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Essay 1 Topic: Happiness or the Pursuit Itself?

As opposed to preferences, I am choosing to focus on happiness as discussed in class. More specifically, I would like to explore the ideas within the article “The Futile Pursuit of Happiness.” Within that article, the writer explains that an economist working with a psychologist are discovering how people are unable to accurately predict how they will feel about the outcome of a future situation. Basically, we as humans attempt to use cardinal preferences when ranking bundles but it is usually wrong. If we are unable to accurately predict how we will feel after making a decision, how can we accurately predict what bundles will maximize our utility?

Additionally, I would like to explore the research on the feeling we have during the pursuit in contrast with our feelings of the outcome. One article explains how drug addicts typically hate using the drugs but they enjoy the intense feeling while they are attempting to buy the drugs. Why do people state during rational calm they would not have unprotected sex, yet in the heat of the moment they will? Do these two situations relate to one another?

Personally, I don’t think people look too deeply into the statement, “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” I think people think of happiness being the end, but I am starting to wonder if it is the pursuit part that makes them happy. Is it more fun to imagine being a millionaire, or being a millionaire? So, since I want to focus on the pursuit part I would like to include that in my title. I was thinking something along the lines of, “Find contentment in Your Pursuit.”
Ideas

The Futile Pursuit of Happiness (R)

Is the pursuit of happiness more about the pursuit or happiness itself?

Happiness is a Warm Gun (R)

Ordinal preferences mean we can rank bundles but do not know the intensity of differences.

Cardinal preferences mean we can give a value of intensity to our likes and dislikes.

Does each individual have a fixed level of happiness that they can only temporarily deviate from?

Miswanting and drug use. For drug addicts, is their addiction to the feeling during the pursuit of the drugs, or the time during the usage itself?

Economics and Happiness (R)

Happiness and Economic Performance (R)

Is happiness rising with a rising real income? The data suggests happiness is rising, but not at similar levels of the national real income. Therefore the data may conclude that rising income does not have a large impact on happiness.

1 in 5 patients to be admitted to hospitals in Britain is due to para-suicide (attempted suicide).

Are people overestimating how terrible the future will be in the same way one would overestimate their happiness with a new BMW?
Is a suicide attempt made in the intense state people are in when they chose not to wear a condom during sex? Or are they in a calm rational state? Does it matter? Can they still not precisely determine the well being of their future?

A Happiness Index with a Long Reach (To be read)

Cardinalism and Interpersonal Capability (To be read)

Frame of reference as a Public Good (To be read)