	1000
Iran	5.31	.61	.41	.20	.77	1300
Yemen	4.48	.59	.36	.23	.82	1000
Turkey	4.72	.55	.32	.23	.82	995
Azerbaijan	4.73	.51	.26	.25	.85	1000
Serbia	4.75	.57	.30	.27	.84	1556
Croatia	5.82	.58	.29	.29	.91	1000
Montenegro	5.20	.58	.29	.29	.83	834
Bangladesh	4.32	.60	.31	.29	.67	1048
Haiti	3.75	.60	.31	.29	.69	505
Lebanon	5.49	.58	.27	.31	.80	996
Peru	4.81	.70	.38	.32	.87	1000
Benin	3.33	.58	.26	.32	.44	1000
South Korea	5.33	.65	.33	.32	.78	1100
Togo	3.20	.61	.29	.32	.44	1000
Bosnia Herzegovina	4.90	.60	.26	.34	.77	2002
Romania	5.05	.64	.30	.34	.84	1022
Ethiopia	3.76	.63	.29	.34	.82	1000
Belarus	5.66	.60	.25	.35	.92	1092
Bolivia	5.37	.74	.39	.35	.83	1000
Angola	4.15	.63	.28	.35	.77	1000
Uganda	3.73	.59	.24	.35	.76	1000

Chad	3.43	.58	.23	.35	.72	1000
Albania	4.63	.55	.20	.35	.82	981
Mozambique	4.59	.62	.26	.36	.88	1000
Cameroon	3.85	.60	.24	.36	.69	1000
Tajikistan	4.61	.56	.20	.36	.72	1000
Moldova	5.10	.61	.24	.37	.81	1000
Ukraine	4.80	.60	.23	.37	.85	1102
Bulgaria	3.84	.58	.21	.37	.83	1003
Cuba	5.42	.64	.26	.38	.97	1000
Macedonia	4.49	.61	.23	.38	.81	1042
Portugal	5.41	.70	.30	.40	.91	1007
Lithuania	5.95	.61	.21	.40	.93	1015
Russia	4.96	.61	.21	.40	.89	2011
Cambodia	3.57	.72	.31	.41	.79	1000
Slovenia	5.81	.66	.25	.41	.94	1009
Hungary	5.19	.68	.27	.41	.93	1025
Italy	6.85	.68	.26	.42	.93	1002
Slovakia	5.26	.68	.26	.42	.95	1018
Kosovo	5.10	.65	.23	.42	.85	1046
Israel	7.17	.69	.26	.43	.93	1002
Zimbabwe	3.83	.71	.28	.43	.82	1000
Egypt	5.31	.74	.31	.43	.84	999
Afghanistan	4.05	.64	.21	.43	.57	1196
Pakistan	5.22	.66	.22	.44	.59	1001
Latvia	4.71	.65	.21	.44	.88	1000
Greece	6.01	.68	.23	.45	.84	1002
Estonia	5.37	.66	.20	.46	.91	1003
Malawi	3.83	.67	.21	.46	.55	1000
Jordan	6.29	.69	.22	.47	.92	1000
Poland	5.59	.70	.23	.47	.92	1000
Morocco	4.63	.69	.22	.47		999
Vietnam	5.29	.66	.19	.47	.89	1023
Singapore	6.46	.75	.27	.48	.90	1095
Botswana	4.74	.69	.21	.48	.88	1000
Nicaragua	4.46	.76	.28	.48	.88	1004
Kazakhstan	5.48	.66	.18	.48	.87	1000
United Arab Emirates	6.73	.74	.25	.49	.90	1013
Czech Republic	6.44	.72	.23	.49	.92	1001
Burkina Faso	3.80	.71	.22	.49	.80	1000
Ghana	4.54	.67	.18	.49	.73	1000
Ecuador	5.02	.82	.32	.50	.91	1067
Zambia	4.82	.70	.20	.50	.80	1001
Saudi Arabia	7.08	.72	.22	.50	.87	1004
Dominican Republic	5.09	.75	.25	.50	.92	1000
Kyrgyzstan	4.64	.65	.15	.50	.84	1000

Chile	6.06	.81	.30	.51	.84	1007
Hong Kong	5.51	.72	.21	.51	.81	800
India	5.35	.69	.18	.51	.71	2100
Tanzania	3.67	.71	.20	.51	.75	1000
Colombia	6.02	.80	.28	.52	.91	1000
Malaysia	6.01	.74	.22	.52	.87	1012
Uruguay	5.79	.79	.27	.52	.91	1004
Philippines	4.67	.83	.31	.52	.80	1200
Rwanda	4.21	.73	.21	.52	.72	1504
Kenya	4.01	.70	.17	.53	.90	1000
Madagascar	3.98	.70	.17	.53	.71	1000
Argentina	6.31	.83	.28	.55	.94	1000
Guatemala	5.90	.82	.27	.55	.83	1021
Paraguay	4.73	.81	.26	.55	.90	1000
Sri Lanka	4.34	.75	.20	.55	.86	1033
Finland	7.67	.72	.16	.56	.96	1010
Uzbekistan	5.23	.73	.17	.56	.90	1000
Nepal	4.57	.72	.16	.56	.87	1002
Spain	7.15	.77	.21	.56	.96	1000
Brazil	6.64	.82	.25	.57	.88	1029
Myanmar	5.32	.64	.07	.57	.89	1047
Belgium	7.26	.80	.22	.58	.93	1003
France	7.09	.77	.19	.58	.94	1002
Trinidad and Tobago	5.83	.79	.21	.58	.89	508
Japan	6.52	.74	.15	.59	.93	1000
South Africa	5.08	.80	.21	.59	.91	1001
Indonesia	4.95	.81	.22	.59	.77	1180
Mali	4.01	.77	.18	.59	.76	1000
United States	7.18	.83	.23	.60	.96	1001
Puerto Rico	6.59	.83	.23	.60	.93	500
Niger	3.74	.76	.16	.60	.68	1000
Venezuela	7.17	.82	.21	.61	.96	1000
Jamaica	6.21	.79	.18	.61	.91	543
Senegal	4.59	.79	.18	.61	.80	1000
Mexico	6.58	.82	.20	.62	.90	1007
Germany	6.62	.78	.16	.62	.96	1001
Cyprus	6.24	.83	.21	.62	.88	1000
Nigeria	4.71	.78	.16	.62	.74	1000
Australia	7.34	.84	.20	.64	.97	1001
United Kingdom	6.98	.86	.22	.64	.98	1037
China	4.56	.80	.16	.64	.75	3730
Switzerland	7.47	.82	.17	.65	.95	1000
Canada	7.42	.84	.19	.65	.96	1355
Panama	6.13	.85	.20	.65	.95	1005
El Salvador	5.70	.86	.21	.65	.88	1000

Norway	7.42	.83	.17	.66	.96	1001
Costa Rica	7.08	.87	.21	.66	.94	1002
Thailand	5.89	.81	.14	.67	.89	1410
Netherlands	7.46	.87	.19	.68	.95	1000
Austria	7.12	.82	.14	.68	.94	1004
Kuwait	6.08	.85	.17	.68	.92	1000
Mauritania	5.19	.80	.11	.69	.88	1000
New Zealand	7.31	.88	.18	.70	.95	1028
Ireland	7.14	.88	.17	.71	.97	1000
Taiwan	6.19	.81	.10	.71	.88	1002
Sweden	7.38	.84	.12	.72	.95	1000
Honduras	5.40	.86	.14	.72	.93	1000
Denmark	8.02	.86	.12	.74	.97	1004
Laos	5.08	.88	.14	.74	.81	1001
Burundi	4.19		.25			1000

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Note: Positive feelings included smiling/laughing and enjoyment yesterday, while negative feelings included anger, worry, sadness, and depression. Feelings balance is the difference between positive and negative feelings for nations.

