Illness and Happiness in Global Contexts

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Illness  Happiness  Globalization
Illness
Infection rate of Hong Kong
For each country,
\[ \ln(\text{# of new case on Day N}) \sim a + b \times \ln(\text{# of total confirmed cases}) \]
Infection rate

Accelerating
Speeding up

Decelerating
Slowing down
Illness

Globalization
In general, globalized entities speed up, but there are exceptions ....
Illness: How can I prevent it?
An infection is preventable if you...

“wash hands more often; use alcohol-based hand sanitizer more often; wear a face mask; avoid social events; avoid public transport; eat out less; touch your face less; shop for groceries less; cooking at home more; stay home, work from work ...”
Coronavirus: Italy charges 50,000 people with breaching lockdown, including priests

Zoe Tidman | Friday 20 March 2020 18:16
Sander van der Linden and David Spiegelhalter at the University of Cambridge

They collected data from 8 countries: USA, UK, Italy, Spain, Germany, Australia, Mexico, and Sweden.

Most of these countries have high number of confirmed cases.

About 700 participants from each country participated in the study between March 19, 2020 and March 29, 2020. The total sample size is 5,598
Number of preventive actions taken:

“Which of the following steps, if any, have you taken in the last month to prepare for the possibility of many cases of the coronavirus/COVID-19 in your community? (No. of steps taken)

• washing hands more often
• using alcohol-based hand sanitizer more often
• wearing a face mask
• avoiding social events
• avoiding public transport
• eating out less
• touching your face less
• shopping for groceries less
• cooking at home more
• staying home from work extra supplies
Common good vs. personal freedom

Mean of five items

• “The government interferes far too much in our everyday lives” (reverse)
• “Sometimes government needs to make laws that keep people from hurting themselves.”
• “It's not the government's business to try to protect people from themselves” (reverse)
• “The government should stop telling people how to live their lives.” (reverse)
• "The government should do more to advance society's goals, even if that means limiting the freedom and choices of individuals."
• “Government should put limits on the choices individuals can make so they don't get in the way of what's good for society.”
• “I think the response in the past few weeks was putting too many restrictions on people.” (reverse)
Country
Australia common good vs. personal freedom
1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0
preventive behaviors
Germany 2.5 4.0 5.5 7.0
Italy
Mexico 2.5
4.0
5.5
7.0
Spain
Sweden
UK
USA
preventive behaviors
common good vs. personal freedom
important to do things for the benefit of others and society even if they have some costs to you personally

Country

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preventive behaviors

important to do things for the benefit of others and society even if they have some costs to you personally
Illness: How can WE prevent it?
French police fine over 4,000 people for violating lockdown

French police control people and evacuate the beach in Pornichet near La Baule as a lockdown is imposed to slow the rate of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in France, March 18, 2020. REUTERS/Stephane Mahe
Infection rate by Individualism
Sized by # of days into the disease

Individualism:
Put personal goals before common good
Happiness

Globalization
Incidentally, what is happiness?
Beyond Hedonism: Eudaimonic Happiness
Prosocial spending makes people happy almost everywhere in the world

Dunn et al., 2014
WHERE AM I GOING?
WHAT AM I DOING?
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
I am a taker
My life is meaningful?
r = -.07

I am a giver
My life is meaningful!
r = .32

I help the needy
My life is meaningful!
r = .23
Meaning gives you good health

Meaning Is Healthier Than Happiness

People who are happy but have little-to-no sense of meaning in their lives have the same gene expression patterns as people who are enduring chronic adversity.
Fig. 2. Expression of the CTRA gene set. (A) Linear model-based estimates of mean difference (±SEM) in expression in a 53-gene CTRA contrast score in PBMCs from individuals with low levels (−2 SD relative to sample mean) vs. high levels (+2 SD) of hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being (each adjusting for the other and for demographic and behavioral covariates). (B) Differential expression of CTRA subcomponents: 19 proinflammatory genes, 31 type I IFN response genes, and three antibody synthesis genes.

A functional genomic perspective on human well-being
