

Community Quality-of-Life and Well-Being

Scott Cloutier

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Melanie Weaver *Editors*

Linking Sustainability and Happiness

Theoretical and Applied Perspectives

 Springer

Community Quality-of-Life and Well-Being

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Linking Sustainability and Happiness: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives



Scott Cloutier, Sara El-Sayed, Allison Ross, and Melanie Weaver

Welcome

Hello Friend!

Thank you for taking the time to pick up or link to this book. When we set out on this journey, the intention was to integrate scientific evidence, spiritual aspects, traditional knowledge, mysticism and other means and methods of exploring the links between sustainability and happiness. What has been delivered is an exciting array of studies from an international group of scholars that support prior findings, open new inquiries, acknowledge limitations, and suggest a bright future for sustainability and happiness research. What we can offer you is a toolkit for using the book to inform your own interests in sustainability and happiness research. First, we ask you to relax your mind to make space for questions that emerge from other ways of thinking, knowing, and being. Some of the ideas posed within the book are likely familiar to you, and others are very likely not—notice the spaces of resistance, inquiry, and knowing you hold, as they are valuable teachers. Second, we ask you to open your heart to the possibilities that relating sustainability and happiness can produce. There is a deeply knowing place that rests within the heart space as an important contributor to this conversation and exploration within the pages of the volume. Finally, we request your humility and appreciation as we thank our contributing scholars for

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putting together a shared space of open inquiry and exploration of a relationship that is inherently important to humanity's future with our teacher and guide, Mother Earth.

With Love,
Scott, Sara, Ali, and Melanie

1.1 An Honoring

Before we delve into the introduction of the book, we want to honor all the beings before us that have contributed to and explored this space. Our work is in no means beyond these works, even with seemingly new findings. We see the book as a contribution to our responsibility to be aligned with our planet and an opportunity to (re)align with our ancestors to find a shared path toward sustainability and happiness.

Below, we will contextualize our terms of interest, as well as some of their purported linkages, as the terms are more deeply defined in the included chapters. The sections within this introduction are not exhaustive, in any way, and are more fodder for the future of what possibilities may come when bringing sustainability and happiness research together. We seek to push the edge of what is commonly discussed and cited, opening the field to new ways of knowledge (re)generation and being.

1.2 What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is a word that generates more questions than answers, as it should be. While many individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions acknowledge we are pushing the limits of our shared planet, no universal definition of sustainability or means of putting it into action has been agreed upon. Perhaps one of the most often cited is that from the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), defining sustainable development as a general responsibility for our future generations' needs, while thinking more deeply about our own. The definition is useful in a sense, yet, it is limited by its lack of acknowledgment of the many prior cultures, places and their nuances (Schilling, 2018) from which sustainability is derived—as are many papers citing the definition. Specifically, the Brundtland Report definition is built upon the work of cultures that were better attuned to natural systems, reciprocal living with the systems that support human life, and humanity's responsibility to a planet shared with all our kin (LaDuke, 2005) (e.g., the beaver people, the hummingbird people, the Wind, and Father Sun). Interestingly, the Brundtland definition was borne from a group of people struggling to live sustainably and on the path, perhaps, to becoming more disconnected from Mother Earth than anytime in humanity's short window of existence. And, while not romanticizing past cultures who certainly worked with overconsumption and

unsustainability, there are great offerings from lessons they learned. For instance, the Iroquois Nation and its Great Law of Peace (Williams, 2018) is often credited for thinking about Seven Generations ahead when making current decisions that require resources. Other indigenous teachers have emerged reminding us of our responsibility to Mother Earth as stewards, caretakers, and beings observing and adhering to the law of nature (Lyons, 1991, 2016). Such people and nations serve as our elders, our teachers, and our leaders from which we can derive wisdom and knowledge to move toward a sustainable future.

In general, we suggest that sustainability can be thought of as both a noun and a verb. The former begets a destination where humanity lives in a reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth, honoring and acknowledging our reliance on her. It is a place where a concept like regenerative development, or learning from and attuning to land's natural rhythms to cultivate abundance, is the norm. More, it is a place where traditional knowledge is (re)learned and passed onto our children and children's children in written word, yes, but also in song, prayer, practice, and many forms of creative expression.

Sustainability as a verb is a process of exploration, growth and renegotiations. It touches on a spiritual (re)connection with the laws of nature and rhythms of Mother Earth. There is a myriad of pathways to finding this (re)connection, coming from any combination of intellect, heart, and spirit. In itself, sustainability verb is the process of reaching sustainability noun. What is important, is not how the verb is actualized—it is more important toward what the process is moving. The intellect is invaluable here, as it can generate great interactions and interventions that honor sustainability noun. We suggest that our work, as academic scholar practitioners, is to create the spaces where noun can be (re)visioned and verb can be (re)aligned with moving toward that space. Our book is an offering toward such an approach.

1.3 What is Happiness?

Ah, the age-old question that has been explored for thousands of years. A seemingly endless pool of happiness research and definitions exist but, for the purposes of brevity, we will leave this to the chapters within. Generally, we, the editors, refer to happiness as a sense of wellbeing grounded in a life of joy and contentment. Much like sustainability, the term can be thought of as both a noun and a verb. Happiness noun is also a destination, and we suggest that this space might not be far off from the sustainability noun space. In other words, we suggest happiness noun is a place that focuses on regeneration from connection with natural systems and a reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth and all her beings. Happiness verb, on the other hand, is the process of moving toward noun. We clarify this relationship with what has been referred to as two distinct forms of happiness (Deci & Ryan, 2008): hedonia and eudaimonia.

Hedonia, simply put, is pleasure. Cloutier (editor 1) has long purported that hedonia is a significant contributor to our shared lack of sustainability, in the sense

that dominant society has created an array of pleasurable experiences—and we are all complicit. In short, the archetypal modern human can find numerous forms of pleasure close at hand. Such a design has many implications, the most significant of which is overconsumption feeding into climate change. More, the happiness derived from a life of short-term dopamine spikes can be an arduous path from which long-term happiness is not found. Both our biological machinery and spiritual hunger reinforce this idea. The former is connected to biological concepts of habituation and adaptation—as we obtain the same form of pleasure, our reinforcing physiological signals become weaker, encouraging the seeking of more and new forms of pleasure. The idea has been referred to as the hedonic treadmill (Lyubomirsky, 2011). The latter, spiritual hunger, is what underlies our desires to find pleasure in the forms of soft (i.e. technology, video games, overeating) and hard (i.e. drugs, alcohol) addictions. In essence, we seek deeper human experiences like community, connection, and feeling loved, and temper these deeper needs with short term pleasure gains. Such experiences touch on the edge of eudaimonia or, simply, happiness derived as meaning and purpose. Eudaimonia is a happiness that, when fully activated (through meaningful relationships, time in nature, time volunteering, and being of service etc.), may reduce our dependence on the planet through longer lasting experiences of happiness and the reduced need to consume and put excessive demands on our planet.

1.4 Sustainability and Happiness Linked

A limited number of studies have directly linked sustainability and happiness (Cloutier et al., 2020; Cloutier et al., 2017; Cloutier & Pfeiffer, 2015; O'Brien, 2013; O'Brien, 2008; Zidanssek, 2007) and the intention of this book is to broaden the number of studies that do. It is also the intention to bring together a collaborative working group of academic scholar practitioners moving sustainability and happiness research forward. Simply, for the purposes of our introduction, we suggest that sustainability noun, a destination ripe with regeneration, and happiness noun, a destination ripe with nourishing experiences, are not far off from one another. Consequently, happiness and sustainability verbs can be thought of as complementary processes to actualize a sustainable future. We will not go deeply into these relationships, as our contributors have brilliant perspectives of their own to share. A quick summary of our contributed chapters is shared next.

1.4.1 Volume Contributions

As the title of the book states, we sought contributions linking happiness and sustainability from theoretical and/or applied perspectives. The idea behind such a divide was two-fold: (1) to provide space for refined and new theories that expand the way

happiness and sustainability are related, and (2) to open space for applied research and practical perspectives. The volume has been divided as such, with the first section comprising four chapters of theoretical perspectives, and the second section comprising six chapters of applied perspectives. In total, our book and its contributions represent a diversity of countries, cultures, and approaches. Many “traditional” perspectives are covered in our book and new ones are introduced, including double dividend, regeneration, community productivity, buddhist sustainable development, and more. The chapters are briefly summarized below.

Theoretical perspectives:

- (1) *Achieving Community Happiness and Well-being through Community Productivity* by Maria Spiliotopoulou and Mark Roseland: makes a convincing case that community happiness can be achieved through a holistic perspective of enhanced community productivity and quality of life.
- (2) *Sustainability and Happiness as “Promoting Life”* by Jacob Bethem: suggests that “promoting life” supports both happiness and sustainability, while exploring what the value of life is.
- (3) *Buddhist Sustainable Development: Inner Happiness as a Direction for Sustainable Development* by Sauwalak Kittiprapas: posits Buddhist Sustainable Development (BSD), where inner happiness adjustments, rather than external interventions, are central to achieving sustainable and happy individuals and communities.
- (4) *Mahatma Gandhi’s Sarvodaya (Welfare for All) as a Way to End Violence and Achieve Happy, Sustainable Societies* by Jorge Guardiola: details *Sarvodaya* as a means of moving toward a sustainable and happy future for all beings.

Applied perspectives:

- (1) *Where is the double dividend? The Relationship Between Different Types of Pro-environmental Behavior and Different Conceptions of Subjective Well-being* by Nazaret Ibáñez-Rueda and Jorge Guardiola Wanden-Berghe: assesses the relationship between pro-environmental behaviors and subjective well-being amongst university students.
- (2) *Are the Sustainable Development Goals the Compass for a Happier Society?* by Leire Iriarte from *El Buen Vivir*: explores how the SDGs and various environmental indicators interact with the happiness and well-being measures at the country level and reflects on some of the implications.
- (3) *Are Turkish Housewives Happy? A Qualitative Approach* by Shoirakhon Nurdinova: identifies interesting factors affecting women’s decisions to participate in the labor market, or not.
- (4) *Inner Happiness and Environmental Preservation in a Green-Space Community* by Sauwalak Kittiprapas: investigates happiness and sustainable development (environmental preservation) relationships in Thailand.
- (5) *How Sustainable is Mobility in Cities Branded the Happiest?* by Alshimaa Aboelmakarem Farag: explores the relationships between happiness indices and sustainable mobility measures in the world’s happiest cities.

- (6) *Linking Subjective Wellbeing and Pro-Environmental Behaviour: A Multi-dimensional Approach* by Christian Krekel and Alberto Prati: explores the relationship between happiness and pro environmental behavior.

You will hear more from us within the concluding chapter. We hope you enjoy the book and the many perspectives within, and glean as much information, knowledge, and wisdom as we did while putting it together.

With Love,
The Editors.

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Chapter 2

Achieving Community Happiness and Well-Being Through Community Productivity



Maria Spiliotopoulou and Mark Roseland

Abstract Since the middle of the twentieth century, social isolation and unhappiness rates have been increasing almost in parallel with an increase in house sizes and material possessions. Is there a way to develop a happy community with a high quality of life and well-being? We propose that it is possible to tackle the realities of individual and community isolation through whole systems thinking coupled with improvements in the quality of life, with less stuff, enhanced social connections, and ideally reduced and more efficient resource use. In this chapter, we discuss the need to transition from current sustainable community development theory and practice towards a productive and regenerative community. Following a brief review of the emerging concept of community productivity, we argue that achieving community happiness and well-being is possible through increased productivity of multiple, tangible and intangible, community assets.

Keywords Sustainable communities · Community productivity · Community development · Community well-being

2.1 Introduction

A happiness-related paradox is often cited in the literature: rich, developed-world communities facing increasing rates of depression and life dissatisfaction. Although referring to a controversial and multi-faceted debate, a diminishing returns relationship between happiness and income can be found in today's highly urbanized society (Frey, 2018). To paraphrase *The Doors'* song *People are Strange*, people seem strange, ugly, and wicked when we feel strange, alone or unwanted. More and more urban dwellers report feeling like this every day, regardless of their income or house

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size. Since the middle of the twentieth century, social isolation and unhappiness rates in western societies have been increasing almost in parallel with the increase in house sizes and material possessions. Is there a way to develop a happy community with high quality of life and well-being? We propose that it is possible to tackle such issues through whole systems thinking coupled with improvements in the quality of life, with less attachment to material products, enhanced social connections, and ideally reduced and more efficient resource use. The links between such enhancements in quality of life, well-being, and the concept of community productivity—which advocates for systems thinking in community policy and development—will be elaborated on below.

In section two we provide information on the methods used for this chapter and in section three, we briefly explain why a transition from current sustainable community development theory and practice is necessary. In section four, we present the emerging concept of community productivity and we provide examples of relevant metrics and current initiatives from around the world. Finally, in section five, we argue that achieving community happiness and well-being is possible through increased multi-factor productivity.

2.2 Methods

To explore the issues associated with sustainable community development and the transition to productive community development, we first studied academic articles through a traditional, theoretical literature review process. Starting with seminal academic work on sustainable community development and urban sustainability, we expanded the search through Simon Fraser University Library's search tool¹ using search terms such as *urban sustainability debates*, *local sustainability case studies*, *urban systems theory*, *urban sustainability frameworks*, *urban metabolism*, *urban governance*, *urban resilience*, *urban resource productivity*, *social productivity*, *ecological productivity*, *urban regeneration*, *regenerative sustainability*, and *sharing economy*.

In an iterative way and concurrently with the scholarly literature review, we also consulted non-academic sources such as scientific reports, non-governmental and international organization documents, handbooks, websites, and edited books. All references were evaluated for credibility and soundness, in terms of author, publication venue, content, and methodology. This chapter provides a succinct review of conceptual influences and limitations in sustainability and in productivity theory and practice, and demonstrates interdisciplinary influences as they pertain to the goal of increasing community happiness and well-being.

¹ The current web link for the SFU library's search tool is: <https://sfu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?vid=SFUL&sortby=rank>.

2.3 From Community Sustainability to Community Productivity

Sustainable development (SD) emerged after the 1987 Brundtland Commission report showed the interconnectedness between human activities and increasing environmental degradation: 26% of the world's population living in developed countries consumed 80–86% of non-renewable resources and 34–53% of food products (WCED, 1987). SD has since represented a new way of thinking about economic development: *doing development differently* (Roseland, 2012). This view is reflected in important international agreements, such as the UN global development agenda for 2030, the 2015 UN (Paris) Climate Change agreement, and the UN New Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2015a, 2015b, 2017).

Our research focus is sustainability at the community level, particularly the complex, adaptive, and interconnected urban systems that require interdisciplinary study (Uphoff, 2014). An urban area is “a human settlement characterized—ecologically, economically, politically and culturally—by a significant infrastructural base; a high density of population, whether it be as denizens, working people, or transitory visitors; and what is perceived to be a large proportion of constructed surface area relative to the rest of the region”(James, 2015).

The UN Global Agenda for 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals) includes a goal for *inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable* cities, since cities occupy 3–4% of the world's land surface, use 80% of resources, discharge most global waste, are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impact and health challenges such as depression, and will be host to two thirds of the world's population by 2050 (Girardet, 2015; UN DESA, 2018). The growing awareness that achieving sustainability requires societal change through collaborative decision-making and community engagement has brought sustainable community development (SCD) to the foreground (Clarke, 2012; Hermans et al., 2011).

SCD is a holistic approach that integrates social, environmental, and economic considerations into the dynamic processes and actions of communities on their path toward sustainability, while providing for current and future generations (Berke & Conroy, 2000; Roseland, 2012). In its early steps, SCD was mostly influenced by weak sustainability approaches that champion human domination over nature and infinite economic growth and advise cities to increase their economic output through technology, innovation, and capital accumulation (Ayres, 2007; Solow, 1993; Williams & Millington, 2004).

However, SCD theory has been gradually moving toward a stronger sustainability model which acknowledges the finite character of natural resources and the need for socio-ecological and economic resilience, thus encouraging cities to reduce their resource extraction and consumption (Meerow et al., 2016; Williams & Millington, 2004). SCD has in recent years expanded its scope to embrace stronger sustainability concepts such as social, green, and circular economy, just and collective action, local resilience, and self-reliance (Agyeman, 2008; Connelly et al., 2013; Folke, 2006; Jackson & Victor, 2011; Robinson & Cole, 2015). Despite the conceptual

evolution though, community sustainability policies and initiatives have not always involved a balanced application of environmental, economic, and social principles, as reflected in the variety of local agendas and tools grounded in diverse theoretical backgrounds and frequently reflecting specific stakeholders' interests (Joss et al., 2015; Roseland & Spiliotopoulou, 2017).

In pursuit of their well-being, communities are challenged by the difficulties of addressing multiple objectives, thinking strategically and holistically about high-level goals, meaningfully engaging their citizens, and assessing progress consistently (Caprotti et al., 2017; Connelly et al., 2013). SCD requires fundamental changes to the status quo to stop *sustaining* an ill-functioning and unsustainable system with business-as-usual operations driven by growth, in favour of achieving meaningful improvements to community health, happiness, and well-being (Roseland & Spiliotopoulou, 2017).

We suggest that a way to address a wide range of current community sustainability issues is through a transition from the current demand-driven, resource-extracting model to a systemic, resource-productive model of a sustainable city. This transition involves shifting community development from a negative individualistic logic (reducing impact) to a positive systemic one (regeneration of all types of resources within a network of systems) so that the system we *sustain* thereafter is a well-functioning one (Brugmann, 2015; Girardet, 2015).

During this shift to systemic development, community, people, and environment would be involved in a co-evolutionary process, engaging all related systems, sub-systems, and stakeholders (Neuman, 2005). Communities that are planned using strong sustainability principles can lead to increases in human, social, resource, and process productivity; improved urban assets performance and systemic interactions; ecological function regeneration; efficient use of resources; and ultimately happiness and well-being (Brugmann, 2015; Girardet, 2015). In the next section we will explain how looking at community development through the conceptual lens of productivity can provide both a bridge linking personal and collective development, and tools to benefit planning for and achieving community happiness and well-being.

2.4 Happiness and Well-Being in a Productive Community

2.4.1 *The Interdisciplinary Concept of Community Productivity*

Community development—particularly in urban settings—has for a long time focused on reducing impact and risk; for instance, the origins of urban sprawl date to when people needed to address serious health and safety risks and polluted city centres (Neuman, 2005). Today, this focus should be shifting to the development of sustainable and resilient communities which still need to address problems such as growing rates of urbanisation, environmental degradation, extensive resource use,

and decreasing subjective well-being. Cultivating, attaining, and sustaining well-being is a process with many parallels to SCD and community productivity, an emerging SCD concept that is forward-looking, acknowledges the systemic nature of the community as a living system, and, in addition to solving problems, focuses on achieving positive outcomes for individual and community well-being.

Conceptually, holistic community productivity is informed by numerous theories and approaches and is multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary, as we will present in this section while linking the approaches and dimensions with community happiness and well-being. The community productivity approach is grounded in strong sustainability principles and seeks maximisation and regeneration of the various forms of community capital. These forms represent the tangible and intangible assets and aspects of a community beyond the traditional triple-bottom line of SD. SCD incorporates natural, physical, economic, human, social, and cultural dimensions of community development (Roseland, 2012) and happiness is part of what the World Bank calls *intangible capital residual* or *intangible assets* (Hamilton & Liu, 2013).

The concept of productivity is usually associated with economic activities and there is extensive research on *economic and labour productivity*. For instance, this type of productivity is higher in cities that attract agglomeration economies and high-skilled employees—in developed and developing countries alike (Abel et al., 2012; Behrens et al., 2015; Glaeser & Xiong, 2017). Higher labour productivity need not mean increased working hours, though, as it is well established that longer work hours are associated with lower level of happiness and life satisfaction. On the contrary, life-work balance that embraces *time affluence* (free, quality time for oneself and family) contributes to long-lasting positive experiences including happiness (Knight et al., 2013).

Resource productivity and its circularity aspect can contribute to higher levels of happiness and well-being by developing communities that are as self-reliant, locally connected, and resilient as possible. Community productivity also adopts the concept of urban metabolism to analyse the urban ecosystem by studying resource flows and promoting effective policies for a cradle-to-cradle approach (Beloin-Saint-Pierre et al., 2017). In a productive community, circular economy initiatives would not only urge resource regeneration and closing technical cycles in production and consumption, but they would also contribute to the recovery and restoration of the natural environment and improve social and human well-being (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; World Economic Forum, 2018).

Ecological productivity, or the restoration, enhancement, and regeneration of ecological diversity in an urban area and in its hinterland, can add significant value to the entire local living system, including its human residents. One way of increasing ecological productivity is through regenerative or net-positive design, a promising practice rooted in ecology and living systems theory (Robinson & Cole, 2015) that has been applied to agricultural (Rodale Institute, 2014) and architectural practices (Thomson & Newman, 2018). Generally, the regenerative or productive sustainability principles provide the urban environment designers with a holistic socio-ecological systems worldview that includes collaborative planning and participatory

backcasting and is aligned and synergistic with the natural environment (Mang et al., 2016; Robinson & Cole, 2015).

In terms of *social productivity*, if coupled with a diverse and innovative economy, fair and productive labour, and ecologically enhanced and diverse urban environment, the cultivation of human and social capital is a necessary condition to achieve community happiness and well-being. Many cities today tend to resemble *social deserts*, despite the potential existence of parks and recreation space, or a patchwork of *food deserts*, since people usually need to drive to the nearest grocery store. While it is crucial to find remedies for these *deserts*, social productivity also advocates for the right to retreat as explained for instance by Montgomery (2013): social geometry refers to the optimum setback or yard depth is 10.6 ft or 3.23 m because it allows for conversation and interaction with neighbours or passersby while protecting individual and family privacy.

The definition of *happiness* has evolved along with the evolution and dictates of consumerism in the twentieth century, but studies show that, after a certain income level, the increases in economic well-being may have little positive impact on overall well-being and people's subjective perception of happiness (Afsa et al., 2009; Sharpe, 2002). The findings of a large-scale study (sample of 1.7 million individuals worldwide) on correlations between income and life satisfaction (among other factors) agree with previous studies: beyond a specific threshold of income (which varies between different regions of the world), there does not seem to be any strong correlation between income and happiness (Jebb et al., 2018).

Happiness therefore is a function of several factors, aside from the strong determinant of genetic predisposition for happiness or unhappiness and beyond that level of income that satisfies people's basic needs (Frey, 2018). Some factors depend on individual actions and choices (e.g. education, health, work contentment, time affluence, work-life balance, spirituality, etc.) whereas others relate to community elements (e.g. tightness of social connections, community belonging, walkability, access to food, access to recreation and other public amenities, safety, democratic processes, institutional trust, volunteering, civic empowerment, etc.) (Agyeman, 2013; Anielski, 2007; Gilding, 2012).

By enhancing social capital, the productive city becomes an enabler of happiness, reversing current trends of social isolation, loneliness and fear, and providing opportunities for human connections; because social capital can deplete only if it is not used or *produced* (Roseland, 2012). In a socially productive community, the convergence of happiness, well-being, and sustainability is possible through a focus on non-material wealth—or intangible forms of individual and community assets (O'Brien, 2013). Recent research on the urban commons highlights the importance of regenerating and co-producing community capital in an equitable, accessible, inclusive, and creative way; in a way that invites community members not only to share space but also to *co-produce* their well-being through ecologically responsible paths (Elmqvist et al., 2019; McLaren & Agyeman, 2017; Wahl, 2016).

2.4.2 *Evaluating Well-Being in a Productive Community*

Communities develop and implement sustainability plans often with the aid of a framework or tool; there are many such tools available today and most are designed to support decision-making at all stages, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation (Jong et al., 2015). The community productivity approach can contribute to measuring and evaluating a community's progress towards achieving sustainability goals, by using objective and subjective information guided by a holistic perspective. A community indicators dashboard is often a collection of indicators and does not necessarily provide a coherent or comprehensive picture of the community's health. We should recognise though that it is a snapshot in time, of a dynamic system, and that context, place, and the interconnections of the system's components are significant but intangible parameters that cannot always be captured by static metrics.

Although we usually measure problems such as depression, crime, inaccessibility and social exclusion more than we measure goals such as happiness and well-being, there are initiatives that attempt to evaluate these more intangible qualities globally; for instance, social trust is now included in the World Bank's calculations of the total wealth of nations. Costanza (2014) lists 14 alternatives to GDP to measure well-being, such as the Canadian Index of Well-being, the World Values Survey, Gross National Happiness, Human Development Index, Happy Planet Index, etc. and there are many more nationally or internationally, for instance the European Social Survey, the Canadian General Social Survey, and Vital Signs from Community Foundations of Canada. Most have been developed for use at the national level but can be adapted to the local level since they use either surveys for subjective well-being or proxy metrics. The Seattle Area Happiness Initiative and Sydney's Community Wellbeing Indicators project provide two examples of locally-relevant and meaningful indicators systems (City of Sydney, n.d.; Musikanski et al., 2017).

A productive community can be measured using a combination of effective and widely-accepted indicators of sustainability and several new indicators specifically geared toward the productive and regenerative aspects of the community. Some of these indicators would be considered as proxies for qualitative information around happiness, trust, human connection, governance, and other components of human and social capital. These are some examples of community productivity indicators that are directly or indirectly relevant to happiness and well-being (Spiliotopoulou, 2021):

- Growing space per dwelling unit (proxy for community gardens)
- Mix of land uses and compact development that minimizes commuting times
- Regeneratively designed buildings (net-positive, energy label homes)
- Local innovation (patents)
- Creative industry jobs
- Work opportunities for people with developmental disabilities
- Lifelong learning (vocational or other adult education opportunities)
- Positive individual health practices

- Life satisfaction and/or happiness perception
- Number of neighbours one can rely on in an emergency
- Perceptions of optimism and mental health
- Social service volunteering
- Confidence and trust in local government
- Participation in local/neighbourhood events
- Healthy and safe neighbourhood development initiatives
- Cultural access and participation
- Investment in public art and public art awareness.

During our research, we identified various initiatives of community productivity around the world that promote community happiness and well-being, directly or indirectly. These are some examples of productive or regenerative community practices (8 80 Cities, n.d.; Girardet, 2015; Mang et al., 2016; Razavi, 2017, 2018; Roseland, 2012; Scharmer, 2018; Urban Innovation Community, 2015; Wahl, 2016):

- Adelaide, Australia (dynamic public consultations, major organic waste composting schemes, impressive renewable energy development),
- Copenhagen, Denmark (successful co-housing and community-building projects, energy efficiency initiatives, public transit and cycling uptake, extensive information campaigns and debates, exemplary waste management),
- Amsterdam, The Netherlands (successful sharing and collaborative economy ventures),
- Bristol, U.K. (renewable energy initiatives, successful civil society partnerships and climate resilience actions),
- Medellín, Colombia (inclusive social practices, long-term participatory planning, efficient transportation system),
- Kigali, Rwanda (Africa's leader in knowledge-based sharing economy),
- San Francisco, USA (Quesada Gardens—a regenerative neighbourhood and social capital-building initiative),
- Portland, USA (Eco-District initiative),
- Theory U Lab at MIT (personal and skills development research and application),
- 8 80 Cities organisation, Toronto, Canada (safety and well-being initiatives)
- Havana, Cuba, New York City, Shanghai, and other places (urban farming and regenerative agriculture programmes).

2.5 Discussion

A happy city is a social and trusting city, one whose social, human, and cultural dimensions of capital are co-produced by all its components. Cultivating a sense of place is a fundamental component of healthy and happy communities. As Orr (2013) explains, looking at the world through the lens of place promotes a sense of responsibility for and a sense of unity with the natural environment. Reclaiming the urban commons and developing a sense of community can help build social capital