

CHAPTER 6: DOES HAPPINESS BIND?

Marriage chances of the unhappy

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Summary

This chapter checks the claim that happiness harms social bonds, marriage in particular. It is shown that happiness rather benefits marriage. Married people appear typically happier than singles, and the difference seems partly due to a positive effect of happiness on marriage chances. Unhappiness is a handicap in love, both because it is mostly a disadvantage in intimate encounters and because it is detrimental to the development of psychological characteristics that are crucial in modern marriage.

Opinions differ on whether happiness strengthens social bonds or not. On the one hand, anti-hedonists claim that it will breed self-complacent people who feel they can do without. In their view it is suffering that unites us, whereas enjoyment of life is seen to dissolve the family and to individualize society. On the other hand, the humanist view is that happiness rather clears the way for genuine love and commitment. Though in less need for support than the unhappy, happy persons are seen to be more able to maintain intimate ties and to accept responsibility for others. This chapter addresses this broad issue by an inspection of the effects of happiness on marriage ties.

There is a lot of correlational research on the link between happiness and marriage. An outstanding result is that singles are typically less happy than the married. The widowed and the divorced are particularly inclined to unhappiness. Up to now this difference has always been taken to show that the presence of a partner makes life more satisfying; in other words that marriage brings happiness. Yet the difference can also mean that happiness boosts marriage chances.

It is important to know which of these two viewpoints is correct, because they have quite different policy implications. If the relative dissatisfaction of single people is mainly a consequence of their lack of a partner, then obviously 'partner supportive' policies should be given priority, for example by subsidizing marriage bureaux and singles clubs, and by making living together fiscally attractive. However, if unhappiness is rather cause than consequence, then one is merely attacking the symptoms. It would then be better to direct one's attention to the factors causing the unhappiness, whatever they may be.

This paper sets out to explore the alternative explanation. It will begin by asking whether the initial point of view is correct: are singles really less happy? Once we have established that this is indeed the case we will discuss the two explanations in more detail.

Are singles really less happy?

Nature of the evidence

Indications that singles are less happy come from so-called 'Quality-Of-Life' surveys. These are large scale interview studies among representative samples of the population about one's life-situation and the appreciation of it. Since the seventies, such surveys are periodically held in most of the rich nations. In the USA the so-called 'General Social Surveys', in the Netherlands the 'Life Situation Surveys' and in the EC the bi-annual Eurobarometer polls. Most of these polls involve questions about 'life-satisfaction' or 'happiness'. Standard items have come into use for these issues, which have proved reasonably valid and reliable.

When one compares the answers on questions about happiness of single and married persons, the latter are invariably more happy. It makes no difference whether the people concerned are legally married or living together informally, or whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. Among singles, the divorced are usually the most unhappy, followed by widows and widowers. The never married are the least unhappy of this category, though markedly less happy than those in the co-habitation category.

Table 1 illustrates this point.

These differences in happiness are not equally great in all countries: they are the most pronounced in modern Western countries like Denmark, the Netherlands and the USA. In Italy and Ireland the difference is minimal (Veenhoven, 1983). The differences are greatest among young people. One survey found more pronounced differences among men than among women, but that has not been found to be the rule (Veenhoven, 1984a: 245).

The fact that survey after survey reproduces this pattern does not mean that its validity is beyond all doubt. It could be that the same distortions are repeatedly involved. The literature mentions three possible faults: 1. The difference could be due to a statistical artefact; 2) The difference could be due to stereotyped responses; 3) The difference may no longer be actually true. I will now investigate these three possible explanations. All three will be shown to be invalid.

Table 1. Average satisfaction with life of Dutch nationals of 18 and older according to civil status and living situation

Artefact?

Of course there are a number of intervening variables, such as 'income' and 'age'. One should remember that a large number of the singles are old and widowed. Old age and a scanty pension could have more to do with their life-satisfaction than whether or not they live alone. It has also been pointed out that the 'health'-factor could be complicating the picture, health problems simultaneously decreasing life-satisfaction and one's chances on the marriage market: there then emerges a statistical relation between living alone and happiness without any real interdependence between the two phenomena.

Various checking procedures have been carried out to investigate this sort of pseudorelationship. Glenn and Weaver (1979) attacked the issue most thoroughly: they considered eight verification variables simultaneously: 1) whether or not there were children, 2) the age of those children, 3) own age, 4) church going, 5) income, 6) education, 7) occupational status of the man, 8) job situation of the woman. These factors could explain only part of the difference. Jol (1984) carried out a similar analysis. Her findings are set out in **table 2**. Here again the relation remains, in fact it is slightly strengthened by the verification procedure. It is important to note that the relations appear to be not an artefact consequential to bad health. Health does influence happiness, but cannot explain the

difference between singles and married people. Living with a partner stands firm as the most important correlate of happiness, slightly more important than 'health' and 'employment situation' and considerably more important than 'income' or 'education'.

Table 2 Correlates of happiness in the Netherlands in 1983

Stereotype distortion?

Part of the public thinks of singles as pitiable wallflowers, in particular where elderly never married are concerned. Such stigmatization might lead singles to be more inhibited in their answers about life-satisfaction and less reticent about expressing feelings of unhappiness if they have them.

Although this may play a role, it cannot explain the difference entirely. For one thing, the stereotype of the 'pitiable bachelor' has lost its force over the last few decades and has large been replaced by the new image of the 'swinging single'. In 1956 60% of the Dutch population were of the opinion that singles were less happy than married people; in 1986 only 21% did. In the meantime, however, those living on their own have in fact become less happy (Veenhoven, 1984b). Secondly, the differences in reported happiness are not the only evidence: there are more indications that living on one's own in this society is less satisfying than living with a partner. Since long suicide rates are higher among the single (Diekstra, 1980). Mortality is higher among singles anyway. A recent study among middle-aged American widowers showed a.o. that the remarried in this category lived longer than the widowers who had not remarried (Helsing et al., 1981). The causes of death were varied: among singles there is not only a more or less understandably higher death rate from liver disease, accidents and murder, but also distinctly higher rates of death from heart disease and cancer. (Lynch, 1977). It is not surprising then that singles have more health problems as well: they are ill more often, their illnesses are more serious, they visit the doctor more often and take more medication (e.g. Morgan, 1980). As far as mental health is concerned, one finds the same pattern. Statistics reflecting the use of psychiatric services show that singles are decidedly over-represented and survey-studies on psychic morbidity show more complaints among singles as well.

Out of date?

So far, it does not seem that there is any reason to question the difference itself. That does not, however, exclude the possibility that it no longer exists. It is possible that a new generation of 'swinging singles' has changed the picture. There is at least a lot of suggestive publicity on this matter (a.o. Vuisje, 1978). Yet this argument does not apply either. In the first place, the studies being discussed here are quite recent. Most data were gathered in the sixties and seventies, and research carried out at the beginning of the eighties continues to show the same pattern (Jol, 1985). Secondly, living alone is not primarily a problem for the older generation. On the contrary, young singles appear to be the most vulnerable category. Thirdly, there are indications that living alone in our society is becoming more difficult rather than easier. Elsewhere I have shown that in the Netherlands the suicide rate increased more rapidly among the singles than among the married (Veenhoven, 1983) during the last decades. Finally it should be noted that differences in life-satisfaction between the single and the married are greatest in the most modern countries of Europe. In other words, the relative lack of appeal of the single life cannot be described as a survival of former social structures, but is in fact a product of this era. All in all, the objections discussed here are not convincing. We may proceed on the assumption that - in today's society - singles are, on average, less happy.

Why are singles less happy? Current explanations

As mentioned above, there are two possible explanations: living alone might make for unhappiness, or - the other way round - unhappiness may lower marriage chances. Both explanations figure in the literature on differences in health and suicide between single and married persons. They have not yet been applied on the difference in happiness.

Living alone as the cause

This explanation has been given the most attention. There are three variations:

Labelling theory

This variant starts from the assumption that the high rate of distress among singles is a matter of stigmatization. The reputation of being a pitiable wallflower is seen to be internalized and to express itself in more health complaints and a higher suicide rate (e.g. Davies and Strong, 1977). The objections to this theory, however, are the same as those discussed earlier in connection with 'stereotype distortion'. Furthermore the labelling theory cannot quite explain the differences in death rates. It is not easy to see how the stigma of being 'pitiable' could express itself in a higher rate of heart-disease related deaths.

Crisis theory

This variant primarily concerns the divorced and the widowed who experienced a loss and had to adapt to a new situation. Sorrow and uncertainty are seen to render these people more vulnerable to disease and suicidal thoughts. This theory does not apply to the never married. In fact it originated out of attempt to explain why the never married are better able to cope with old age than people who have lost their partner (e.g. Fengler et al., 1982).

This theory can explain only temporary differences between singles and married people. Long term persistence of the differences can only be expected when many fail to 'overcome' the loss.

Deficiency theory

This view emphasises the advantages of marriage, advantages which singles either go without or which they can only enjoy to a limited degree. Several such 'functions' of marriage are mentioned in the literature: 1) the fulfillment of basic needs like sex and security, 2) on-going self-affirmation, 3) correction of inadequate behaviour, 4) support in times of stress, 5) better material care, and 6) meaningfulness because there is someone else to live for (e.g. Weiss, 1969). Elsewhere I have argued that the functional equivalents of intimate-relationships are seriously diminished in modern society (Veenhoven, 1984a). Seen in this light it is not surprising that the relative unhappiness of singles is a fairly recent phenomenon.

This type of explanation is often referred to as the 'protection' theory: this term originates from Durkheim (1951), who used it to indicate that the presence of a partner or children may help to ward off suicidal impulses.

Living alone as a consequence

The other explanation of the difference is known as the 'selection theory'. It assumes that the marriage market selects the healthy and life-loving, so that ailing and problematic people are left on the shelf. This theory has not been worked out in any great detail yet. The very purpose of this article is to develop it further.

Before we start, it should be noted that the selection theory has its limitation. It cannot be applied to all categories of singles: the relative unhappiness of the widowed can hardly be attributed to selection. The widowed have gone through the first round of the marriage market with obvious success. There is often no question of any selection in the second round: in most cases there are simply no partners available for the older women who constitute the majority of widows. At best one might assume that problematic people who did manage to get through the first selection sometimes sent their partners to a premature death. In the case of the divorced, selection in the second round is easier to imagine. Physical - and particularly mental - problems might easily increase the chance of divorce and decrease the chance of a second marriage. Selection theory would appear to be most applicable to those who have never married. Yet an unknown number of these never enter the selection because they do not want a partner.

Happiness before and after change in marital status

The question is now whether there is any truth in these explanations. Causal effects can be established by longitudinal research. Hence I searched for longitudinal studies that had followed both marital status and happiness. I found three of these: all American. The relevant results are set out in **table 3**.

Happiness following change in marital status

At first sight the results seem to indicate that change in marital status has no effect on happiness. This would appear to invalidate the first of the two possible explanations and would thus endorse the plausibility of the second explanation. Erbes & Hedderson (third in **table 3**) also think so. They write '...psychological well-being affects marital status, rather than marital status affecting psychological well-being' (p. 937). But this conclusion is not well-considered. Let us consider the results more closely.

No happier after marriage?

In the study carried out by Nock (1980), it appeared that respondents who entered the marriage during the research period were not significantly happier at the last interview than at the first. This applied both to people who married for the first time and to those who remarried. The same tendency is shown in Spanier and Furstenburg's (1982) study among divorced people: remarriage (whether formal or not) was not followed by a significant increase of happiness. Does this imply that singles are not missing out on much or at least that they are compensated by fruits of freedom?

These results are indeed suggestive, but not convincing. The period covered by these studies is fairly short and attention is centered on the legal dates of marriage and divorce rather than on the moment that the relationships were actually established or dissolved. These latter dates will often precede the former by some considerable time. In the Spanier and Furstenburg study, the majority of the people who remarried probably already had the relationship at the time of the first interview. Seventy per cent of the respondents had answered affirmatively when asked whether they were

planning to remarry (p. 174): in other words they were already enjoying many of the advantages of marriage so that it is not surprising that two years later they were not much happier than before. This applies to a lesser extent to Nock's study. This covers a longer period of time; but here again it is quite likely that the majority of the marriages that took place in the course of those five years were the continuation of relationships already functioning at the time of the first interview.

No less happy after divorce?

There is no doubt that death of the spouse reduces happiness considerably. Nock found an average decrease of one point on a seven point scale. Divorce was also followed by a decrease in happiness, though a smaller one. The two other studies drew different conclusions: Erbes and Hedderson found no alteration and Spanier and Furstenberg found that happiness actually increased after divorce. Could this be taken to mean that divorce is not so bad, or even a relief? When considering these results, one must again remember that the date of divorce does not mark the real end of the relationship: divorce does not just appear out of the blue. It is usually preceded by years of trouble and difficulties. It has been established that people with a bad marriage are on average unhappier than the divorced (Glenn & Weaver, 1981: 165). Seen in this light, it is then quite logical that the divorce as such had little effect on happiness.

This argument applies to a lesser extent to widowhood: the death of a partner often heralds itself some time prior to the event, though there is generally shorter notice given than in the case of divorce. It could be that the shorter adaptation period accounts for the greater decrease in happiness among the widowed than among the divorced. The transition is often greater in the case of widowhood as well: the parting is not preceded by a period of conflict and the bonds are apt to be stronger - indeed the bonds may even have been strengthened by death. Death is also more definite than divorce: one cannot take refuge in the idea that it will all come right in the end.

Happiness as a predictor of marital status

Spanier & Furstenberg found that fewer of those who were least happy at the time of the first interview were remarried two years later than those who were initially most happy (p. 178). The results of Erbes & Hedderson's survey show the same tendency: this time in the form of more divorce among the initially least happy. Erbes & Hedderson draw the conclusion that dissatisfaction leads to divorce rather than the other way round: ". . . people with negative attitudes are more likely to separate/divorce" (p. 939).

Here again, however, we must be cautious about rushing to conclusions: the increased likelihood that Spanier & Furstenberg observed among their 'happiest' respondents could well have been a consequence of the presence of a partner at the time of the first interview i.e. that this was the reason for their happiness. In their observations Spanier & Furstenberg actually attribute the greater happiness of this group to the prospect of a new marriage: "The likelihood that one will remarry may be related to one's well-being during the immediate post-separation period" (p. 718). The same applies to the higher rate of divorce among the unhappy respondents in Erbes & Hedderson's survey. Here again it might just be a question of anticipation: even before divorce was a real possibility, the life-satisfaction of the group might well have been dampened by marriage problems.

All in all, it cannot be said that any of these three panel studies offers convincing support for the argument that happiness is the cause rather than the result of the situation.

How could happiness affect marriage chances?

For the time being, I presume that chronic unhappiness has a negative influence on one's marriage chances. It is then worth exploring how that might happen. Obviously we can do little more than speculate: yet the very purpose of this paper is to generate new hypotheses, not to test established ones.

When discussing the possible effects of happiness, a distinction will be made between direct and indirect effect. 'Direct effects' are the effects which happiness-as-such has on the chances of initiating and maintaining a relationship. 'Indirect effects' refer to the consequences of happiness on personal development, in particular on personal characteristics that are nowadays referred to as 'relational competence' (Hansson et al., 1984).

It is also important to realize that the effects of happiness may vary along phases of the relationship. I will therefore make the distinction between: 1) the development of attitudes toward marriage and love, 2) meeting candidates, 3) courtship, and 4) maintaining the relationship once established. Finally, relationships do not develop in a social vacuum: the possible effects of happiness on one's chances in love depend on prevailing romantic ideals and current marriage practice. I will show that happiness is particularly crucial in the context of modern Western marriage patterns.

Effects due to happiness as such

There are at least three reasons why it is more difficult for chronically unhappy persons to find a spouse and one reason why the unhappy run a greater risk of seeing their marriage go on the rocks.

Fewer like-minded partners available for unhappy people?

In choosing a partner, the principle of similarity, or 'type seeks type', plays an important role. Not only is there a preference for a partner with a similar social background and education; but people also look for partners in whom they can recognize themselves as far as ideas, emotions and other characteristics are concerned (De Hoog, 1982). It seems likely that this preference will also apply to one's attitude to life. If so, unhappy people will be at a disadvantage on the marriage market because there are far more happy people around such unhappy ones.¹

If the unhappy have less choice open to them, then this may have more consequences for them than merely long seeking. It may also induce them to become less discriminating in their choice of a partner, whereby their chances of having an unsuccessful relationship will increase.

Unhappy people less in demand?

Happiness is not a socially neutral issue. Western culture admires those who take pleasure in life. Hence the unhappy are probably less attractive in eyes of potential partners. There are indeed indications that unhappy people are less sought after. Experiments have shown that they are considered to be less likable, and that they are less in demand as travelling companions and colleagues. Even unhappy people themselves prefer happy company (Bell, 1978; Coney, 1982).

¹ At least this will be the case in countries where only about 20% of the population are dissatisfied with their own lives: interestingly enough, in countries like Ireland and Italy, where the percentage of unhappy people is much higher, there is no difference in happiness between the married and those living on their own.

Unhappy people less easy in contacts?

There are indications that people make fewer contacts and find it more difficult to become involved with others when they are feeling depressed than when they are in a buoyant mood. Wessman (1960), for example, had students keep up a 'mood diary' for a period of six weeks. He found that on the days that they were down the students were less active and less open to other people than on the days when they felt well. The results of experiments show the same tendency: people with induced high spirits have been shown to be more helpful and responsive than controls, while people with an induced depression are more withdrawn (e.g. Gouaux, 1971).

If low mood does indeed favour social withdrawal, it follows that unhappy people will have more difficulty in finding a partner. Likewise one can imagine that the unhappy were found less apt to fall in love than the happy (Critelli, 1977). This runs contrary to the theory that unhappy people seek consolation in love.

All this can affect the view at love and marriage. It can either nurture cynical attitudes or unrealistic ideals, both of which further reduce marriage chances.

Unhappy people less secure?

In modern Western society, marriages are no longer established for reasons of economic necessity or political opportunism; the primary motive nowadays is the pleasure of living together. This makes for a decidedly frail basis, which is why so many modern marriages end in divorce. Seen in this light, it is not surprising that modern spouses are inclined to keep on worrying whether their relationship is really a success. If one of them is chronically unhappy, this is bound to raise doubts, certainly in cases where there is no other obvious reason such as illness or unemployment.

Effects due to happiness-dependent-characteristics

The pleasure a person takes in life will probably affect further psychological development. It is likely, for example, that happy children will be approached in a more friendly manner than tiresome children and that they will therefore grow up to have more confidence in their fellow human beings. Elsewhere I have shown that a great deal of the personality correlates of happiness can be interpreted in this way (Veenhoven 1984a: 277). In particular, there are indications that unhappiness nurtures a passive attitude to life (p. 282) and endorses the idea that one's life is being steered by forces outside one's control ('external control belief', p. 292). Unhappiness also seems conducive to the development of a 'negative self-image', and thereby to 'preoccupation with self' rather than openness to others and to low empathy (p. 280).

All these characteristics are known in the literature as aspects of 'relational competence' (see Hansson et al., 1984). It is these characteristics which largely determine the degree to which one is able to take advantage of one's chances on the marriage market. The following paragraph discusses in more detail how this can work and why these traits are particularly crucial in modern society.

Passivity

A passive attitude to life does not improve one's chances in love. It can all too easily lead one to wait for the prince on the white horse. Since the greater passivity of unhappy people implies fewer contacts, chances of meeting such a prince are actually small. Passivity is a particular disadvantage in the world of today, where one is expected to seek out a partner for oneself: it might be less of a disadvantage in cultures where marriages are arranged or where the choice of partner is limited to a convenient number of local eligibles. Here again, it is worth remembering that it is in the most modern countries that difference in happiness between singles and married persons is most

pronounced.

It is also possible that a passive attitude makes the failure of the relationship more likely: these days a more active approach is required. The disappearance of many of the norms that used to guide marital interaction in former days means that one has to give form to the relationship oneself; this requires initiative and creativity. Again this is most typical of most modern societies.

External control

Initiative can hardly be expected from people who feel that their own exertions will be to little avail. This is one of the reasons why unhappy people are less likely to play an active role on the marriage market. The idea that one's life is controlled by external forces will not help the on-going relationship either: it will discourage these people from trying to change patterns that are not satisfying. Here again, and for the same reasons, the problems will be greater in modern society than in traditional society. Traditional marriage is characterized by explicit roles for men and for women, each having their own sphere of influence. De Swaan (1982) refers to this phenomenon as a 'household of command'. He describes the gradual shift to the 'household by negotiation', in which spouses develop their own arrangements. Partners who are unable to stand up for themselves may find themselves at a disadvantage in the latter pattern. In the long run it may force them to abandon the marriage altogether, because they negotiated themselves too poor a position.

Lower self-esteem

Making contact with other people works best if one thinks of oneself as a worth-while person: if one does not, one may be too quick to anticipate rejection. Also, low self-esteem may lead to an unfortunate choice of a partner: not a very good start.

There are other reasons why low self-esteem is not helpful for maintaining on-going relationships. Self-depreciation is a handicap in love-relationships. People who do not like themselves feel both a strong urge for love and understanding but at the same time often cannot believe that the other party really likes them; also, they are often too concerned with themselves to be able to give much in return (see Frenken, 1978). Here again, we are talking about a trait that plays a crucial part in the modern marriage. Traditional marriage could to some extent do without love but modern marriage cannot. Self-esteem is therefore more critical to modern marriage.

Less empathy

Empathy plays an important role in making contact with other people. In 'capturing' a partner, it is necessary to be able to put oneself into the other person's situation. Incorrect evaluation of the other person's feelings can lead to a painful rejection.

Empathy remains important after the initial contact has been made: the better one is able to sympathize with the other party, the more adequately one will be able to react. Again the capacities are most crucial to modern marriage. Mutual understanding and openness are more important in modern love pattern than in the traditional pattern where 'faithfulness' and 'duty' played a greater role.

Summary scheme

Table 4 sets out the various hypotheses. Further research must establish in how far they are viable. Such research will have to be of longitudinal design, covering a period of at least five years. It should not be limited to the formal alterations in civil status but should emphasize the point in time that the relationships actually started or ended.

Table 4: Possible relation between living alone and life satisfaction

Conclusion

A positive appreciation of life seems to favour marriage chances. The available evidence does not provide definite proof, however. Anyway, happiness clearly does not appear harmful to marriage. It rather fosters chances to find a spouse and to maintain the bond.

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Table 1. Average satisfaction with life of Dutch nationals of 18 and older according to civil status and living situation

Living with partner	
- married	1.9
- other	2.0
Living alone	
- never married	2.1
- widowed	2.3
- divorced	2.6

Scores based on questions about perceived satisfaction with life:
1: very happy,
2: happy,
3: uncertain,
4: not very happy.

Source: CBS Life Situation survey 1983.

Table 2 Correlates of happiness in the Netherlands in 1983		
	product moment correlations	standardized effects (beta's)
Presence partner (yes/no)	+0.17	+0.19
Number of protracted health problems	-0.16	-0.17
Employed (yes/no)	-0.11	-0.14
Number of friends	+0.10	+0.13
Frequency of church-going	+0.07	+0.11
Prescribed medicines (yes/no)	-0.13	-0.09
Children at home (yes/no)	-0.01	-0.07
Conservatism	+0.08	+0.07
Age	-0.08	+0.05
Sex (man/woman)	-0.00	+0.05
Household income	+0.12	+0.04
Education	+0.08	+0.04
Voluntary work (yes/no)	+0.06	+0.04
% explained variance		18
Happiness measured by an index of: 1) question: 'In how far do you consider yourself a happy person?', 2) question: 'In how far are you happy with the life you lead?', 3) Affect balance score, 10 questions about moods and emotions in the recent past (Bradburn, 1965). Source: Jol 1984: 183.		

Table 3. Some longitudinal studies on happiness and change in marital status

source	population	period	indicators	results of happiness
Nock 1980	workforce USA N = 963 of which: -41 married for first time -25 remarried -79 divorced -11 widowed during the period of investigation	1972-1977 2 interviews	ten questions on 'feelings about life' one of which about 'satisfaction'	- entering marriage does not add to happiness -no significant increase after first marriage -no significant increase after remarriage -dissolving marriage does lower happiness somewhat -after divorce small decrease -considerable decrease after death of spouse
Spanier & Furstenberg 1982	recently divorced USA N = 180 of which: -63 remarried -24 started cohabitation -93 stayed alone during the period of investigation	1977-1979 2 interviews	two questions on 'life satisfaction' Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969)	- in the first years after divorce happiness rises - this rise is stronger among the ones who came to live with a new partner - of the most happy in 1977 more had re- married in 1979
Erbes & Hedderston 1984	married and divorced males USA N = 2423 of which -40 were already divorced -108 divorced during the period of investigation	1968-1972 5 interviews	one question on the degree one expects life will - after divorce happiness demands	- the divorced were al- ready less happy before the divorce - after divorce happiness does not decrease, but does not increase either - the divorced remain less happy than the married -the difference in happiness between married and long divorced (before 1968) does not shrink -among the married the remarried are slightly less happy

Table 4. Possible relation between living alone and life satisfaction

