
The scientific investigation of happiness (Glück) has to reflect the tension between personal and collective dimensions, between the anthropological and psychological questions, whether there is a natural ‘instinct’ of individuals to pursue happiness, and historically changing conditions of societies and states, how this is possible under given circumstances and can be encouraged by governments.

If we put aside the complex and uncountable forms of this relationship in other epochs and parts of the world and in philosophical and moral discussions, and concentrate the investigation on Europe and North America and the principles of nation building since the 18th century, we get the frame of reference of the book to be presented.

The developing civil society with its longings for freedom and democracy, rule of law and welfare, emancipation and equality also affected and affects the possibilities of all individuals for being happy. Therefore it is not surprising that the famous sentences from the American Declaration of Independence (1776) are quoted (partly) on the first page of the book and dealt with in many of its ten contributions: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. Following this example the declaration of human and civil rights, which preceded the constitution of the French revolution in 1793, demands: “Le but de la société est le bonheur commun”. These declarations are not *expressis verbis* part of modern constitutions, but they are implicitly connected with the aims of welfare states and the “common weal”, in particular in the opinion of the citizens.

The book collects the contributions of the sixth conference of the ‘Institute of the Investigation of Happiness’ (Institut für Glücksforschung) in Vallendar (Germany), a little town near Koblenz/Rhine, 60 km south of Bonn, was founded by Alfred Bellebaum, Professor of Sociology at the Universities of Koblenz and Bonn. The ten contributions are mostly written by sociologists, some by economists.
The first four contributions explicitly refer to the above stated frame of reference; these are: Manfred Prisching: *The Commitment of the State for Happiness*; Hella Mandt: *Pursuing Happiness – Human Rights and State-Guarantee*; Hella Mandt: *Human Rights of Happiness? An Analysis of Concepts of the State in Continental Europe*; Rainer Waßner: *Between Institutionalism and Individualism: State and Happiness in the Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*.

In his contribution Prisching presents several conceptions which – according to his point of view – are more adequate to express the intentions of modern states or welfare states than happiness, among them: welfare, quality of life, solidarity, humanity, ease, (social) security etc. Following his argument happiness is not a concern of politicians or political programs; rather they aim at a high standard of living, satisfied citizens and consent for their politics. In the USA on the other hand, the ‘pursuit of happiness’ is more common, even in official governmental declarations (as President Clinton has shown).

Based on a well-founded knowledge in the development of relevant political philosophy, the contribution by *Hella Mandt* goes to the roots of bringing together state and happiness in modern political theory.


The book shows the great variety of concepts aiming at the happiness of citizens and individuals and makes clear that the tension between freedom and equality cannot be solved without conflicts (as has been shown in all discussions on the benefits of the welfare state since the 19th century).

What is missing is a tribute to the importance of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham. Especially Adam Smith makes quite clear that the