

**Greater Happiness
for a greater number**
Is that possible? If so, how?

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Well-being in the welfare state
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Greater happiness

- The greatest happiness principle
- What we know about happiness
- Is greater happiness possible?
- How can that be achieved?

Greatest happiness principle

- Philosophy
- History
- Present day policy relevance

Greatest happiness principle

Philosophy

- Morally good is what works out well
Morality appears in consequences
- Most moral is what produces
'greatest happiness for greatest number'
- Called 'utilitarianism'

Ideology of greater happiness
Moral philosophy

Variants

- Applied on individual choice
Actor utilitarianism
- Applied on public choice
Rule utilitarianism or Political utilitarianism

Ideology of greater happiness

Moral philosophy

Variants

- Applied on individual choice
Actor utilitarianism
- Applied on public choice
Rule utilitarianism or *Political utilitarianism*

Greatest happiness principle

History

- Idea roots in 18th century Enlightenment
- Articulated by Jeremy Bentham
'On morals and legislation' (1789)
- Rejected by leading ideologies
in the 19th and early 20th century
 - Church
 - Liberalism
 - Socialism
 - Nationalism

Ideology of greater happiness

Present day relevance

- End of great ideologies of deficit
Call for 'positive' policy goals
- Rising appreciation of happiness
 - In public opinion
 - Among policy makers
- Greater knowledge about happiness

What we know about happiness

- What is 'happiness'?
- How is that measured?
- How happy are we?
- In what conditions are we most happy?

What is 'happiness'?

Four qualities of life

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>		
<i>outcomes</i>		

What is 'happiness'?

Four qualities of life

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Livability	Life-ability
<i>outcomes</i>	Utility	Satisfaction

What is 'happiness'?

Four kinds of satisfaction

	<i>Passing</i>	<i>Enduring</i>
<i>Part</i>		
<i>Whole</i>		

What is 'happiness'?

Four kinds of satisfaction

	<i>Passing</i>	<i>Enduring</i>
<i>Part</i>	Pleasure	Domain satisfaction
<i>Whole</i>	Top experience	Life satisfaction (Happiness)

What we know about happiness

Measurement of happiness

Measurement of happiness

Best practice in direct questioning

- **global self estimate**
 - single question for large scale surveys
 - multiple questions

- **multi-moment average** for small scale follow-up

Measurement of happiness

Best practice in direct questioning

- global self estimate
 - single question for large scale surveys
 - multiple questions
- multi-moment average for small scale follow-up

Measurement of happiness

Example of a survey question

Taking all together, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Dissatisfied

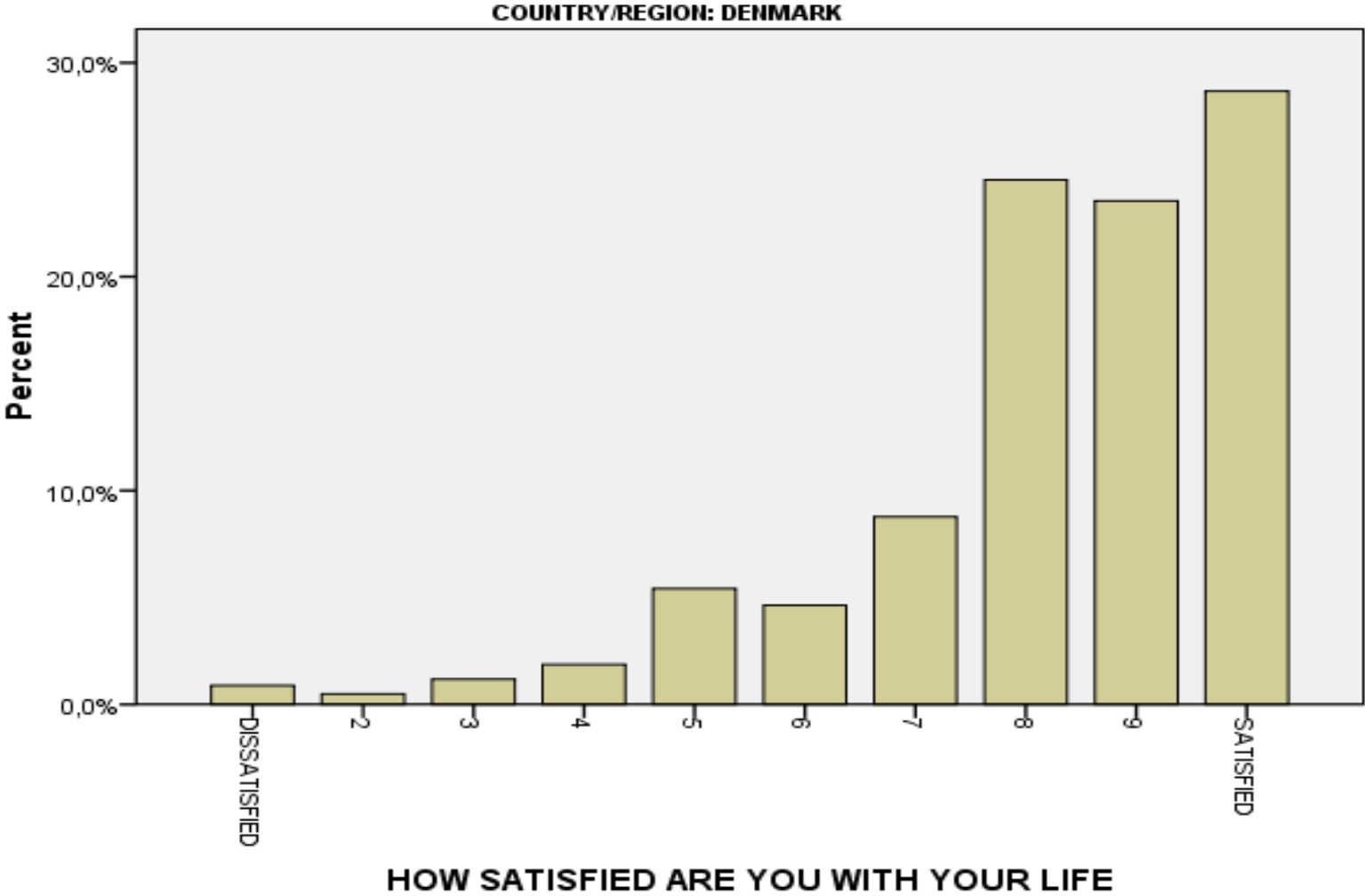
Satisfied

What we know about happiness

How happy are we?

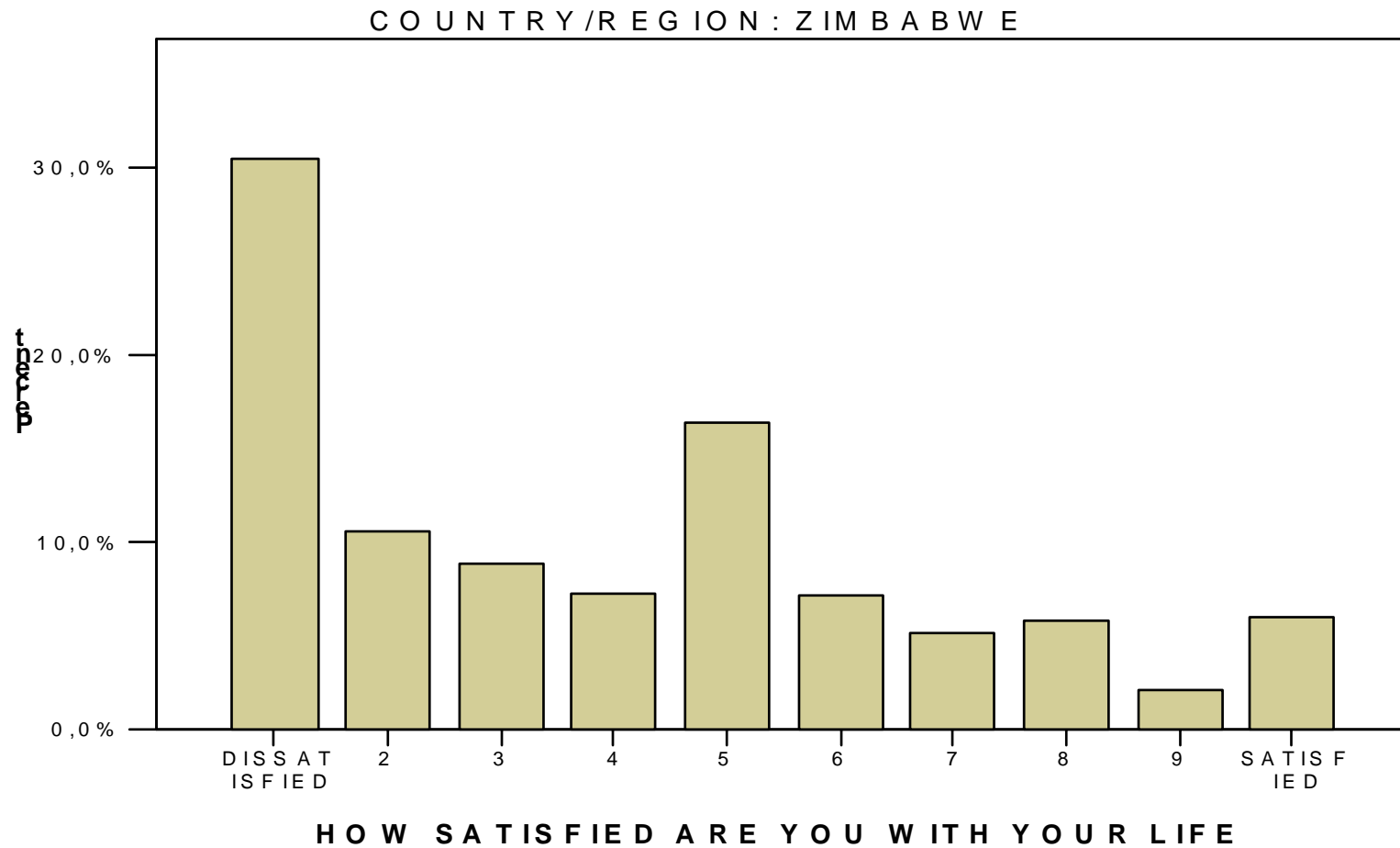
How happy are we?

Denmark



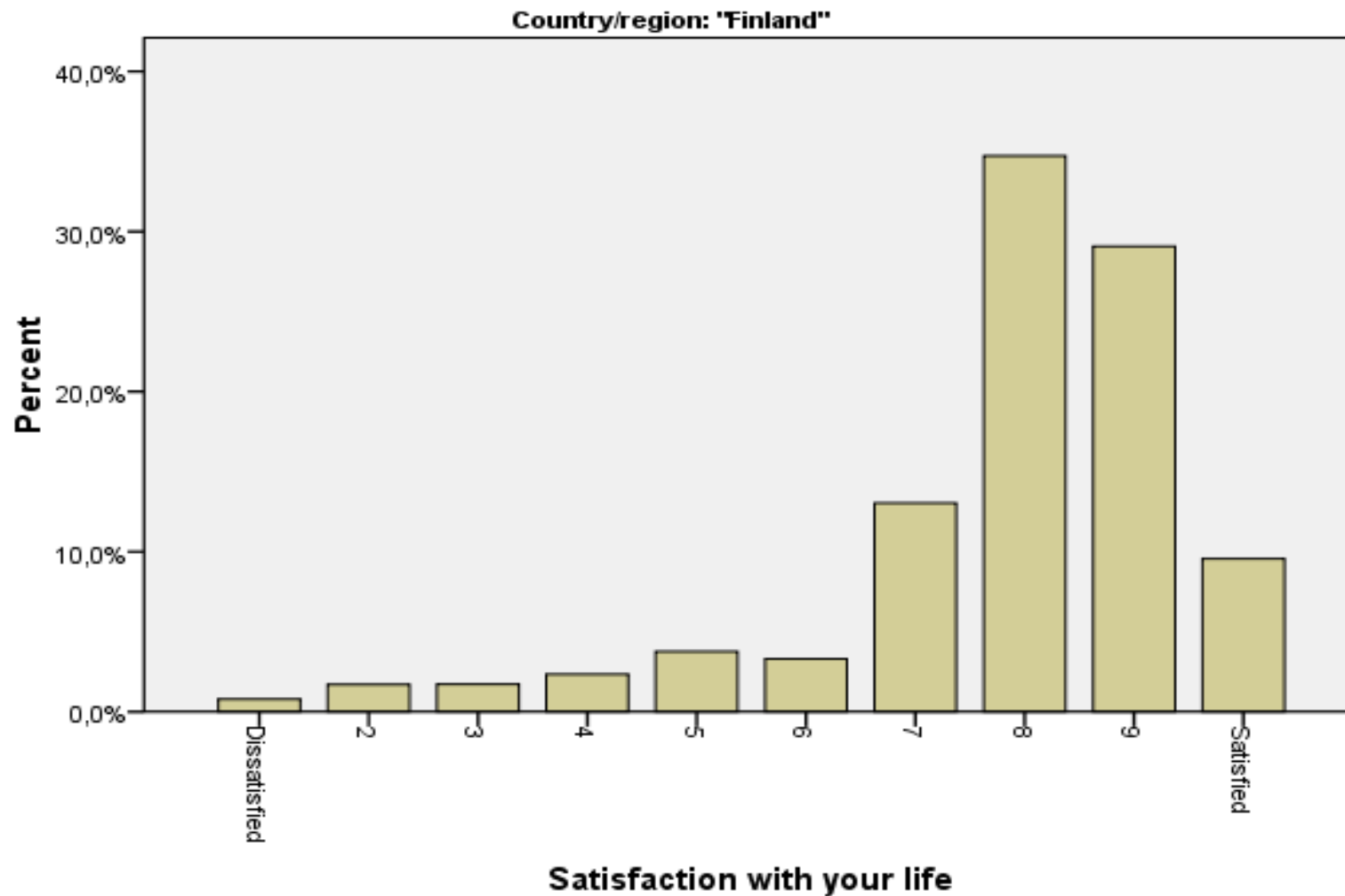
How happy are we?

Zimbabwe 2005



How happy are we?

Finland



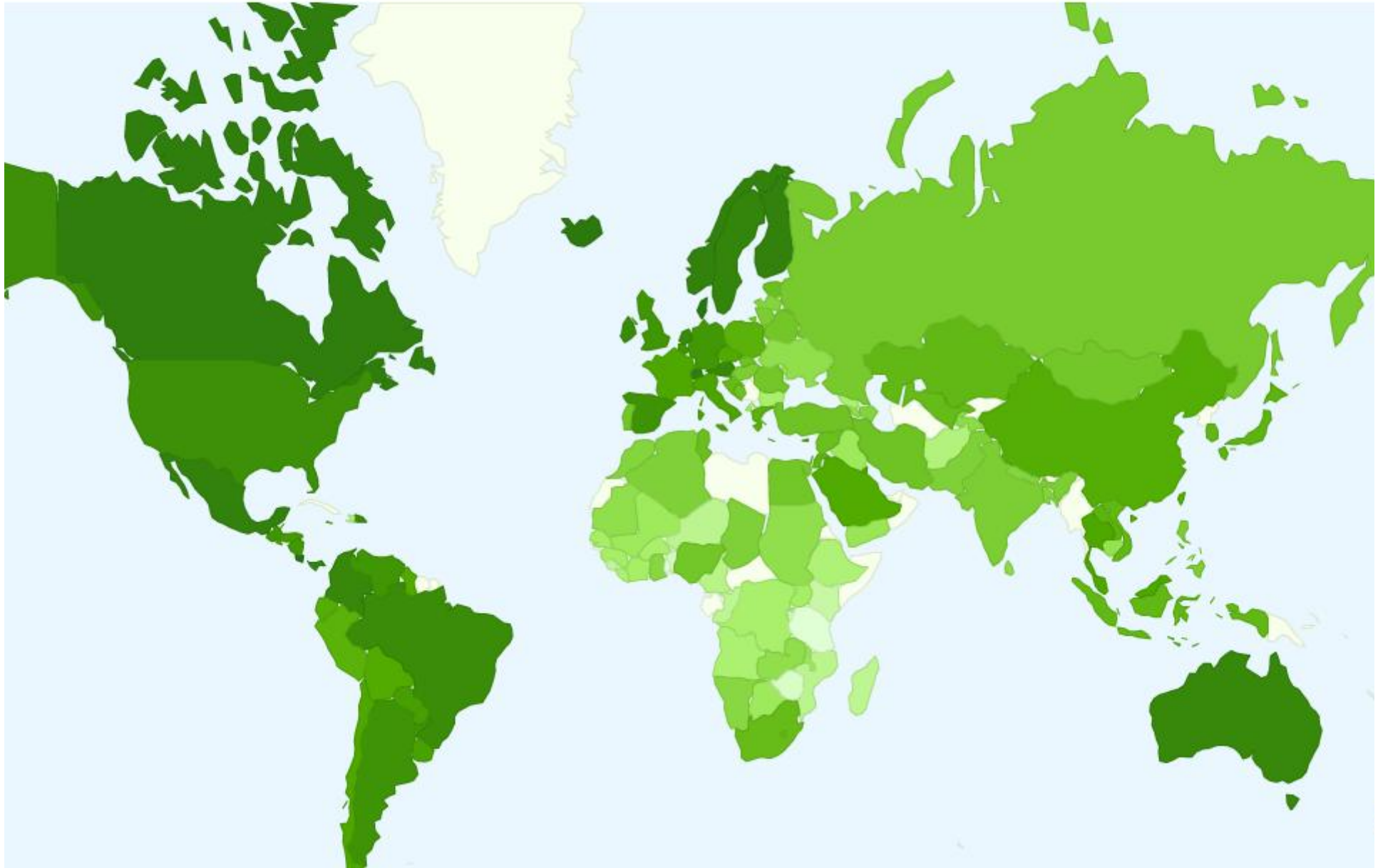
How happy are we?

Happiness in nations 2000-2009

- Denmark 8,3
- **Finland 7,9**
- USA 7,4
- Germany 7,1
- France 6,6
- Russia 5,5
- Iraq 4,7
- Zimbabwe 3,0

WORLDWIDE HAPPINESS IN 148 NATIONS 2000-2009

How much do people enjoy their life-as-a-whole on scale 0 to 10



What we know about happiness

What makes us happy?

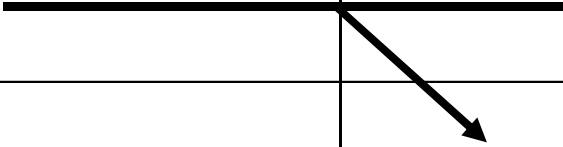
What makes us happy?

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Livability	Life-ability
<i>outcomes</i>	Utility	Happiness

The diagram consists of a 3x2 grid. The top row is empty. The middle row contains 'Livability' under 'external' and 'Life-ability' under 'internal'. The bottom row contains 'Utility' under 'external' and 'Happiness' under 'internal'. A horizontal line spans the width of the middle row, and an arrow points from its center down to the word 'Happiness'.

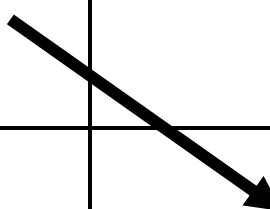
Analogous concepts in biology

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Biotope	Fitness
<i>outcomes</i>	Ecological function	Survival



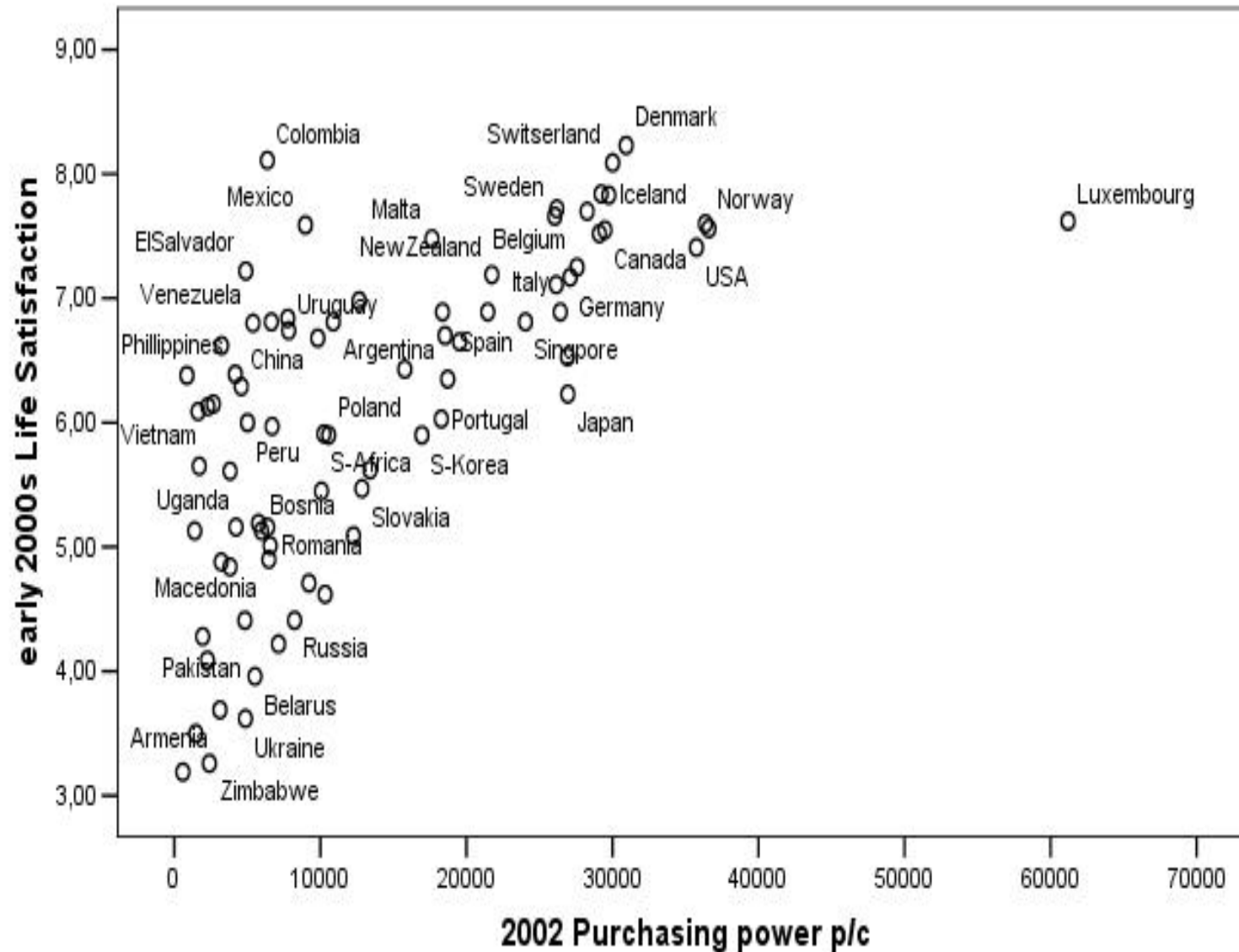
What makes us happy?

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Livability kind of society	Life ability
<i>outcomes</i>	Utility	Happiness



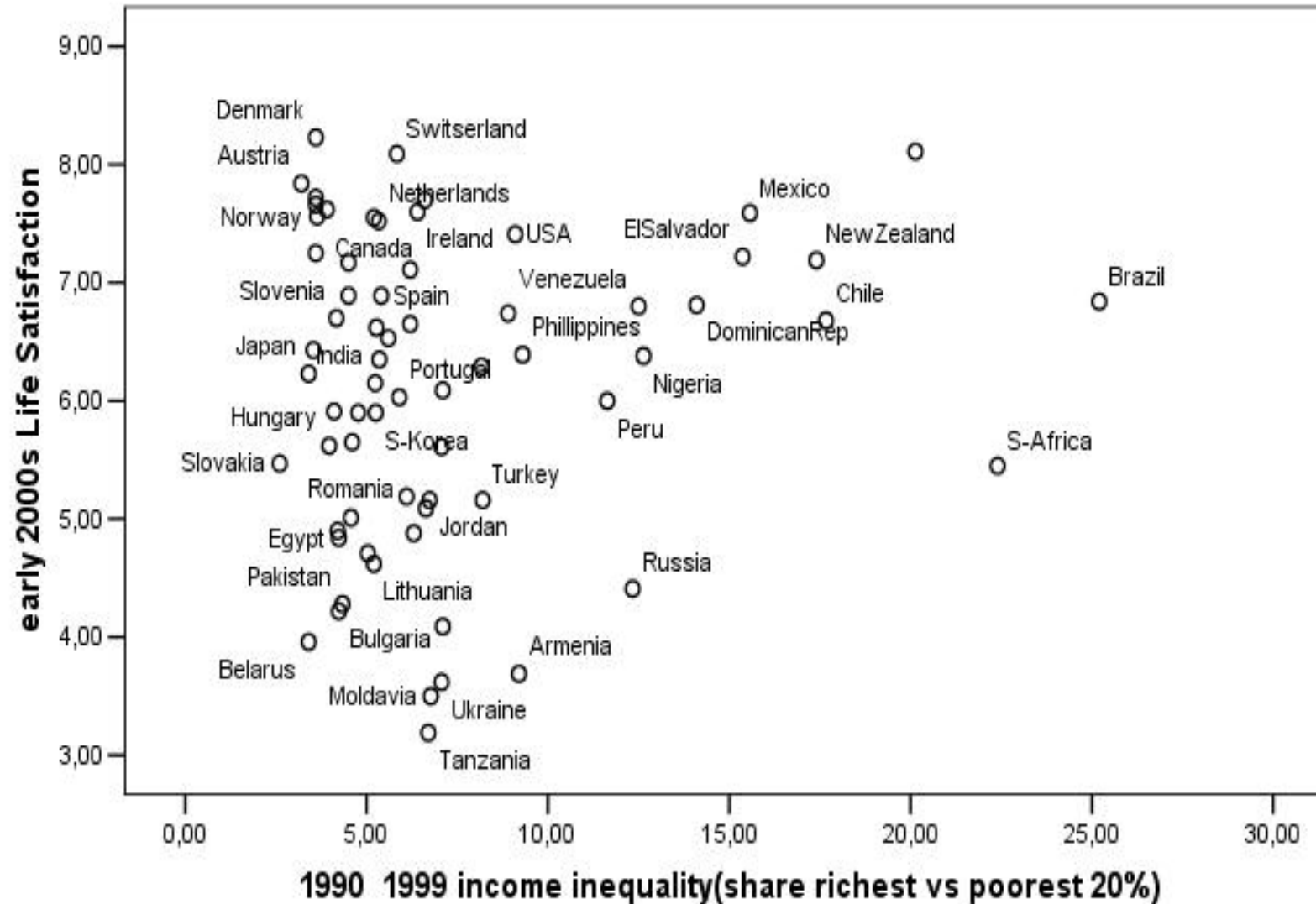
What makes us happy?

Wealth of the nation



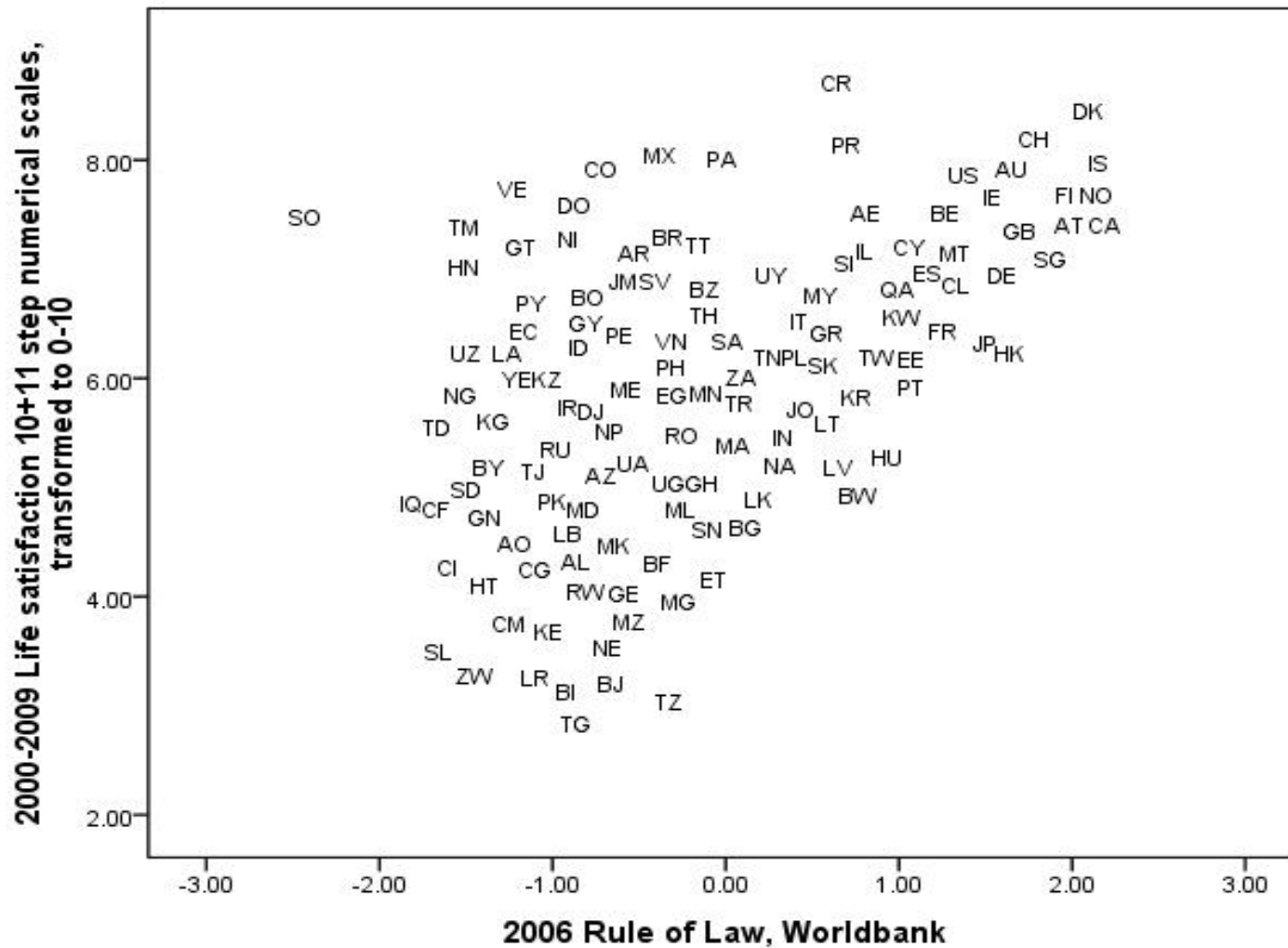
What makes us happy?

Inequality of incomes in the nation



What makes us happy?

Rule of law



What makes us happy?

Societal conditions

- Economic affluence +.65
- Good governance +.62
- Rule of law +.58
- Democracy +.50
- Personal freedom +.46
- State welfare +.22
- Income inequality +.18

Explained variance

75%

What makes us happy?

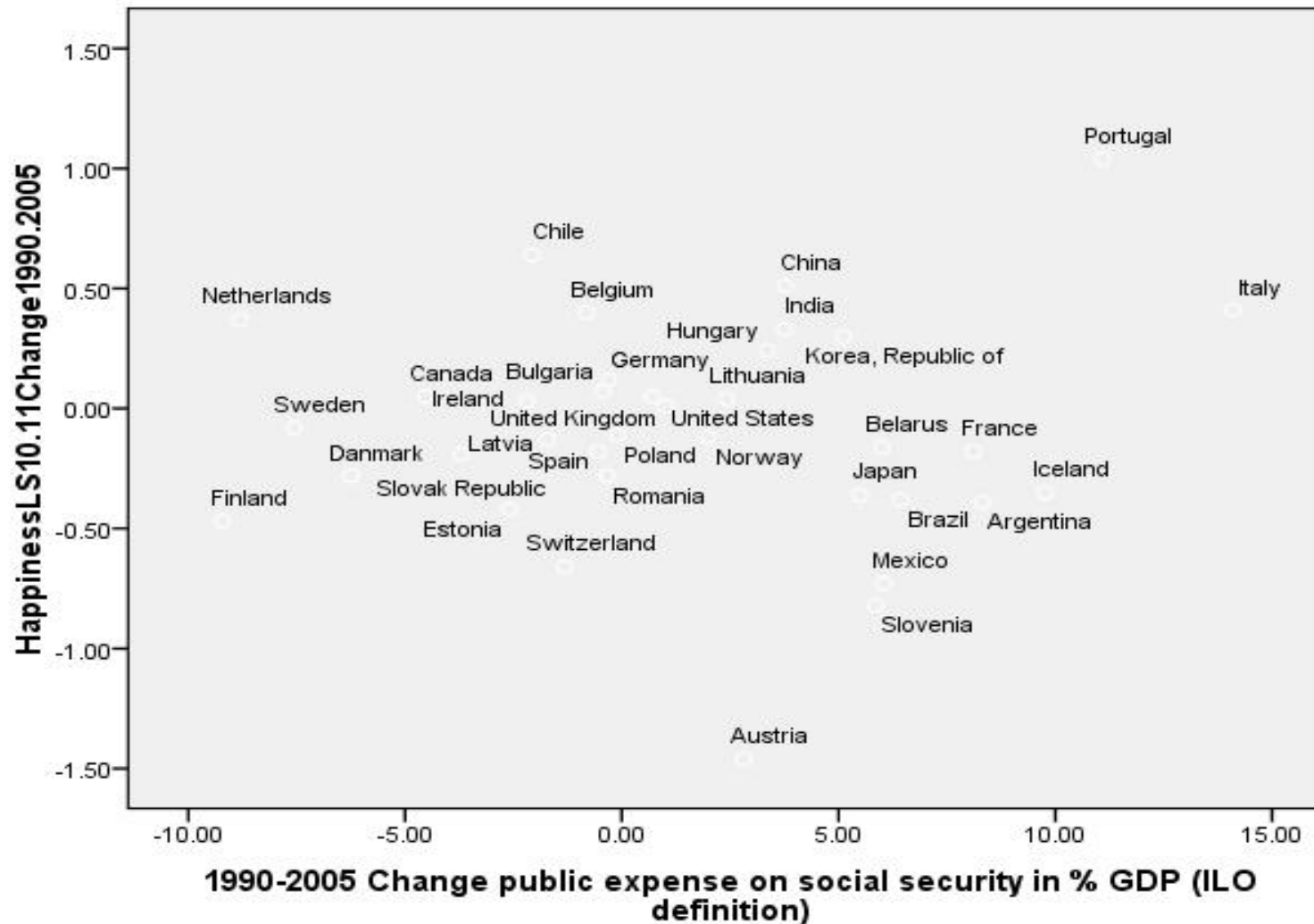
Societal conditions

- Economic affluence +.65
- Good governance +.62
- Rule of law +.58
- Democracy +.50
- Personal freedom +.46
- **State welfare** **+.22**
- Income inequality +.18

Explained variance

75%

Change social security by ***change*** happiness 1990-2005



What makes us happy?

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Livability	Life ability ↓
<i>outcomes</i>	Utility	Happiness

What makes us happy?

Sources of difference in modern nations

- Heredity $\pm 30\%$
- Good/bad luck $\pm 10\%$
- Social position $\pm 10\%$
- Learned abilities 25%?
- Choice 25%?

Great happiness possible?

Theoretical answers

- Comparison theory no
 - Happiness will oscillate
 - Around neutral level
- Need theory
 - Freudian theory of primitive urges **no**
 - Maslow's theory **yes**

Great happiness possible?

Empirical answers

- Most people are happy
- Most people live long and happy

How happy are we?

Happiness in nations 2000-2009

Greaterer happiness possible?

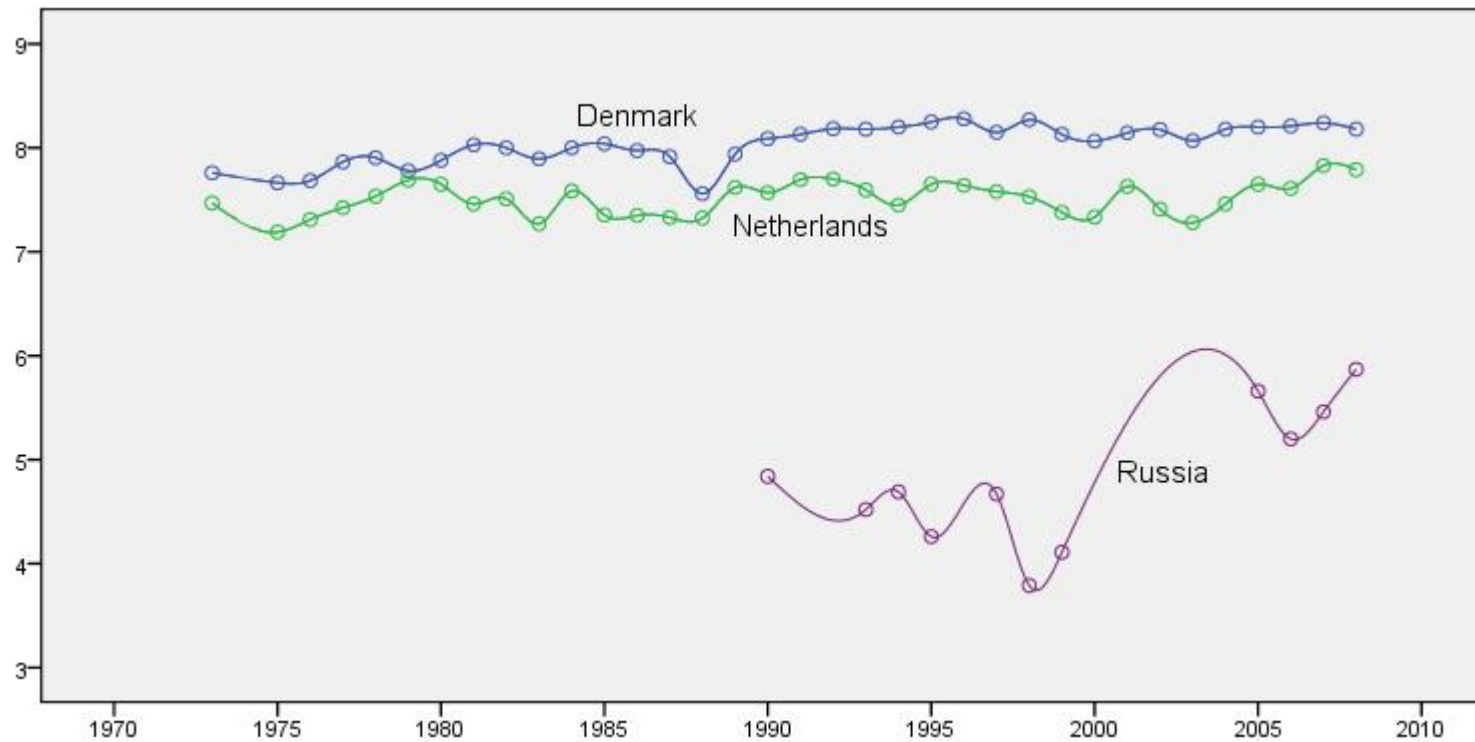
- Theoretical answers
- Empirical answers

Greaterer happiness possible?

Theoretical answers

- Trait theory no
- Comparison theory no
- Need theory yes

Greater happiness possible? Average happiness 1973-2010



Greater happiness possible?

Gains on scale 0-10, 1973-2010

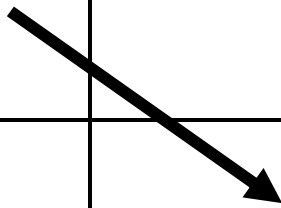
- Italy + 0,63
- Denmark + 0,55
- USA + 0,29
- France + 0,55
- UK + 0,26
- Netherlands + 0,26
- Japan + 0,20
- Belgium - 0,33

How create greater happiness?

- Improving livability of society
- Improving individual life-ability

What makes us happy?

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Livability of society	Life ability
<i>outcomes</i>	Utility	Happiness



How create greater happiness?

Improve livability of society

- Society as-a-whole *macro level*
- Institutions in society *meso level*
 - Schools
 - Work organizations
 - Old age homes

How create greater happiness?

More livable society

Do invest in:

- Good governance
- Rule of law
- Freedom

Don't invest in more

- Income equality
- State welfare
- Economic growth?

How create greater happiness?

More livable institutions

- Happiness is a major aim of
 - Schools
 - Care homes
- As yet no measurement of happiness effects
- Hence, no competition on happiness

What makes us happy?

	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	Livability	Life ability ↓
<i>outcomes</i>	Utility	Happiness

How create greater happiness?

Strengthen life-abilities of individuals

Do invest in:

- (preventive) mental health care
- Support of life choices

Don't invest in

- More schooling?

How create greater happiness?

Strengthen life-abilities of individuals

Do invest in:

- (preventive) mental health care
- **Support of life choices**

Don't invest in

- More schooling

How create greater happiness?

Better informed life choice

Problem

- Happiness depends partly on choice: 25%?
- Difficult to predict our own happiness
Gilbert: 'Stumbling on happiness'
- Hence much sub-optimal choice
Kahneman: Expected vs experienced utility
Frey: Mis-predicting utility

How create greater happiness?

Better informed life choice

Solution 1: Mood monitoring

- Use of happiness diary for education
- Feedback on
 - How happy you are compared to comparable people
 - Profile of your enjoyment of activities

How create greater happiness?

Better informed life choice

Solution 2: Chart consequences of choice

- Investigate long-term effects on happiness
 - of major choices
 - in large scale panels
- Assess probabilities for people like you
- Analogous to
 - tests of consumer goods
 - Research on health consequences of behavior



How happy are you?

Understanding happiness



Comparative Happiness Indicator

Are you happier than other people? The Happiness Indicator answers this question, including if you could be happier than you are now.



Happiness Diary

People derive happiness from daily life... 'Will offer you a better understanding of your own happiness, which is vital in identifying the lifestyle that suits you best.

News

This website is currently under construction. Over time, important research findings based on the Happiness Indicator project will be placed [here](#).

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Register

Email:

Password:

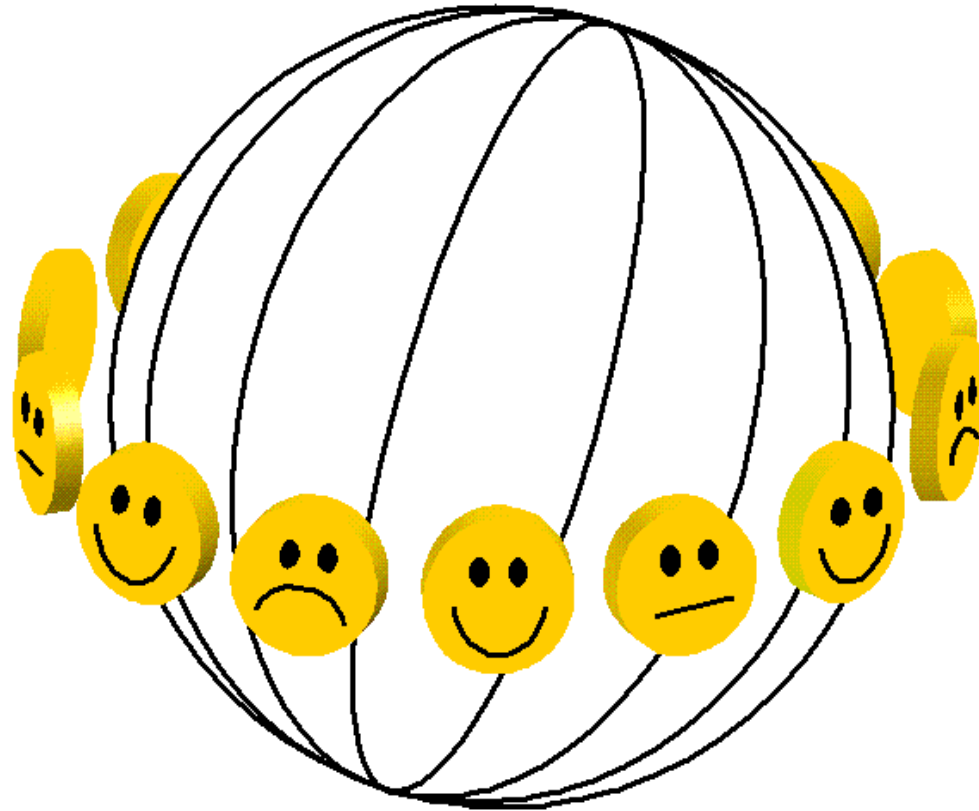
[Forgot your password?](#)

Log in

Conclusion

- Greater happiness is possible
- This can be achieved at three levels
 - macro level of society
 - meso level of organizations
 - micro level of individuals
- Effect-research is required at all three levels

World Database of Happiness



<http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl>