

# **FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS**

## **Comparison of 126 nations in 2006**

Ruut Veenhoven, Erasmus University Rotterdam, E-mail:[veenhoven@fsw.eur.nl](mailto:veenhoven@fsw.eur.nl)

*Paper presented at: Legatum Prosperity Workshop, June 21-22, 2008, London, UK*

### ***ABSTRACT***

*Freedom in nations can affect the happiness of citizens both positively and negatively. This study is about the balance of effects and considers three kinds of freedom: economic freedom, political freedom and private freedom. The following five questions are addressed: 1) Does freedom go with happiness? 2) Do these kinds of freedom go equally closely with happiness? 3) Are these patterns universal? 4) Are there indications of freedom reaching its limits? 5) What are the causal mechanisms behind these correlations?*

*Freedom is conceived as opportunity to choose and measured by absence of restrictions in economic, political and personal life. Happiness is conceived as the overall appreciation of one's life as a whole and measured by responses to questions on the matter in representative surveys.*

*Data on both freedom and happiness is available for 126 nations in the years 2000-2006. It appears that people tend to be happier, the more freedom their nation allows and this applies for all three kinds of freedom. This means that the positive effects of freedom outweigh possible negative ones. The data show no pattern of diminishing returns and this means that freedom has not yet reached its maximum. This global pattern exists also in specific parts of the world, in poor nations as well among rich nations and also in the Western world and in the East. This means that the relationship between freedom and happiness is universal. The correlations are greatly reduced when wealth of the nation is controlled. This may mean that the statistical relationship is largely spurious or that freedom affects happiness through wealth.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

'Freedom, equality, and brotherhood' was the credo of the French Revolution. This entreaty was linked to the concept of happiness, which was also under discussion by fashionable authors at the time. It was believed that people could live happier lives if more of society put these principles into practice. This classic view of the Enlightenment is still with us today. But is it realistic? Freedom, equality, and brotherhood are mixed blessings, and their realization is not always compatible.

For a long time, this principle could not be tested empirically. The degree of freedom, equality, and brotherhood in society could barely be measured, and neither could the happiness of citizens. However, during the last decades most of the measurement problems have been solved. Fairly good data are now available on some 130 nations. The first explorations of these data yield intriguing results.

The presumed link between 'equality' and happiness fails to appear, at least where income equality is concerned. Average happiness is as high in countries with great income inequality as in nations where income differences are small (Berg 2007). Happiness is also not higher in egalitarian welfare states (Veenhoven 2000). 'Brotherhood' appears to be no sure ticket to happiness either, though we cannot be happy without good relations with our neighbors, we can live without relations of the brotherhood type. Average happiness appears to be higher in individualistic societies against that in communitarian settings (Veenhoven 1999). The next question is whether the 'freedom' factor fulfills the promises of the French Revolution.

### *The issue*

Opinion about the impact of freedom on happiness is mixed. Different philosophies stress different effects and suggest different net outcomes.

Individualistic social philosophy stresses the possible positive effects. It is typically assumed that people themselves know best what will make them happy, and hence that they will enjoy life more if they can follow their own preferences. Conflicts of interest are seen to be solved by the invisible hand of the market, which is believed to yield more optimal solutions than prescription by king or custom. Though this intellectual tradition is not blind to the perils of free choice, it expects that the positive

effects prevail.

Conservative thought tends to emphasize the negative consequences of freedom. Conservatives doubt that people really know what is best for them. The wisdom of tradition and the benefits of solidarity are seen to bring a better life than short sighted egoism. Through the ages proponents of this view have complained that individual freedom has gone too far, that it is about to destroy vital institutions. There are also claims that freedom imposes stress on individuals and that we live better with less choice (e.g. Schwartz 2004). Again, the other side of the coin is also acknowledged but deemed to be less relevant.

Some schools see different effects of different variants of freedom. Currently the New Right is quite positive about economic freedom, but at the same time it is critical about freedom in the private sphere of life. Free sex and the legalization of soft drugs are seen to lead to unhappiness. Likewise the leading view in South-East Asia is that economic freedom will improve the human lot, but not political freedom.

Another theme in the discussion is that freedom will add to happiness only in specific conditions. The most commonly mentioned condition is that people are sufficiently 'mature'. If incapable to choose people will fear freedom and seek refuge under authoritarian leaders and strict rules for life (e.g. Fromm 1941). In this line it is also argued that freedom adds to happiness only in rich nations, since material needs are predominant in poor nations.

### *Research questions*

Four questions are addressed in this paper: 1) What is the balance of effects of freedom on happiness in nations? Is that effect positive or negative and what is the size of the effect? 2) What kind of freedom is most conducive to happiness? Do all freedom variants work out equally or are some kinds more essential? One of the issues in this context is whether happiness depends more on freedom in private life than in public life, that is, the economy and politics. 3): To what extent does the balance of effects depend on circumstances? Does freedom add to happiness only in so-called 'developed' societies? 4) How much freedom is too much? Is there a level of freedom after which happiness declines?

Answering these questions requires, first of all, that the concepts be defined and

measured. To that end we will first consider freedom (§ 2) and then happiness (§ 3). The next requirement is that the interrelationships be explored, which is the subject of § 4.

## 2 FREEDOM

### 2.1 Concept of Freedom

Freedom can be defined as the *possibility to choose*. The 'possibility' to choose requires first of all that there be an 'opportunity' to choose. This is an attribute of the environment. In the second place it requires a 'capability' to choose, which an individual attribute is. In this paper the focus is on 'opportunity to choose' in nations. This opportunity to choose involves two requirements: first that there be something to choose and second that choice not be blocked by others.

In the first sense, freedom depends on the societal supply of life style alternatives. That variety in life style options depends primarily of all on the mode of existence. For example, simple hunter-gatherer societies provide their members with a more limited assortment than highly differentiated industrial societies. Variety depends also on internal dynamics and on contacts with foreign cultures. In this meaning, the concept of freedom overlaps more or less with notions of material affluence, division of work and cultural variety. This broad meaning will not be considered in this paper. The reason is simply that it is too much to handle.

Provided that there is something to choose, opportunity to choose depends further on absence of restriction by others. Bay (1965) refers to this variant as 'social freedom'. In this sense freedom is freedom from impediments, such as restrictive laws or oppression by the powerful. This is the kind of freedom pursued in the French Revolution. The focus of this study is on that latter freedom concept.

### 2.2 Measures of freedom in nations

Restrictions to choice can best be measured by considering spheres of life separately. We will review measures of freedom in economic, political, and private life below. Though these three domains do not constitute the whole of life, they cover at least much of it. The sum of restrictions in these fields is indicative of the room for choice in a society.

### *Economic freedom*

Economic freedom is measured by absence of restrictions on free trade, such as price control, excessive taxing, or closed-shop practices. This is measured by the Heritage Foundation (2008), reputed to be a think tank of the New Right. This index is based on national ratings of 1) limitations to trade, 2) fiscal burden, 3) government intervention, 4) monetary policy, 5) limitation to foreign investment, 6) limitations to banking, 7) Control of wages and prices, 8) limitations to property rights, 9) regulation, 10) limitation in access to international markets.

The degree of restriction in these matters in nations is assessed using ratings by experts and surveys among business people and journalists. The index is expressed in a number between 0 and 100, higher scores meaning more economic freedom. Scores are presented in appendix 1

### *Political freedom*

Political is measured by absence of restrictions on 1) political liberties and 2) civil liberties.

Political liberties involved in this measure are: a) State leader elected through free and fair elections, b) Legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections, c). Fair electoral laws, equal campaigning opportunities, fair polling and honest tabulation of ballots, d) Freely elected representatives have real power, e) Right to organize in political parties, system open to rise and fall of competing groups, f) Realistic possibility for opposition, de facto opposition power, 7. National independence, g) Influence of minority groups, h) Political power decentralized.

Civil liberties involved in this measure are: a) Free and independent media, b) Open public discussion, free private discussion, c) Freedom of assembly and demonstration, d) Freedom of political organization, e) Equal law, nondiscriminatory judiciary, f) Protection from political terror, g) Free trade unions, effective collective bargaining, h) Free professional and other private organizations, i) Free business, j) Free religion, k) Personal freedoms such as: gender equality, property rights, freedom of movement, choice of residence, choice of marriage and size of family.

The criterion of 'property rights' in this last item (2k) overlaps with item 8 in

the index of economic freedom. The item in ‘free trade unions’ (2g) may contradict with the item on ‘control of wages’ (7) in the index of economic freedom.

The degree of restriction to these liberties in nations is assessed by means of expert ratings, and partly based on surveys among foreign journalists. All these ratings are condensed in an index ranging from 2 (most unfree) to 14 (most free). Data are taken from Freedom House (2005) Scores are presented in appendix 1.

### *Private freedom*

Restriction of choice in private life is most manifest in legal constraints. Legal restraints can be assessed by inspection of legislation and law enforcement. Comparative data on these matters are reported in several sources, e.g. data on restrictions to birth control in the statistics of the IPPF. Many restrictions in private life are often informal, however, especially restrictions on sexuality. The degree of informal social control in nations can be estimated on the basis of attitudes in nations as assessed in surveys. Such data is available in the World Values Survey, the latest wave of which covered 90 nations in 2000. On the basis of these sources constructed an index of absence of restrictions to: 1) travel, 2) religion, 3) marriage, 4) divorce, 5) euthanasia, 6) suicide, 7) homosexuality, 8) prostitution. Maximally 2 missing values accepted per country. No comparable data were found on restrictions on dress, use of drugs, and choice of vocation.

Some of the items in this index overlap with the index of political freedom. As mentioned above, item k in its sub-index of ‘civil rights’ concerns ‘personal freedom’, which involved freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of marriage and size of family.

Since these aspects are scored on different scales, they were all transformed to z-scores. Average z-scores per nation are presented in appendix 1.

## **2.3 Observed level of freedom in nations**

Using the measures I found considerable differences in freedom across nations. Some illustrative cases are discussed below. The full data matrix is presented on appendix 1.

### *Economic freedom*

The theoretical variation on this index is from 0 to 100. The actual range in this data set is between 3 (North Korea) and 89 (Hong Kong). Iran is in the middle with a score of 43.

### *Political freedom*

The index of political freedom ranges from 2 to 14. Countries that score the minimum of 2 on this index are Cuba and Saudi Arabia; all the western nations score the maximum of 14 on this index. Countries that score in the middle are Nigeria and Colombia.

### *Private freedom*

Private freedom is expressed in z-scores that vary from -1,92 (Indonesia) to 1,48 (Netherlands). Romania is in the middle with a z-score of +.07.

### *Inter- correlations*

These three kinds of freedom tend to go together. The strongest correlation is between economic freedom and political freedom (+.69). Inspection of the scattergram shows that Singapore is an outlier in this pattern, with high economic freedom and medium political freedom. The next strongest is between political freedom and private freedom (+.66). Outliers in this pattern are Russia and Belarus, where political freedom is low, but private freedom at the medium level. On the other hand Malta stands out with a combination of high political freedom but low private freedom. The lowest correlation is between economic freedom and private freedom (+.58), which is still quite strong. Singapore is again an outlier with high economic freedom, but not so much private freedom. Slovenia is a case of not so much economic freedom, fairly much private freedom.

## **3 HAPPINESS**

### **3.1 Concept of happiness**

Happiness is defined as *the degree to which someone evaluates positively the overall quality of his or her present 'life as a whole'*. In other words: how much one likes the life one lives. When we appraise how much we appreciate the life we live, we seem to use two sources of information: we estimate our typical affective experience to assess how

well we feel generally, and at the cognitive level we compare 'life as it is' with standards of 'how life should be'. The former affective source of information seems generally to be more important than the latter cognitive one (Veenhoven 2009).

### 3.2 Measures of happiness

Happiness can be measured by the self-report. Different questions have been developed for that purpose. For a review of the items and scales, see Veenhoven (1984: chapter 4).

Though currently used, these questions are much criticized. Three main objections have been raised: it is doubted that responses to such simple questions reflect true appreciation of life, there are doubts about the comparability of such ratings across cultures and it is claimed that subjective appraisals of life are meaningless. These qualms have been discussed elsewhere and rejected. See e.g. Diener (1995), Headey & Wearing (1992), Saris et al. (1996), and Veenhoven (1993, 1996).

The question used here is the so-called 'Ladder of life' rating, which was developed for cross-national comparison by Cantril (1965). This question reads as follows:

Here is a picture of a ladder: Suppose the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder the worst possible life. Where on this ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?

- 10
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0



### 3.3 Observed level of happiness in nations

The theoretical range on this scale is from 0 to 10. The actual range in these 126 nations is between 3.2 (Togo) and 8 (Denmark). Countries in the middle range of 5.3 are Egypt, Iran and South Africa. The rank order on this measure of happiness in this large dataset is similar to the rank order observed earlier in smaller dataset using different questions on happiness (e.g. Veenhoven 2007).

## 4 FREEDOM and HAPPINESS

Data on both freedom and happiness is available for 126 nations in the years 2000-2006. Below I present some analyses. I begin with an inspection of bi-variate relationships and then proceed with multivariate analysis.

### 4.1 Greater happiness in most free nation?

Correlations between the three kinds of freedom and happiness are presented in table 1. The correlations are quite strong and this suggests that the positive effects of freedom on happiness outweigh possible negative effects. Scatter-grams in [figure 1](#), [2](#) and [3](#) provide a closer look at the pattern of correlation.

#### *Economic freedom and happiness*

Figure 1 presents a plot of economic freedom (horizontal) against average happiness in nations (vertical). A clear positive relationship appears; the more economic freedom in the nation, the happier citizens tend to be ( $r = +.63$ ). Illustrative cases are Zimbabwe (ZW) that pairs low economic freedom with low happiness and Denmark (DK) where economic freedom is high and people live happy.

At the left in figure 1 Cuba (CU) is an outlier. Economic freedom is very low in that country, but the level of happiness is only slightly below median. Venezuela (VE) is another outlier on the left. At the right Singapore (SG) is a case of high economic freedom and not too high happiness.

A look at of the pattern of figure 1 shows somewhat more dispersion in happiness among nations where economic freedom is low that among nations where economic freedom is high. This may be due to that fact that the latter nations are all western nations, which are very much alike. It may also mean that economic freedom works out more consistently on happiness at the higher level of freedom. The shape of the relationship appears to be linear there is no pattern of diminishing returns. That finding is discussed in more detail below.

#### *Political freedom and happiness*

Figure 2 presents a plot of political freedom (horizontal) against average happiness (vertical). Again a positive relationship emerges:  $r = +.54$ . The more political and civil rights are respected in a country, the happier its citizens tend to be. Zimbabwe (ZW) is again an example that of low freedom and happiness and Denmark (DK) a case of high freedom and high happiness. The number of countries in this analysis is lower than in the above case of economic freedom. N is 101.

In this plot, Venezuela (VE) is again an outlier, combining limited political freedom with a high degree of happiness. Likewise Saudi Arabia combined very low political freedom with a fair degree of happiness. Tanzania (TZ) and Taiwan (TW) are cases of moderate to fair political freedom and little happiness.

Note that the variation in this graph is greater than in the figures 1 and 3 and that the variation appears to the left as well as to the right. The dispersion at the left can be a method effect, since all western nation score maximally on this measure of political freedom.

The shape of the relationship is somewhat concave and suggests growing returns of freedom. Below I come back to that finding.

### *Private freedom and happiness*

Figure 3 presents the relationship between private freedom (horizontal) and average happiness (vertical). Once more we see a positive trend: the more private freedom in the country, the happier citizens are ( $r = +.57$ ). Zimbabwe (ZW) is again an exemplary combination of low freedom and low happiness, while the Netherlands (NL) stands out as a combination of high private freedom and high happiness. Note that this analysis is based on 82 nations.

Inspection of the scatter-gram shows a few outliers at the left. Private freedom is low in Malta (MK) and Pakistan (PK), while average happiness is above medium in these countries. On the right in Figure 3, Slovenia (SI) is a case of high private freedom that goes with a medium level of happiness. Private freedom is at the medium level in Latin American nations like Brazil (BR), Mexico (MX) and Venezuela (VE), but happiness is relatively high in these nations. Private freedom is also around the medium in the former communist countries, such as Armenia (AM) and Georgia (GE) but happiness is relatively low in these cases, probably as a result of the political turbulence in these countries.

Like in the case of economic freedom, there is less dispersion at the right of the scatter-gram than on the left. This means that a high level of private freedom predicts happiness a better than a low level of private freedom. The shape of the relationship is clearly linear in this case.

## **4.2 Which kind of freedom relates strongest to happiness?**

The strongest correlation in table 1 is between economic freedom and happiness (+.63), the next strongest correlation is between private freedom and happiness (+.58) and the least strong correlation is between political freedom and happiness (+.54). Yet all these correlations are 'strong' and in the same order as the correlations with economic development of the nation (+.69) and government effectiveness (+.75). The somewhat lower correlation with political freedom can be due to the lesser differentiation of the 2 to 14 scale, with its concentration of western nations in the highest category (cf. Figure 2).

As we have seen in section 2.4, the three kinds of freedom in nations tend to go together; section 2.4 reported inter-correlations ranging from +.58 to +.69. This begs the question of how the independent relations with happiness compare. The regression analysis reported in table 2 suggests that the separate effects of economic freedom and of

private freedom are equally strong (Beta +.30) and that the independent effect of political freedom is much smaller (Beta +.10). Together, these 3 kinds of freedom explain 44% of the variation in happiness in nations.

### 4.3 In which conditions?

Although it is generally acknowledged that the relationship between freedom and happiness is conditional, there is no clear opinion on the kind of contingencies involved. Two possibilities are explored below.

#### *Only in nations where people are capable to choose?*

It seems logical that the opportunity to choose adds to happiness only when accompanied by a capability to choose. Chances one cannot pick are of no help. Unfortunately, a good indicator of capability to choose is not available for the 126 countries at hand here<sup>1</sup>. Hence I use the level of education as a proxy and measured that with gross school-enrollment, data of which were found in the Human Development Report (UNDP 2007). Next I separated countries where the level of education is low from countries where the level of education is high (split at the median) and run the analysis in each sub-set separately. The findings are presented in table 3. The correlations are consistently positive, but tend to be lower in countries where the level of education is low than in nations where the level of education is high. The difference is particularly pronounced in the case of political freedom.

#### *Only in affluence?*

Another consideration is that freedom adds to happiness only among affluent nations. One reason may be that poor countries simply cannot afford the luxury of freedom, since all effort is dedicated to making ends meet. Another logic might be that freedom does not pay in poverty because there is little to choose. This theory was checked on the basis of a split at the median level of GDP per capita. The data are presented in table 4. The

correlations are consistently positive among poor and rich nations, but stronger in the latter than in the former. This could mean that freedom pay more in the conditions of developed societies.

#### **4.4 Limits to freedom in view?**

It is common knowledge that there are limits to freedom. Too much economic freedom will lead into relentless capitalism, too much political freedom will result in anarchy and too much personal freedom may give rise to anomy. Such results of too much freedom will reduce happiness and hence we can expect too much freedom will reflect in a decrease of happiness. If so, that will materialize statistically in a bending off of the regression line; first a leveling of that line indicative of diminishing returns and later a downward trend.

Let's now look back at the figures 1, 2 and 3. There is no such tendency in any of these scatter-grams. In the case of economic freedom we see a clear linear pattern (cf. figure 1) and we see a linear relationship in the case of private freedom as well (cf. Figure 3). In the case of political freedom, the pattern is not quite linear, but contrary to the expected pattern of diminishing returns we see a pattern of increasing returns, the best fitting line being concave rather than convex. This means that the limits of freedom are not in view as yet.

#### **4.5 Causal mechanisms**

The correlations in table 1 are sizable and at the bottom of table 2 we could see that freedom in these three fields explains 44% of the observed differences in average happiness in these 126 nations. Still it is not sure that freedom makes happiness, since the relationship could be largely spurious. If not spurious, the question is how freedom affects happiness

*Spurious correlation?*

Freedom is typically higher in modern industrial societies than in traditional agrarian

societies (Nolan & Lenski 1999) and it is an established fact that people live happier in the former kind of societies than in the latter (Veenhoven 2006). Hence it is possible that the observed correlations reflect the effect of societal modernization at large, rather than an effect of freedom specifically. In theory it is even possible that beneficial effects on happiness of wider modernization veil a negative effect of the freedom that accompanies societal modernization.

The wealth of a nation is a good proxy for its modernity and for that reason I assessed what correlation remains if GDP per head is partial led out. Table 5 shows that not much correlation is left, the partial correlations being about +.05. At first sight this suggests that the independent effect of freedom on happiness is minimal, and that the data merely show that freedom does not work out negatively on happiness. Yet another account for these findings is that freedom is so much intertwined with modernization that its effect on happiness cannot be separated statistically. In this line it is also possible that freedom affects happiness though other aspects of modernization, economic development in particular. This possibility is explored below.

### *Possible causal paths*

There is good evidence that economic freedom foster economic growth (ref) and there is also evidence that economic development fosters happiness (Veenhoven 1989, 2006). Hence economic freedom is likely to affect happiness in that way. This historical causation may reflect to some extent in present day variation of the variables concerned and that can be checked using path models. The following model shows a good fit indeed.

### *Path model 1*

economic freedom → economic development → happiness

Historically the political emancipation of the middle class was a major driver of economic freedom (e.g. Nolan & Lenski 1999) and today political freedom is still a force behind economic liberalization. This causal path reflects also in these cross-sectional data.

Path model 2

Political freedom → economic freedom → economic development → happiness

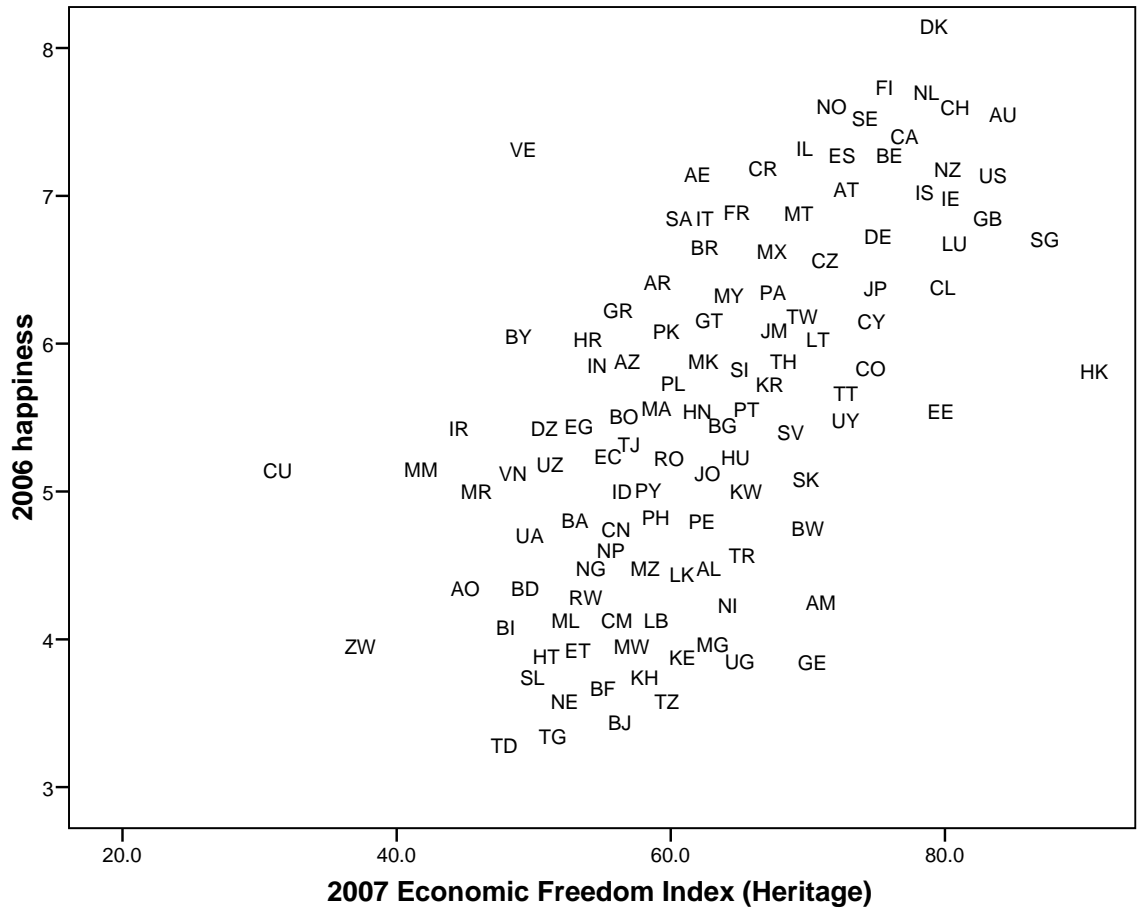
How could private freedom fit this picture? Possibly economic freedom and political freedom make way for private freedom, which on its turn adds to happiness by allowing a better fit between life-style and preferences.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusion is methodological: empirical research can settle this matter which philosophers could not solve. Both freedom and happiness can be measured across nations. Though measures are not ideal yet, and data limited, good evidence is feasible.

Substantive conclusions are: 1) Freedom goes with happiness. 2) This relationship is at least partly the result of causal effects of freedom on happiness. 3) There is no evidence of negative effects of freedom on happiness. 4) There are no indications either that freedom has gone too far in the freest nations of the present day world. 5) This holds for all three kinds of freedom; economic freedom, political freedom and private freedom. 6) This pattern seems to be universal, though freedom appears to be more conducive to happiness in the most developed nations..

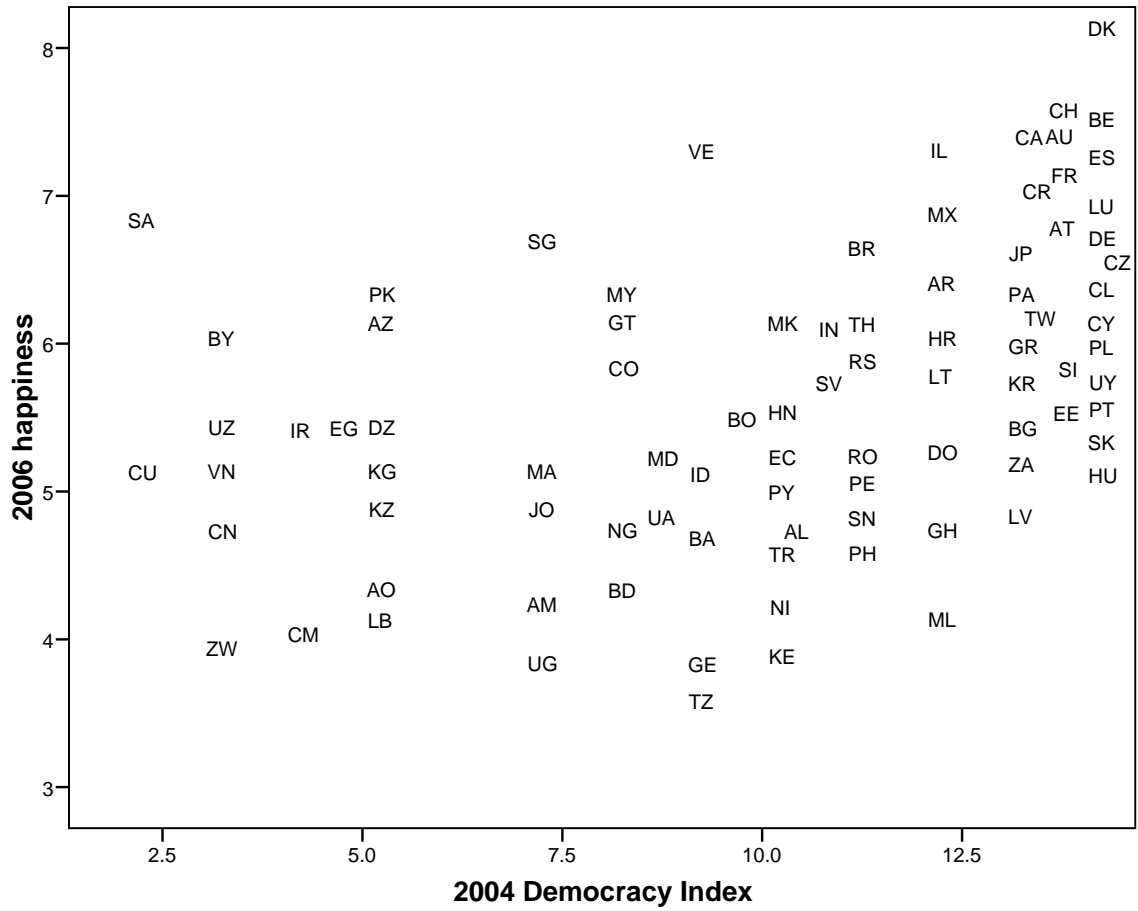
**Figure 1**  
Economic freedom and happiness



Data and nation codes on appendix 1

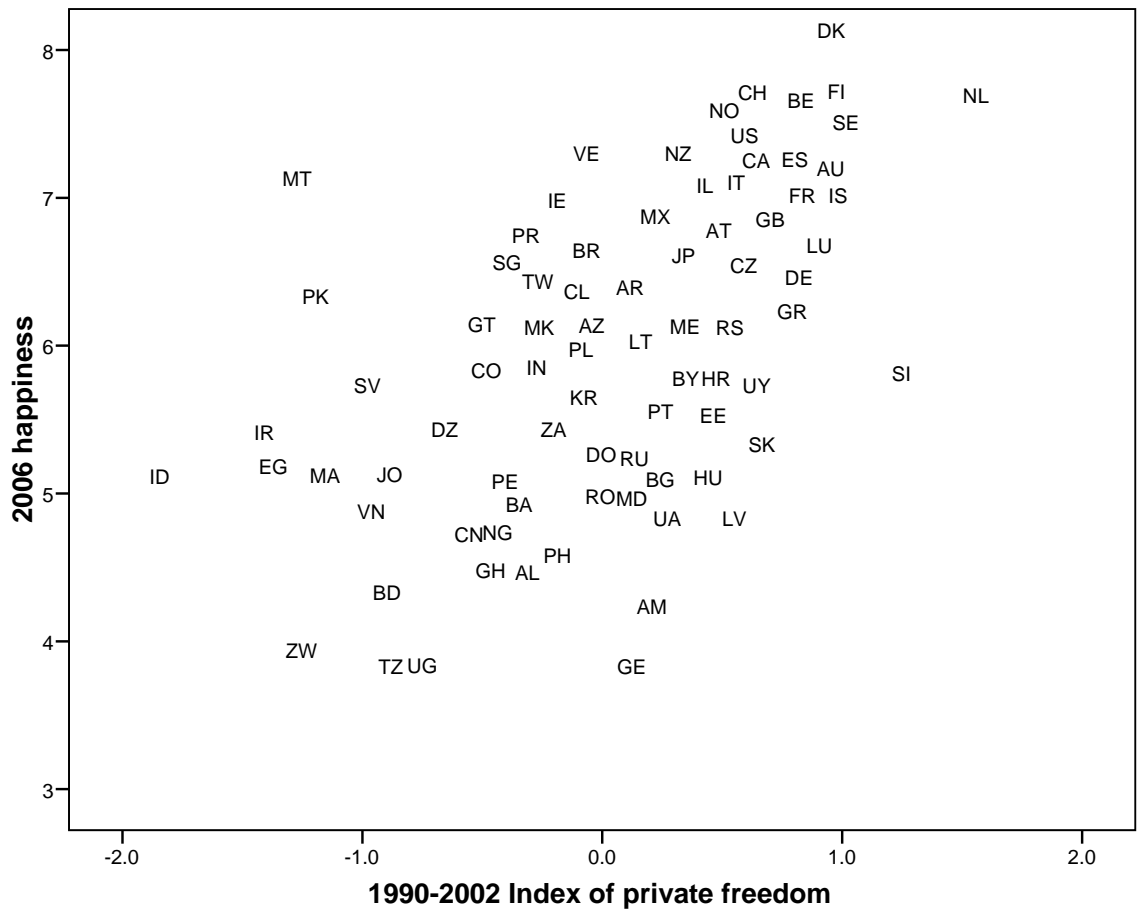


**Figure 2**  
Political freedom and happiness



Data and nation codes on appendix 1

**Figure 3**  
Private freedom and happiness



Data and nation codes on appendix 1

**Figure 4**  
**Path model**

**Table 1**  
**Happiness and freedom in 126 nations 2006: Zero-order correlations**

<b>Variants of freedom</b>	<b>Zero-order correlation with happiness</b>	<b>Number of nations</b>
Economic Freedom	$r = +.63$	126
Political Freedom	$r = +.55$	101
Private freedom	$r = +.57$	82

**Table 2**  
**Happiness and freedom in 126 nations 2006: independent effects**

<b>Variants of freedom</b>	<b>Regression coefficient with happiness dependent</b>	<b>Number of nations</b>
Economic Freedom	$\beta = +.33$	81
Political Freedom	$\beta = +.10$	81
Private freedom	$\beta = +.33$	81
<i>Explained variance</i>	$R^2 = .44$	

**Table 3****Freedom and happiness in 126 nations 2006: split-up by capability to choose**

Freedom variant	Correlation with happiness			
	Low education in nation		High education in nation	
	r	N	r	N
Economic freedom	+0.42	53	+0.51	69
Political freedom	+0.12	30	+0.54	66
Private freedom	+0.27	22	+0.51	55

**Table 4**  
**Freedom and happiness in 126 nations 2006: split-up by wealth of the nation**

Freedom variant	Correlation with happiness			
	Poor nations		Rich nations	
	r	N	r	N
Economic freedom	+ .22	74	+.41	47
Political freedom	+.15	53	+.20	45
Private freedom	+.16	46	+.47	41

**Table 5**  
**Happiness and freedom in 126 nations 2006:**

Variants of freedom	correlation with happiness	
	zero-order correlation	partial correlation wealth of nation controlled
Economic Freedom	$r = +.63$	$r_p = +.05$
Political Freedom	$r = +.55$	$r_p = +.05$
Private freedom	$r = +.57$	$r_p = +.06$



**Appendix 1**  
**Happiness and freedom in 126 nations 2006**

<b>Nation code</b>	<b>Nation name</b>	<b>Happiness 0-10</b>	<b>Economic freedom 0-100</b>	<b>Political freedom 2-14</b>	<b>Private freedom z-scores</b>
AE	United Arab Emirates	7,00	60,4	.	.
AL	Albania	4,60	61,4	6,0	-,31
AM	Armenia	4,10	69,4	9,0	,13
AO	Angola	4,20	43,5	11,0	.
AR	Argentina	6,27	57,5	4,0	,20
AT	Austria	6,90	71,3	2,0	,57
AU	Australia	7,40	82,7	2,0	,82
AZ	Azerbaijan	6,00	55,4	11,0	-,23
BA	Bosnia	4,80	54,7	7,0	-,26
BD	Bangladesh	4,20	47,8	8,0	-,98
BE	Belgium	7,39	74,5	2,0	,75
BF	Burkina Faso	3,80	55,0	.	.
BG	Bulgaria	5,30	62,2	3,0	,33
BI	Burundi	4,20	46,8	.	.
BJ	Benin		3,30	54,8	.
BO	Bolivia		5,36	55,0	6,0
BR	Brazil	6,51	60,9	5,0	-,15
BW	Botswana	4,60	68,4	.	.
BY	Belarus	5,90	47,4	13,0	,44
CA	Canada	7,40	78,7	2,0	,73
CH	Switzerland	7,45	79,1	2,0	,70
CL	Chile	6,24	78,3	2,0	-,19
CM	Cameroon	3,90	54,4	12,0	.
CN	China	4,60	54,0	13,0	-,48
CO	Colombia	5,95	73,0	8,0	-,40
CR	Costa Rica	7,04	65,1	2,0	.
CU	Cuba	5,00	29,7	14,0	.
CY	Cyprus	6,00	73,1	2,0	.
CZ	Czech Republic	6,42	69,7	2,0	,67
DE	Germany	6,58	73,5	2,0	,74
DK	Denmark	8,00	77,6	2,0	,87

DO	Dominican Republic	5,13	56,7	4,0	-,09
DZ	Algeria	5,30	52,2	11,0	-,74
EC	Ecuador	5,10	55,3	6,0	.
EE	Estonia	5,40	78,1	2,0	,38
EG	Egypt	5,30	53,2	11,0	-1,46
ES	España	7,13	70,9	2,0	,72
ET	Ethiopia	3,80	54,4	.	.
FI	Suomi	7,61	76,5	2,0	,90
FR	France	7,01	66,1	2,0	,92
GB	United Kingdom	6,97	81,6	2,0	,61
GE	Georgia	3,70	68,7	7,0	,04
GH	Ghana	4,60	58,1	4,0	-,56
GR	Greece	6,10	57,6	3,0	,71
GT	Guatemala	6,01	61,2	8,0	-,58
HK	Hong Kong	5,67	89,3	.	.
HN	Honduras	5,40	60,3	6,0	.
HR	Croatia	5,90	55,3	4,0	,39
HT	Haiti		3,76	52,2	.
HU	Hungary	5,23	66,2	2,0	,35
ID	Indonesia	5,00	55,1	7,0	-1,92
IE	Eire	7,10	81,3	2,0	-,25
IL	Israel	7,20	68,4	4,0	,48
IN	India	5,97	55,6	5,0	-,34
IR	Iran	5,30	43,1	12,0	-1,48
IS	Iceland	6,90	77,1	2,0	,91
IT	Italia	6,97	63,4	2,0	,53
JM	Jamaica	6,21	66,1	.	.
JO	Jordan	5,00	64,0	9,0	-,97
JP	Japan	6,49	73,6	3,0	,26
KE	Kenya	4,00	59,4	6,0	.
KG	Kyrgyzstan	5,00	59,9	11,0	.
KH	Cambodia	3,60	56,5	.	.
KR	Korea ,Republic of	5,60	68,6	3,0	-,27
KW	Kuwait	5,00	63,7.	.	.
KZ	Kazakhstan	5,00	60,4	11,0	.
LB	Lebanon	4,00	60,3	11,0	.
LK	Sri Lanka	4,30	59,3	.	.
LT	Lithuania	5,90	72,0	4,0	,08

LU	Luxembourg	6,80	79,3	2,0	,82
LV	Latvia	4,70	68,2	3,0	,48
MA	Morocco	5,00	57,4	9,0	-1,07
MD	Moldova	5,10	59,5	7,0	,12
ME	Montenegro	6,00	.	.	,26
MG	Madagascar	4,00	.61,4	.	
MK	Macedonia	6,00	60,8	6,0	-,35
ML	Mali	4,00	53,7	4,0	.
MR	Mauritania	5,00	53,2.	.	
MT	Malta	7,00	67,8	2,0	-1,36
MW	Malawi	3,80	55,5.	.	
MX	Mexico	6,74	65,8	4,0	,14
MY	Malaysia	6,20	65,8	8,0.	
MZ	Mozambique	4,60	56,6.	.	
NE	Niger		3,70	53,5	.
NG	Nigeria	4,60	52,6	8,0	-,52
NI	Nicaragua	4,10	62,7	6,0	.
NL	Nederland	7,56	77,1	2,0	1,48
NO	Norway	7,46	70,1	2,0	,42
NP	Nepal		4,60	54,0	.
NZ	New Zealand	7,30	81,6	2,0	,51
PA	Panama	6,20	65,9	3,0	.
PE	Peru	4,93	62,1	5,0	-,49
PH	Philippines	4,70	57,4	5,0	-,27
PK	Pakistan	6,20	58,2	11,0	-1,28
PL	Poland	5,85	58,8	2,0	-,17
PR	PuertoRico	6,62	.	.	-,25
PT	Portugal	5,43	66,7	2,0	,16
PY	Paraguay	4,86	56,8	6,0	.
QA	Qatar	.	60,7	.	.
RO	Romania	5,10	61,3	5,0	,07
RS	Serbia	6,00	.	5,0	,45
RU	Russia	5,10	54,0	11,0	,13
RW	Rwanda	4,40	52,1	.	.
SA	Saudi Arabia	6,70	59,1	14,0	.
SE	Sverige	7,38	72,6	2,0	,93
SG	Singapore	6,56	85,7	9,0	-,30
SI	Slovenia	5,70	63,6	2,0	1,17

SK	Slovak Republic	5,20	68,4	2,0	,58
SL	Sierra Leone	3,60	48,4	.	.
SN	Senegal	4,60	58,8	5,0	.
SV	El Salvador	5,60	70,3	5,0	-1,06
TD	Chad	3,40	46,4	.	.
TG	Togo		3,20	49,8	.
TH	Thailand	6,00	65,6	5,0	.
TJ	Tajikistan	5,10	56,9	.	.
TR	Turkey	4,70	59,3	6,0	-,49
TT	Trinidad Tobago	5,78	71,4	.	.
TW	Taiwan	6,30	71,1	3,0	-,42
TZ	Tanzania	3,70	56,4	7,0	-,96
UA	Ukraine	4,70	53,3	7,0	,19
UG	Uganda	3,70	63,4	9,0	-,83
US	United States	7,26	82,0	2,0	,51
UY	Uruguay	5,60	69,3	2,0	,56
UZ	Uzbekistan	5,30	52,6	13,0	.
VE	Venezuela	7,17	47,7	7,0	-,15
VN	Vietnam	5,00	50,0	13,0	-1,05
ZA	South Africa	5,30	61,1	3,0	-,28
ZM	Zambia	4,80	57,9	.	.
ZW	Zimbabwe	3,80	35,8	13,0	-,34

Data: World Database of Happiness, Data file 'States of nations'<sup>2</sup>

## REFERENCES

Bay, C. (1965)

*The structure of freedom*

Stanford University Press, Stanford CL, USA

Berg, M (2007)

*Inkomensongelijkheid en geluk in landen (Income inequality and happiness in nations)*

Mens en Maatschappij, 2007, Vol.82, 28-50

Cantril, H. (1965)

*The pattern of human concern*

Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, USA

Diener, E., Diener, M. & Diener, C. (1995)

*Factors predicting subjective wellbeing in nations*

Journal of personality and social psychology, vol 69, pp 851-864

Freedom House (2005)

*Freedom in the world 2005*

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/research>

Fromm, E. (1941)

*Escape from freedom*

Rhinehart, New York, USA

Headey, B. & Wearing, A. (1992)

*Understanding happiness: a theory of subjective wellbeing*

Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, Australia

Heritage Foundation (2008)

<http://www.heritage.org>

Nolan, P. & Lenski, G. (1999)

*Human societies: An introduction to macrosociology*

Paradigm Publishers, London, UK

Saris, W.E., Scherpenzeel, A.C., Veenhoven, R. & Bunting, B. (Eds) (1996)

*A comparative study of satisfaction with life in Europe*

Eotvos University Press, Budapest, Hungary

Smith

Schwartz, B. (2004)

*The paradox of choice. Why more is less*

HarperCollins, New York, USA

UN DP (2007)

*Human Development Report 2007*

United Nations Development Program, Oxford University Press

Veenhoven, R. (1984)

*Conditions of happiness*

Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht, Netherlands

Veenhoven, R. (1989)

*National wealth and individual happiness*

in Grunert, K.G. & Olander, F (eds) 'Understanding economic behavior', Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht, Netherlands pp 9-32

Veenhoven, R. (1996)

*Developments in satisfaction research*

Social Indicators Research, vol. 37, pp 1-46

Veenhoven, R. (1999)

*Quality-of-life in individualistic society: A comparison in 43 nations in the early 1990's*

Social indicators Research, 1999, vol. 48, pp157-186

Veenhoven, R. (2000)

*Well-being in the welfare state: Level not higher, distribution not more equitable*

Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis, 2000, vol. 2, pp 91-125

Veenhoven, R.(2006)

*Quality of life in modern society, Measured with Happy Life Years*

Published in: Yew-Kwang Ng & Lok Sang Ho (Eds.) 'Happiness and Public Policy, Theory, Case studies and Implications' Palgrave-Macmillan, New York, chapter 2

Veenhoven, R. (2007)

*Average happiness in 95 nations 1995-2005*, World Database of Happiness, Rank Report 2006-1d, Internet: [worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl](http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl)

Veenhoven, R. (2008)

*World Database of happiness, Continuous register of scientific research on subjective enjoyment of life*

Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Available at: <http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl>

Veenhoven, R. (2009)

*How do we assess how happy we are?*

To be published in: Dutt, A. & Radcliff, B. (eds.) Happiness, Economics and Politics, Edward Elger Publishers

World Value Survey

<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

## Notes

- 1 In an earlier study (Veenhoven 2000?) I constructed an index of ‘capability to choose’ consisting of 1) *inclination to choose* as measured with a) endorsement of individualist values and b) perceived fate-control, and *awareness of alternatives*, as measured with level of education. Data on 1a and 1b fall short in this larger set of nations.
- 2 This data file is available on request at [http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/statnat/statnat\\_fp.htm](http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/statnat/statnat_fp.htm)