

contexts for four decades, and this depth of knowledge makes her particularly well-placed to reflect on questions of how and why people's experiences so often diverge from their expectations. An important part of her answer is that expectations of community are unrealistically high. She suggests that utopian aspirations of harmonious, supportive and fulfilling social relationships are rooted in deep-seated traditions of social thought going back to the ancients. Such ideals are open to reinforcement by clever marketing, as is the case with the particular community of Twin Rivers, New Jersey, on which her book concentrates. People were attracted to this planned development from the 1970s onwards by the promise of a fresh start to their lives in a new environment, and at several points in the book their situation is discussed in terms of the unmistakably American imagery of pioneers and the frontier. But in reality Twin Rivers was settled by people who sought a comfortable suburban base from which they (or at least the male heads of household amongst them) could commute to New York or Philadelphia. (It is also within easy striking distance of Princeton, Keller's University.) Describing Twin Rivers as 'this ex-potato field' (p. 66), Keller traces how 'the lure of community' (p. 281) was assisted by the term's vagueness and the somewhat naive optimism that characterized the people who moved in: 'They seemed to believe that the purchase of a townhouse was an automatic ticket to community' (p. 237). The bulk of the book is devoted to telling the story of how community relations did emerge, but emphasizing that they did so by a much more difficult path than the people who bought into the project imagined would be the case.

The fact that community relationships evolve over a lengthy period and the suspicion that people's understandings of community processes are susceptible to romanticism make it necessary for research methods to be selected with care. Keller's book benefits from being based on a longitudinal study over three decades, and

thereby sidesteps the criticism frequently made of community studies that 'time is rarely systematically dealt with' (p. 282). The inclusion of material generated from surveys of residents from 1975 to 1999 allows Keller to convey the dynamic nature of community development, and the inclusion of the survey schedule as an appendix is instructive for those readers looking for guidance about how to carry out such research. Alongside survey data the book also draws on observations (including participant observations), and material drawn from local newspapers (Twin Rivers being, it would appear, populated by its fair share of campaigning letter writers). Keller also notes that 'photography proved a useful ally of research' (p. 163), and the book includes mood-setting pictures at the start of each chapter. If respondents experience difficulty in articulating 'community' in interview settings, a useful alternative is to 'find ways to observe what it is that they do' (p. 287). What these various methods combined are able to convey with great vividness is that everyday life is mundane, the sort of thing that motivates people to set up 'The Committee for a Reasonable Pool Policy' (pp. 93–4) or to organize 'Husband Appreciation Night' (p. 113). Such activities are just as much the stuff of 'community' as are the high-minded ideals to which abstract rhetorical appeals are made.

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Layard, R. **Happiness: Lessons From a New Science** Allen Lane 2005 310 pp.
£17.99 (hardback)

The level of material comfort experienced by the average person in Western nations today is roughly equivalent to how the top 5 per cent lived a half century ago. In 1940, for example, one-third of all homes in the USA did not have running water, an indoor toilet, or a bath, and more than half had no central heating. Today, the typical house has not only running water, two or more baths, and

central heating, but is twice the size, with an average of two rooms per person, and comes equipped with microwave ovens, dishwashers, color televisions, DVD players, and personal computers. And real monthly personal income has more than doubled. Yet, when asked to rate their overall satisfaction with life, Americans in 1940 reported being 'very happy', with an average score of 7.5 out of 10. Today, their average rating is 7.2.

So, people are better off financially, but not emotionally. They are much richer, but not any happier. This 'progress paradox' lies at the centre of Richard Layard's thoughtful and engaging book, *Happiness: Lessons From a New Science*. An economist and member of the House of Lords, Layard brings an interdisciplinary perspective to *The Problem* (Part I) – that is, 'If we are so rich,' to quote Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 'why aren't we happy?' – and to *What Can Be Done?* (Part II). Interweaving a variety of subjects and disciplines – most prominently psychology, but also neuroscience, sociology, social policy, economics, and philosophy – he incisively analyses the limitations of mainstream economics in its understanding of what makes people happy. Notably, however, Layard presses beyond mere criticism by offering solutions – providing practical suggestions for how to place happiness at the core of social and economic policy.

Economists and policy makers have assumed that financially better off citizens are happier, thus focusing their policy recommendations on increasing GDP and ignoring the 'true' causes of happiness, which lie in such ineffable qualities as the magic of family life, the value of being a community member, and the fulfillment of a job well done. Also ignored have been the potent cognitive processes that rob people of the potential happiness to be gained from material riches – namely, hedonic adaptation (becoming accustomed to the big new house), escalating expectations (desiring an even bigger mansion), and social comparisons (feeling that one's home is inferior to the next-door neighbour's). Although the

economists' assumption is partly true – happiness and money are somewhat correlated – happiness, Layard argues, should not be equated with income or purchasing power. His arguments are powerful and important, and the world would be a better place if his proposals are read widely and penetrate public policy.

Although the science of happiness has been around for decades, only recently has its growing sophistication captured the attention of academics in disciplines outside psychology, not to mention self-help gurus and the media. This contribution by a prominent economist is a must-read, for several reasons. First, it is characterized by a lucid and appealing writing style – accessible to the layperson, but without loss of seriousness or complexity. Second, instead of ruminating about the problem of how to increase a society's happiness, Layard devotes fully half of the book to laying out multiple, detailed recommendations, from an economic and social policy perspective. Finally, although not trained in psychology, he gets the psychological literature exactly right.

Layard puts faith in Jeremy Bentham's Greatest Happiness principle, his call to 'create all the happiness you are able to create; remove all the misery you are able to remove'. This is a worthwhile goal, perhaps the most worthwhile goal of all.

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Munck, R. Globalization and Social Exclusion: A Transformationalist Perspective Kumarian Press, Inc. 2004
224 pp. £15.95 (paperback)

At first glance, this book appears to be yet another addition to the ever-expanding literature on the diverse and contested nature of 'globalization'. Indeed, there are the familiar discussions of the expansion of global capitalism, new forms of communication technologies and challenges to the nation-state, but Munck combines these with a foregrounding of issues around social exclusion