



Webinar organized  
as part of the project  
DAStU, Department  
of Excellence  
on Territorial Fragilities



# The economic geography of happiness, unhappiness and discontent

The importance of spatial context in the analysis of happiness has long been recognized in economic studies, including the seminal work by Easterlin (1974) who considered the impact of national Gross Domestic Product on well-being. Since then, there have been a considerable number of studies that consider both individual and household characteristics as well as spatial context and the argument for adopting an explicitly geographical approach has been increasingly highlighted. This presentation offers an economic geography perspective on the analysis of happiness, unhappiness and discontent. First individual- and household-level determinants of subjective well-being are considered by briefly reviewing the current state of the art in the emerging field known as the Economics of Happiness. This is followed by an argument for a Spatial Economics and Economic Geography perspective (Ballas, 2018; 2021), illustrated with new innovative ways of visualizing the spatial distribution of happiness and related variables (Ballas et al., 2017). In addition, an attempt to link the literature of the geography of happiness and well-being to the geographies of discontent (and the 'places that do not matter') literature is also presented, including an analysis of voting for self-proclaimed 'anti-establishment political parties' drawing upon recent and on-going research conducted at the University of Groningen (Koeppen et al., 2019). This is followed by discussion of relevant theoretical insights as well as new possibilities for advanced spatial analysis (including the use of spatial microsimulation and spatial econometrics).

15th December  
2020

Politecnico di Milano,  
MS Teams:  
<https://cutt.ly/GhQv0kU>

program :

16<sup>30</sup>

Introduction

**Gabriele Pasqui** / DAStU  
TF Project Scientific Coordinator

**Manos Matsaganis** / DAStU

17<sup>00</sup>

Presentation

**Dimitris Ballas** / Professor of  
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17<sup>30</sup>

Discussion

**Camilla Lenzi** / DABC,  
Politecnico di Milano

17<sup>45</sup>

Open debate



**POLITECNICO  
MILANO 1863**

DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA  
E STUDI URBANI



**DIPARTIMENTO  
D'ECCELLENZA  
FRAGILITÀ TERRITORIALI  
2018-2022**

**contatti**  
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