



# PSY268

# Contemporary Issues in Psychology

**Zuzana Petrovičová**

Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies

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- What is Happiness? / Life satisfaction / Well-Being
- How can we measure such phenomena?



- Hedonistic approach – positive affect
- Eudemonic approach – actualization of oneself, living well
- Happiness – meaning, psychology, sociology,
- Pleasure – neurobiology



- What does Prefrontal cortex do???
- Responsible for complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making and moderating social behavior
- Simulate experience



# Impact bias

- Tendency to overestimate the hedonic impact of future events
  - Ending relationship, college acceptance, job interviews,...etc.
- Simulator (experience simulator) works badly...

# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- NH – is what we *have* when we *do* get what we wanted
- SH – is what we *make* when we *don't* get what we wanted
- Daniel T. Gilbert – argues that SH is as valuable as NH
- Free-choice paradigm



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

Rank the objects from most to least liked:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

Rank the objects from most to least liked:



- We have some extra prints for you to take home, we have no. 3 & 4:



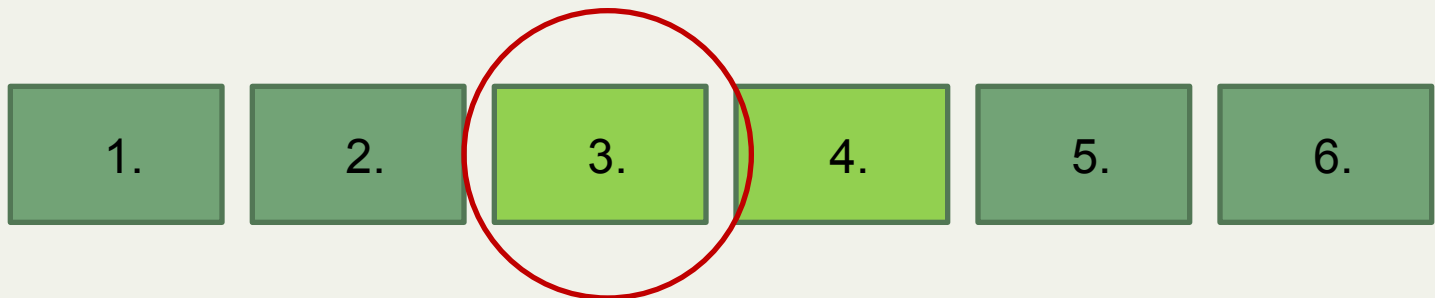


# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

Rank the objects from most to least liked:



- We have some extra prints for you to take home, we have no. 3 & 4:



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

Some time later....

- Rank the objects from most to least liked:



**The owned painting was liked more than before, the one people didn't own was liked less than before**

# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- Sample? – People remember which one they chose, so they tend to respond that they like the one they have better.



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- Sample? – People remember which one they chose, so they tend to respond that they like it better
- People with Anterograde Amnesia ( no new memories)
- 1) Which one do you own?
  - Control group (no memory problems) – do remember very well
  - Amnesia patients – just guess (about 45% of correct answers)



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- Some time later....
- Rank the objects from most to least liked:



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- People with Anterograde amnesia like the one they own better, **but they don't know they own it**



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- What does this mean?
- Seems like people have “psychological immune system” – capacity to synthesize happiness
- Some people synthesize happiness more effectively than other people
- Some situations allow people to synthesize happiness more effectively, than other situations



# Synthesized vs. Natural Happiness

- FREEDOM (ability to make up your mind, and to change it)
- Freedom to choose
  - good for natural happiness
  - bad for synthesized happiness
  - ...real life situations...





# Experiment 2

- Gilbert et al.
- Photography class for university students
- Take 12 pictures of favourite things, develop 2
- Asked to give one up (one of the two developed)
- 2 conditions :





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- Gilbert et al.
- Photography class for university students
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- Asked to give one up (one of the two developed)
- 2 conditions ( **2 groups of students**):

2 week period to change one's mind about the picture

**"If you want to swap your picture for the other one, feel free to stop by and do so"**

2 week period to change one's mind about the picture

**"You chose one picture and the other one is being sent away, so there is no way for you to change your mind"**



# Experiment 2

- Gilbert et al.
- Photography class for university students
- Take 12 pictures of favourite things, develop 2
- Asked to give one up (one of the two developed)
- 2 conditions ( **prediction/ reported liking**):

Half of students:

**State how much you think you will become to like the picture you chose.**

Half of students:

**No questions after given the picture, but 3 and 6 days later asked how much do they like the picture**

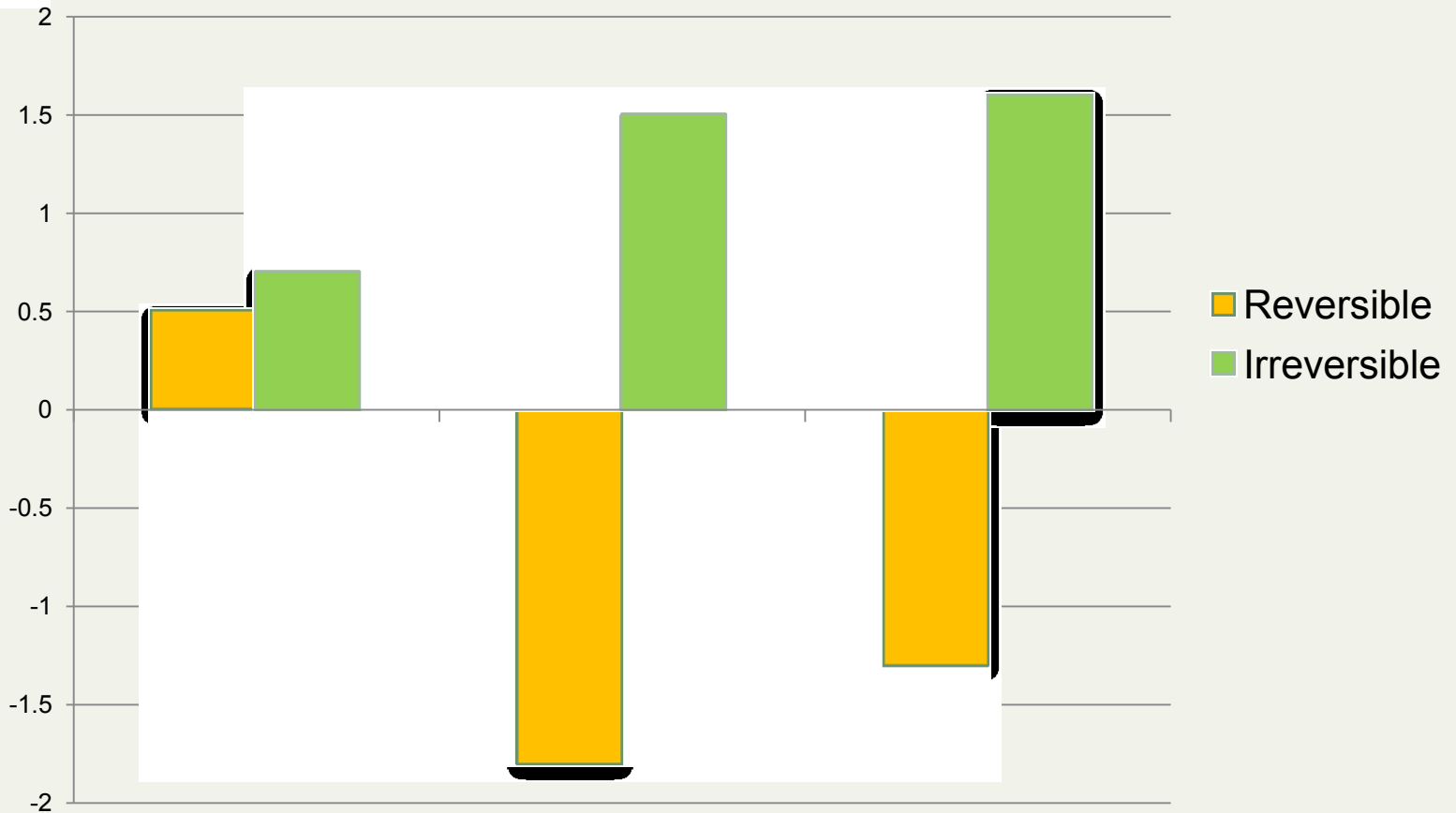


# Experiment 2

Prediction for Day  
before Swap  
Expires

Day before the  
Swap Expire

5 Days After Swap  
Expired





# Experiment 2

- If you could choose the photography class, which one would it be?:
- You will learn how to make and develop photographs and at the end of the class, you will be able to take:
  - One picture home,, however you can come back anytime within 4 days and swap that picture for another.
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**In Gibert's experiment : 66% of students choose the reversible option**



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- Boundaries in decision making
- Our expectations ( of good or bad outcomes) are disproportionate...