

**GREATER HAPPINESS**  
**for a greater number**  
Is that possible and desirable?

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Club of Amsterdam

# Questions

- What is 'happiness'?
- How happy are we?
- What make us happy?
- Is greater happiness possible?
- Is greater happiness desirable?

**What is 'happiness'?**

# 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>	<b>Livability</b>	<b>Life-ability</b>
<i>outcomes</i>	<b>Utility</b>	<b><u>Satisfaction</u></b>

# 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>	<b>Pleasure</b>	<b>Domain satisfaction</b>
<i>Whole</i>	<b>Top experience</b>	<b><u>Life satisfaction</u></b> (Happiness)

**How happy are we?**



How happy are we?

## **Example of a survey question**

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

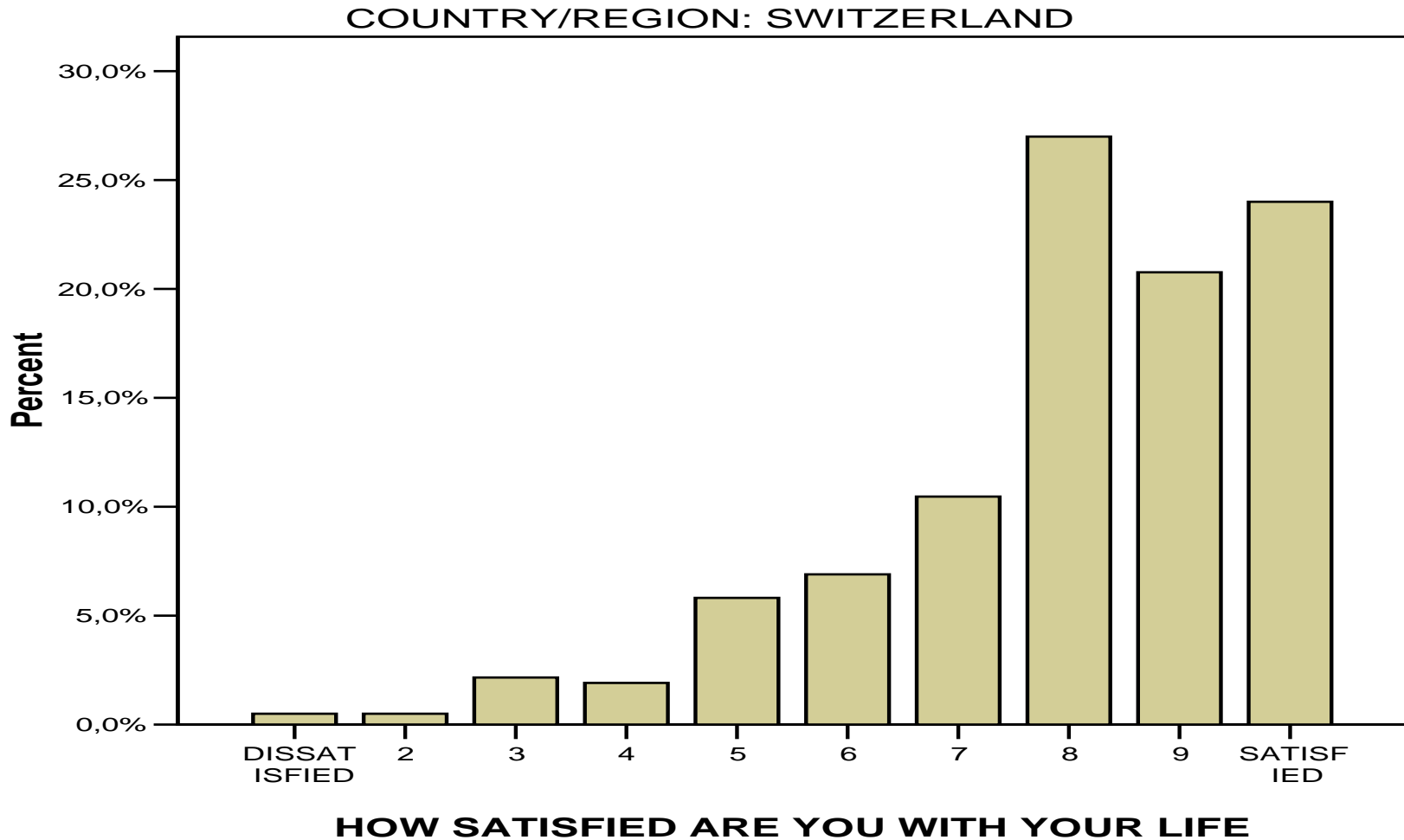
**1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

**Dissatisfied**

**Satisfied**

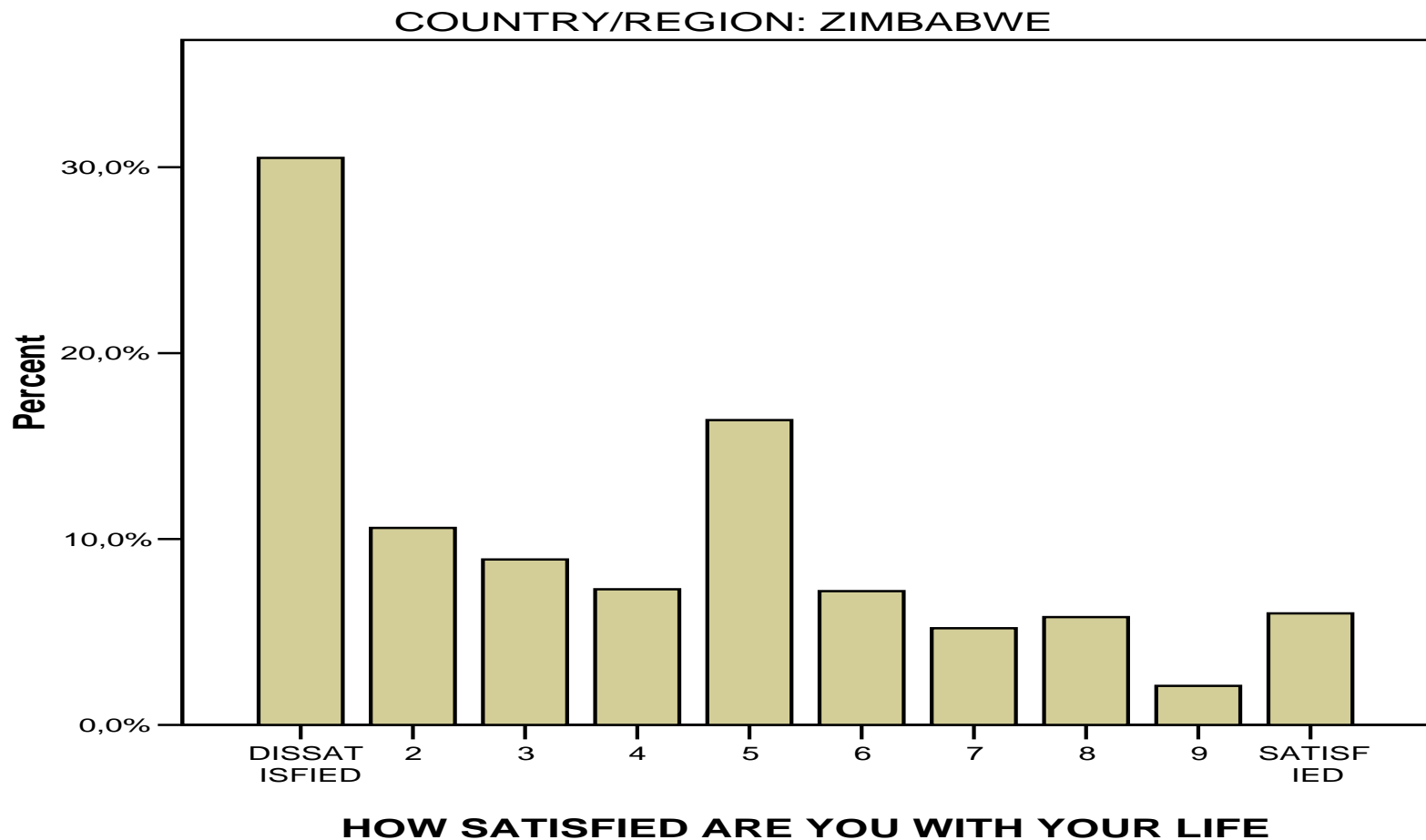
# How happy are we?

## Switzerland 2000



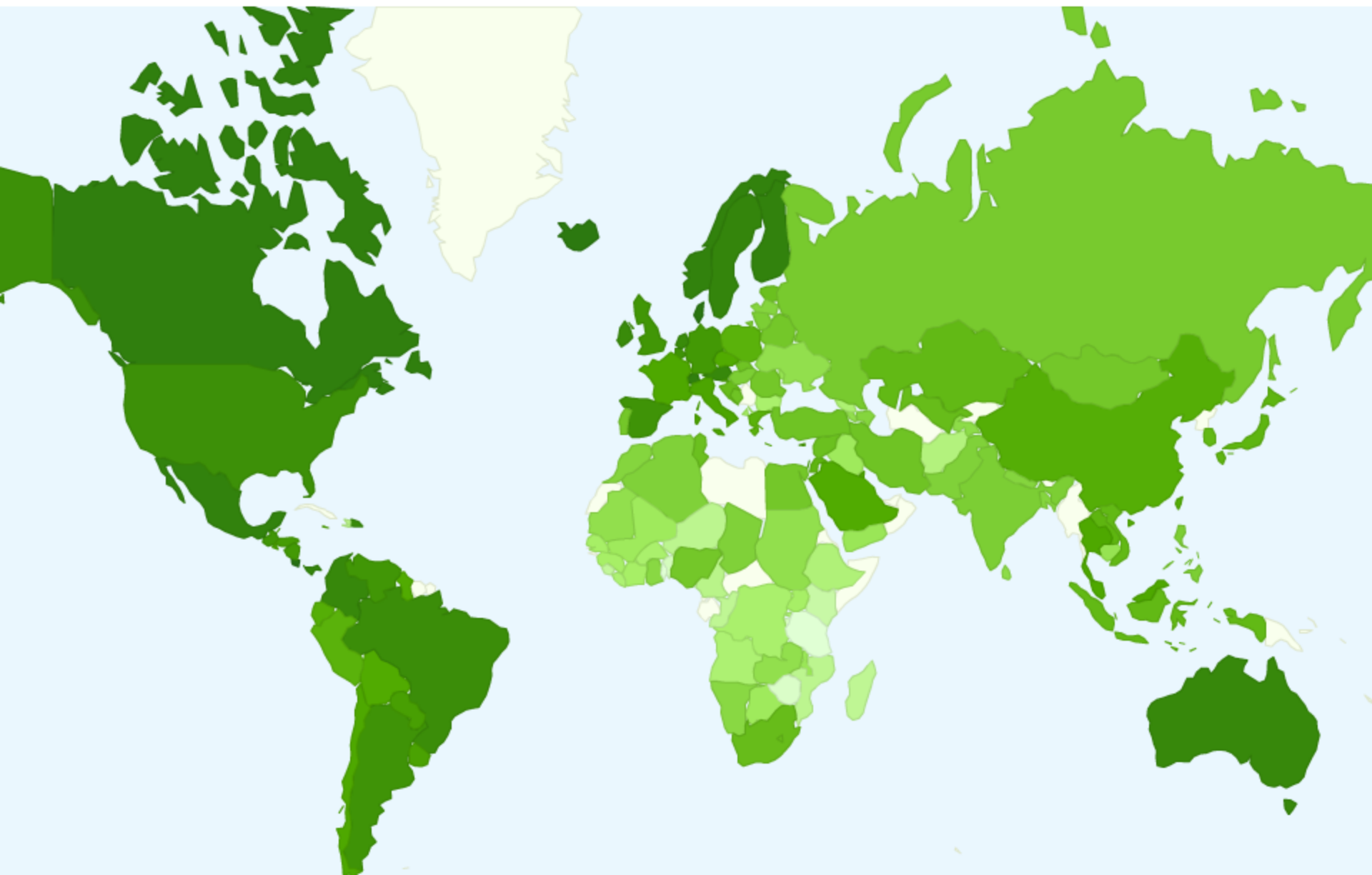
# How happy are we?

## Zimbabwe 2000



# WORLD HAPPINESS IN 148 NATIONS 2000-2009


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



**What makes us happy?**

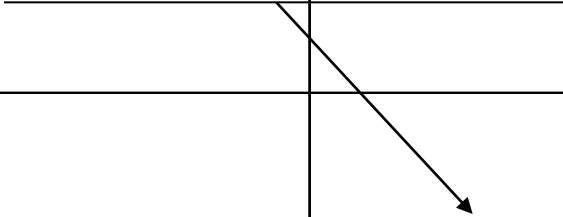
# What makes us happy?

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



# Analogous concepts in biology

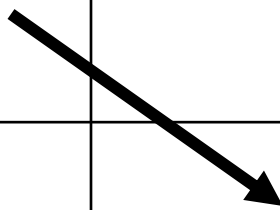
	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	<b>Biotope</b>	<b>Fitness</b>
<i>outcomes</i>	<b>Ecological function</b>	<b>Survival</b>



The diagram illustrates the relationship between biological concepts. A horizontal line is drawn below the 'Biotope' cell, and an arrow points from its right end to the 'Survival' cell, indicating a conceptual link or flow from the external biotope to the internal survival outcome.

# What makes us happy?

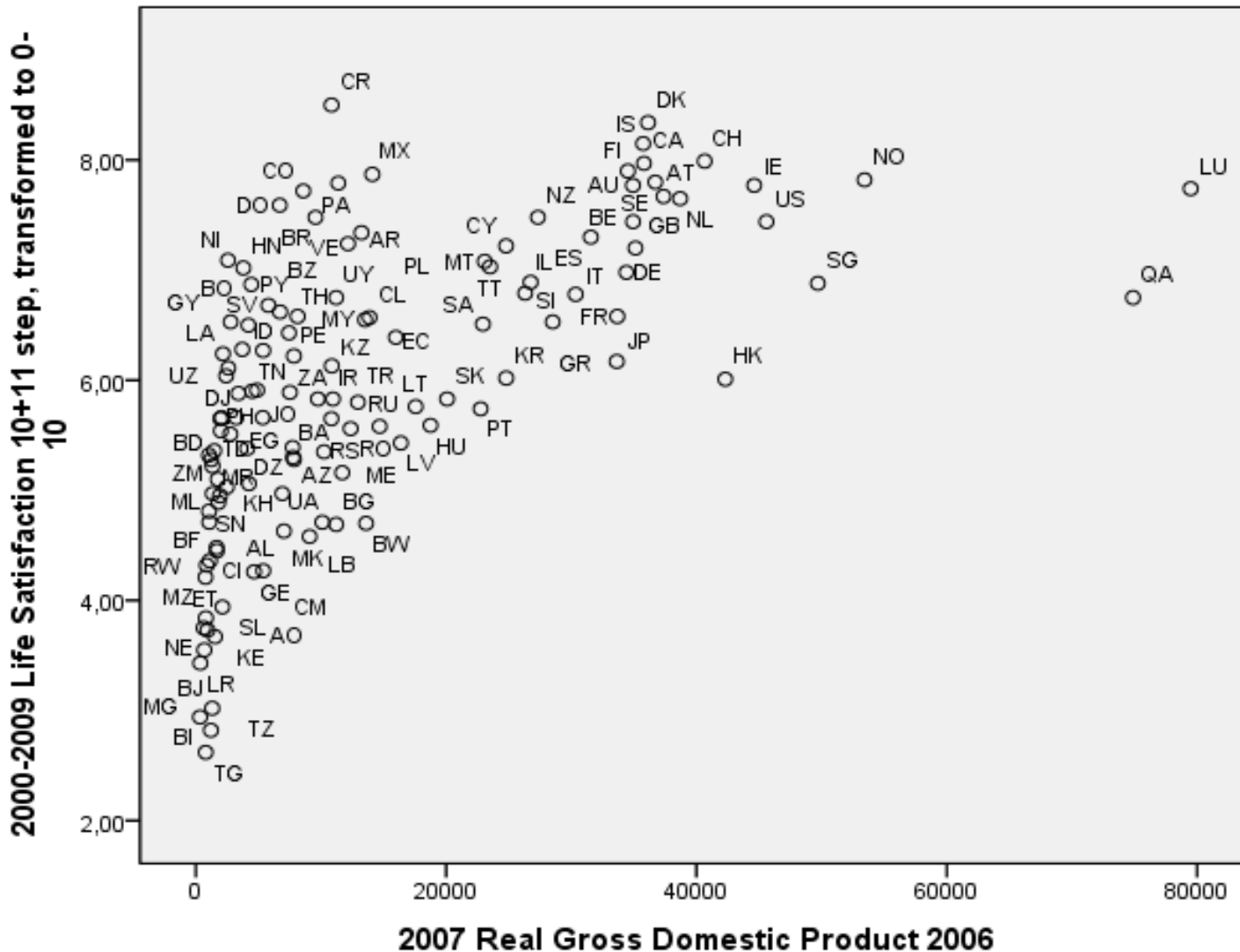
	<i>external</i>	<i>internal</i>
<i>chances</i>	<b>Livability</b> kind of society	<b>Life ability</b>
<i>outcomes</i>	<b>Utility</b>	<b>Happiness</b>





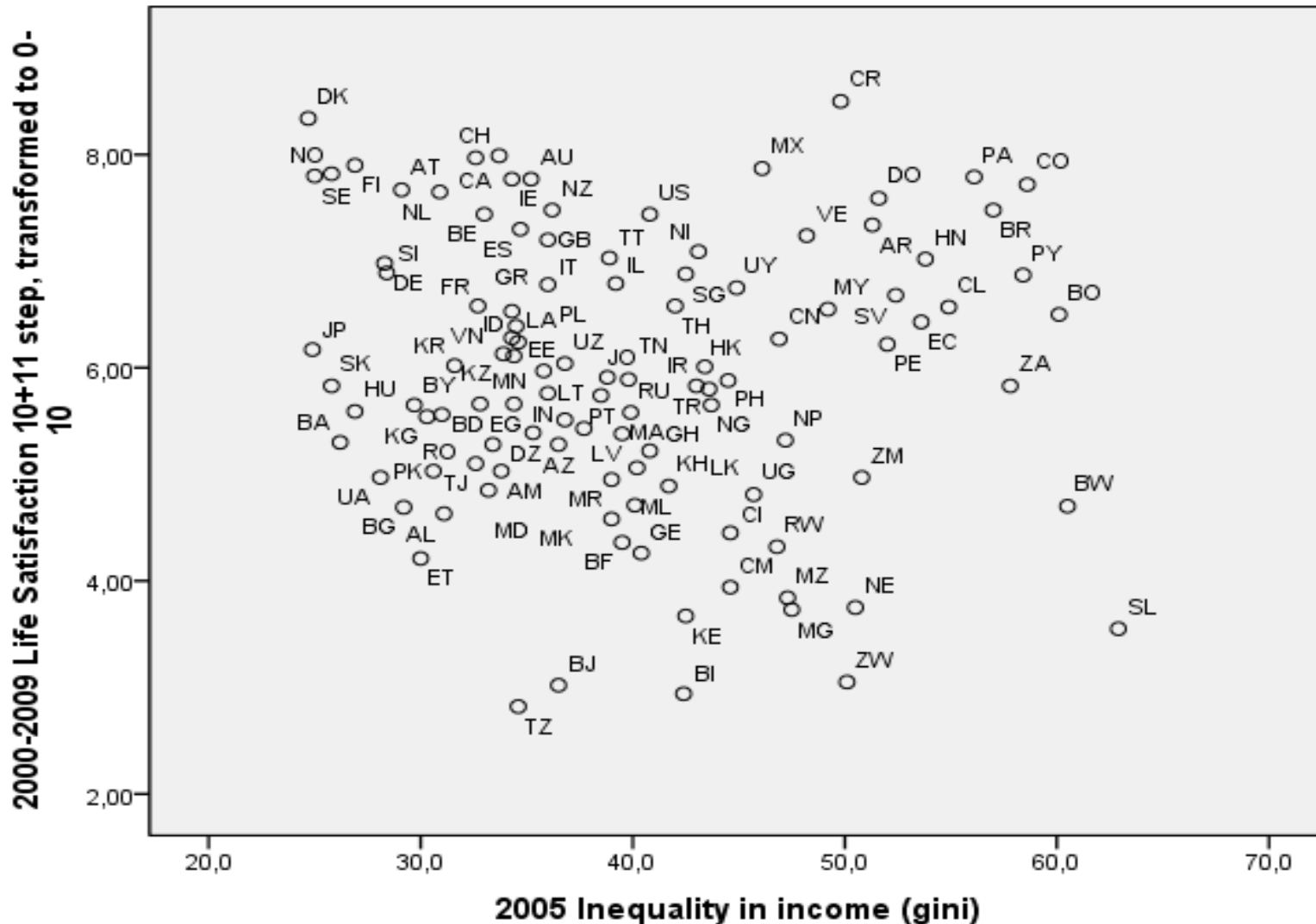
# What makes us happy?

## Wealth of the nation



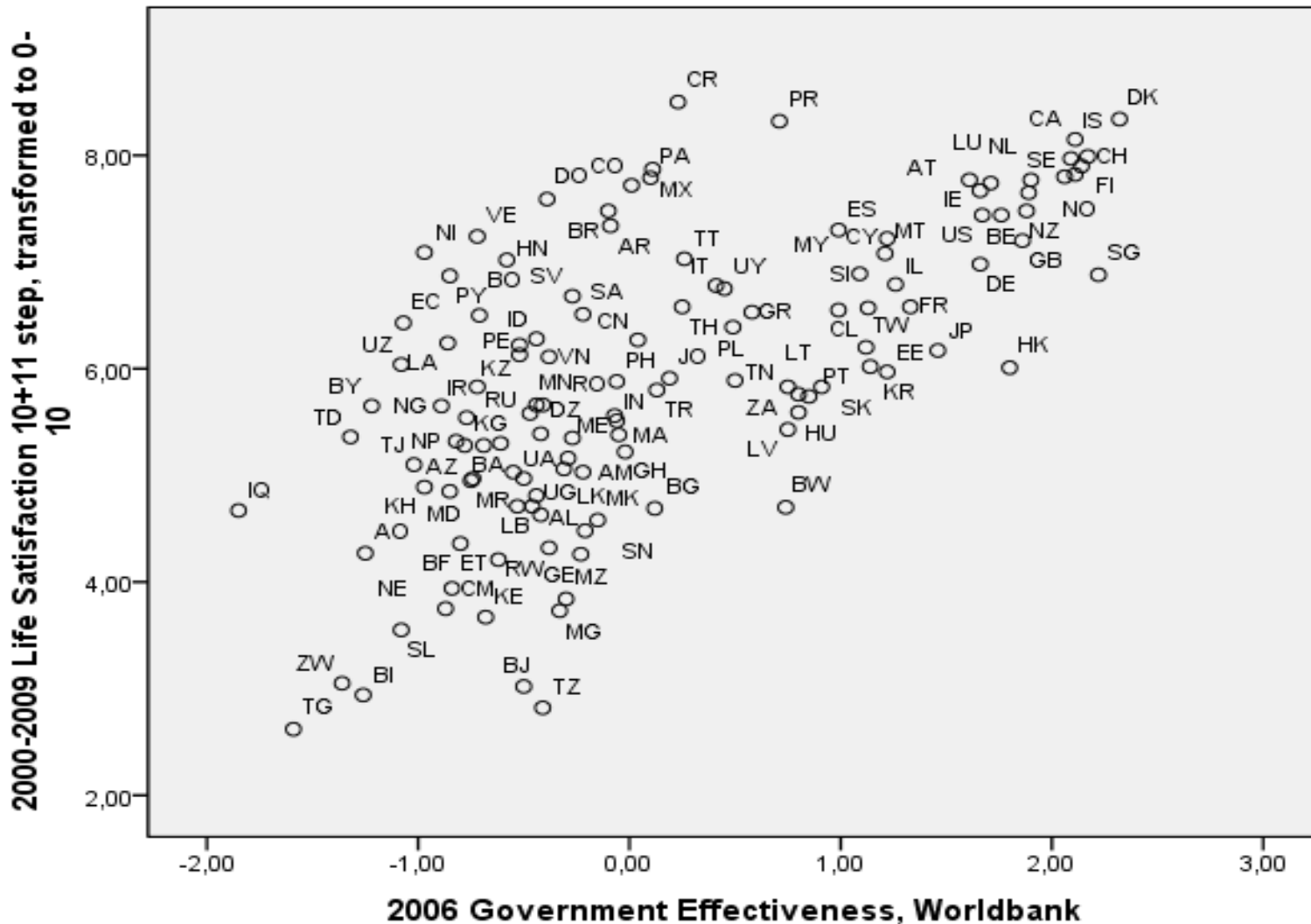
# What makes us happy?

## Inequality of incomes in the nation



# What makes us happy?

## Good Governance



# What makes us happy?

## **Societal conditions** in 135 nations

- Good governance +.66
- Economic affluence +.63
- Democracy +.60
- Gender equality +.58
- Income inequality - .07

*Explained variance* 75%

# What makes us happy?

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

# 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%?

**Greater happiness possible?**

# Greater happiness possible?

- Theoretical answers
- Empirical answers



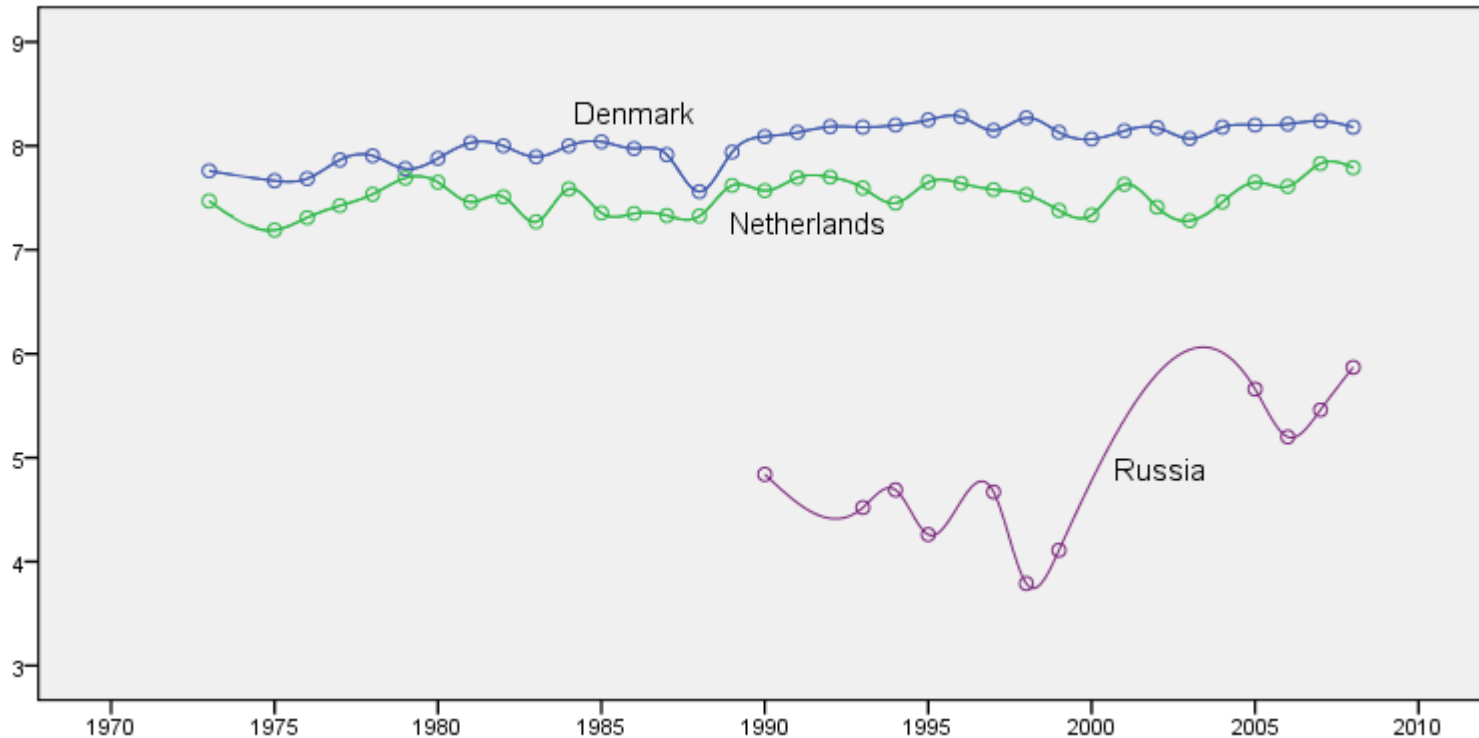
# Greater happiness possible?

## *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, 1973-2006

- Italy + 0,96
- Denmark + 0,50
- USA + 0,34
- France + 0,28
- UK + 0,06
- Netherlands + 0,10
- Japan + 0,00
- Belgium - 0,53

**Is greater happiness desirable?**

# Is greater happiness desirable?

## *Presumed negative effects of happiness*

- Passive
- Self centered
- Hedonistic
- Unconcerned about the world

Idea of '*Contented cow*'

Described in '*Brave New World*'

# Is greater happiness desirable?

## *Observed positive effects of happiness*

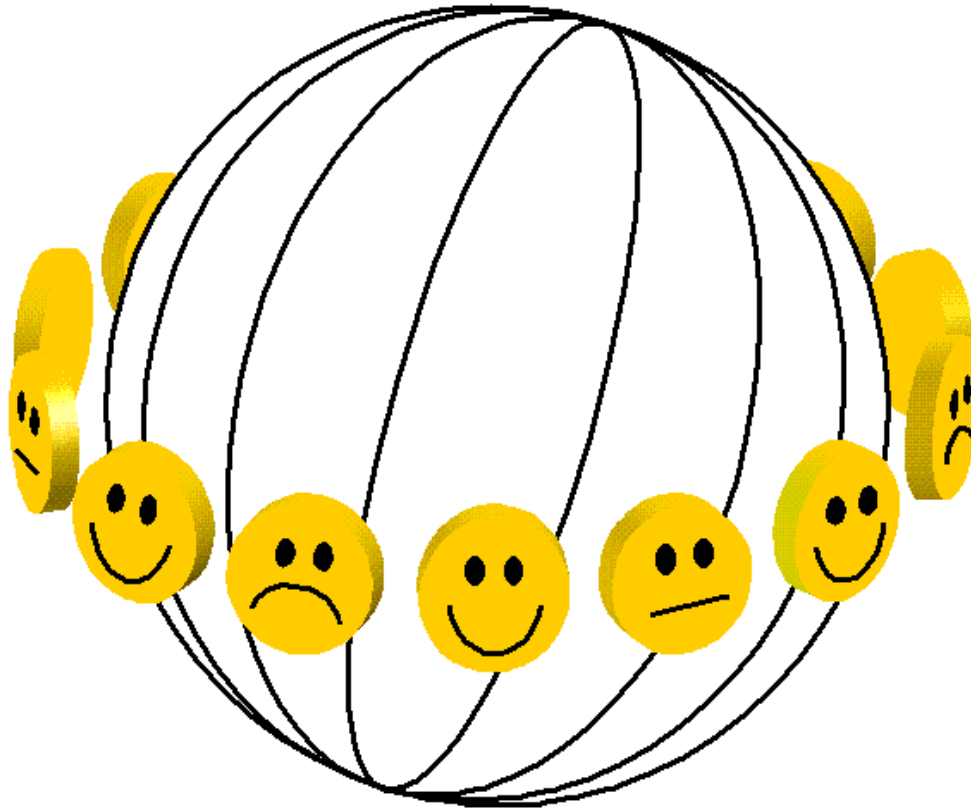
- Active
- Creative
- Social
- Open to pleasure, but not narrow hedonistic
- Concerned about the world

*Fits theory that happiness signals thriving*

# Conclusion

- Greater happiness is possible
- Greater happiness is desirable

# World Database of Happiness



<http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl>