

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Fondazione Luigi Einaudi organized and hosted at its premises the international conference “Happiness, Well-Being and (De)Growth” on June 21st 2019. The aim of this conference was to discuss the multifaceted and complex relationship between these three concepts within the framework of the Economics of Happiness. The latter took off as a branch of Economics in the 1990s and it provides a theoretical and empirical framework for the analysis of the quality of individuals’ lives. As Clark (2018: 246) notes, data on happiness have been used to address three broad questions: what makes people happy; what happy people do; and how happiness can help to solve a number of economic puzzles such as the optimal value of public goods and the appropriate level of social inequality. Individual happiness depends on individuals’ characteristics, such as their income, labour-force status and gender, but also on the aggregate characteristics of the societies in which they live. The first and best-known relationship among the latter is that with GDP growth, summarized by the so-called “Easterlin paradox”: while countries experience GDP growth over time, average happiness does not seem to have risen. Hence the concept behind the third title of the conference: Is De-growth necessary to improve individual happiness?

Six papers were presented at the conference on various aspects of individual happiness. The presentations were followed by the comments of four discussants and a lively debate with the numerous audience members. The program and videos of the conference are available at <http://www.fondazioneeinaudi.it/rivedi-il-convegno-happiness-well-being-and-degrowth-su-youtube/>.

Selected papers and discussions were submitted for publication in *The Annals of the Fondazione Luigi Einaudi. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Economics, History and Political Science*. After a standard refereeing process this issue of the Annals contains seven contributions, ranging from the concept of happiness in economic history to the proposal of a new paradigm beyond *Homo Oeconomicus*.

REFERENCES

CLARK A.E. 2018, "Four Decades of the Economics of Happiness: Where Next?", *Review of Income and Wealth*, 64: 245-269.