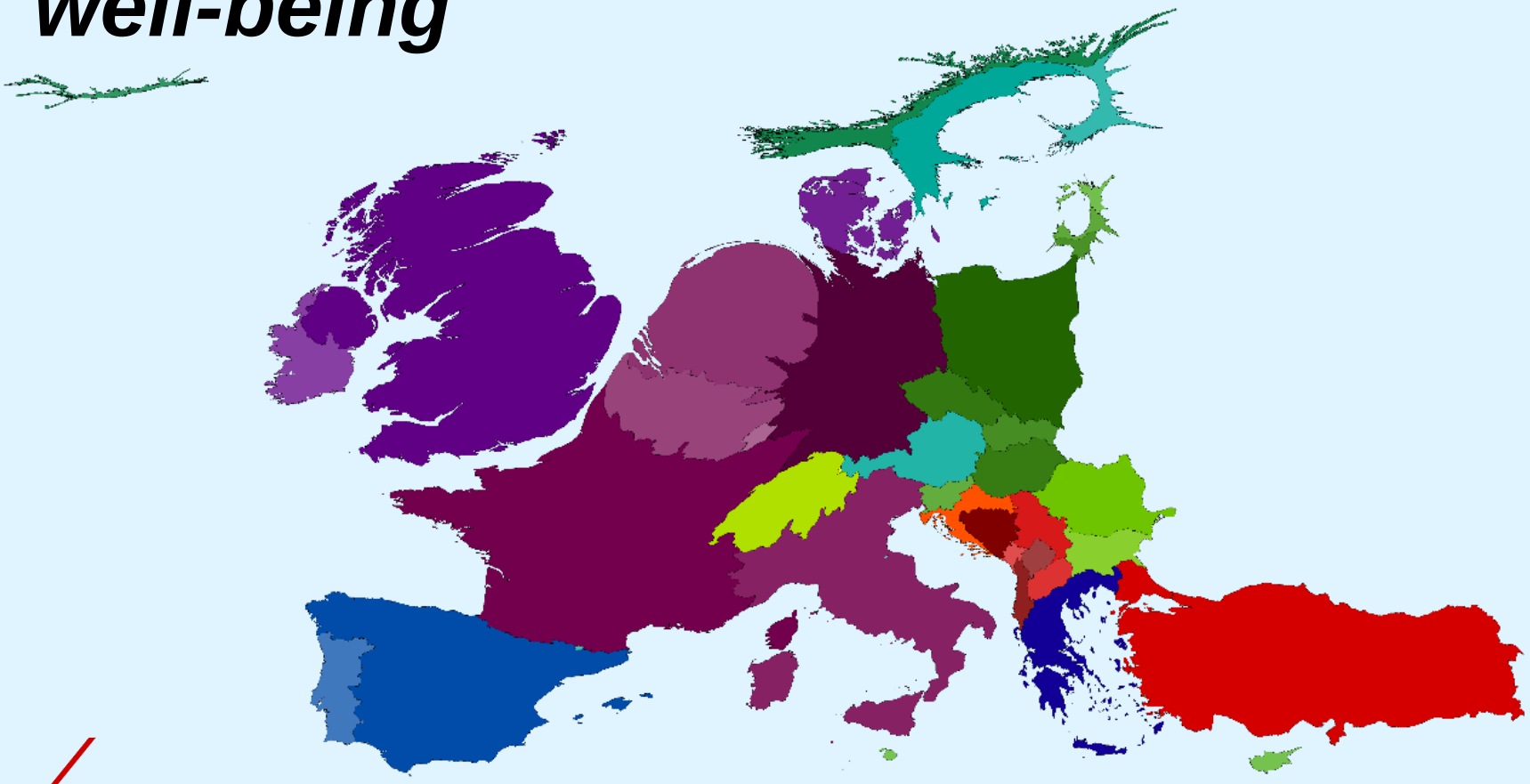
The geography of happiness and well-being



university of groningen

faculty of spatial sciences

Dimitris Ballas

https://www.rug.nl/staff/d.ballas/

Outline

- What is happiness? Can it be measured?
- Individual determinants of happiness and well-being
- The geography of happiness
- Contextual determinants of happiness and well-being
- The impact of inequality

where* and *how* we *live* and *how* we *feel

- *Places Rated Almanac* (Savageau, 2007)
- *Quality of Life Rankings* (Mercer, 2012)
- *Crap Towns: The 50 Worst Places to Live in the UK* (Jordison and Kieran, 2003)

Perceptions and Theories of Happiness through Time and Space

When we look at the world's great thinkers… [we] find them different in time, different in place, different in language and culture. Yet inevitable though these differences are, they cannot obscure the deep similarities in how we search for happiness.

(Schoch, 2007, p. 13)

Perceptions and Theories of Happiness through Time and Space

Buddhism and emphasis on the individual: "a state of saintliness, that is characterized by perfect inner peace, enlightenment and the abolition of all wants"

(Zhang and Veenhoven, 2007: 8)

What is the good life for man? The question of what is a full and rich life cannot be answered for an individual in abstraction from the society in which s/he lives

(Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*)

All human actions should aim at producing the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people

Jeremy Bentham (1789/1983)

Building '*objective' indicators* for cities and regions

- *Natural amenities* (e.g. climate, physical beauty, proximity to mountains or coasts)
- *Urban amenities* (e.g. theatres, music halls, restaurants, public parks, health and education services, shopping choice)
- *Human-created amenities* (e.g. fiscal prudence, cultural and lifestyle tolerance, management of land use, crime levels, education, social capital)
- *Compensating differentials frameworks*

THE HUMAN ATLAS OF EUROPE

A continent united in diversity

"An essential toolkit for understanding Europe post-Brexit"

Dawn Foster, *The Guardian*

Includes:

- over 100 maps
- latest social and economic data
- key statistics
- league tables

DIMITRIS BALLAS | DANNY DORLING | BENJAMIN HENNIG

General happiness

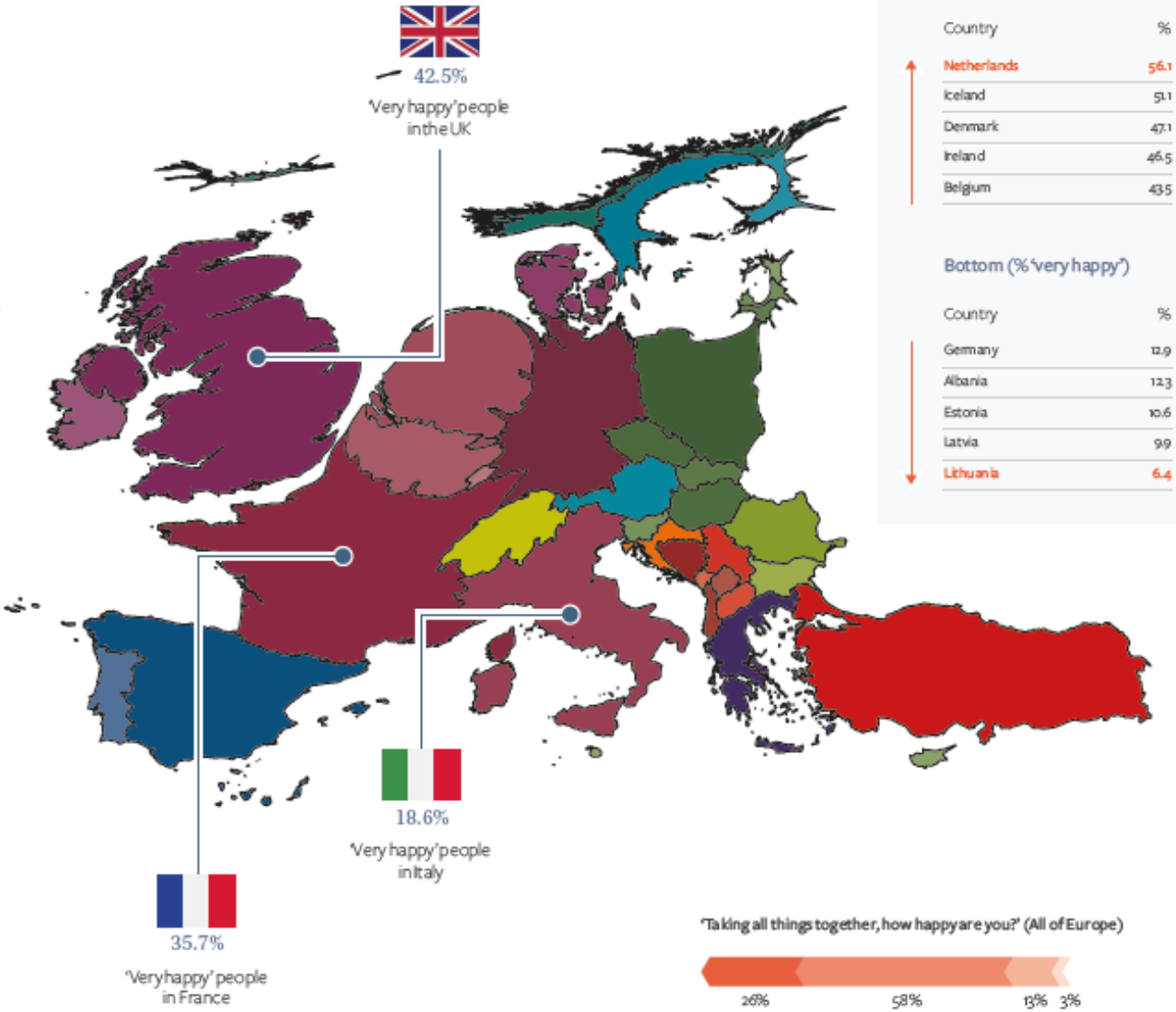
2008

When asked the subjective 'general happiness' question – 'Taking all things together, how happy are you?' – and given four answers to choose from ('very happy', 'quite happy', 'not very happy', 'not at all happy'), 26% of the 2008 European Values Survey respondents answered 'very happy'. This map shows the geographical distribution of these apparently 'very happy' Europeans.

There are two countries (the Netherlands and Iceland) where the estimated numbers of 'very happy' people make up more than half of the population aged 16 and over, whereas the three Baltic States all have a percentage of less than 10%. Caution is needed, however, when looking at the geography of happiness, as there may be cultural as well as perhaps linguistic issues affecting responses to happiness questions in surveys.

Overall, Europe appears to be quite a happy place, where 84% were at least 'quite happy' when this survey was taken. International comparisons often label South America as the happiest continent.

Colour key, see Reference map A1, p 10



Top (% 'very happy')

Country	%
Netherlands	56.1
Iceland	51.1
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Belgium	43.5

Bottom (% 'very happy')

Country	%
Germany	12.9
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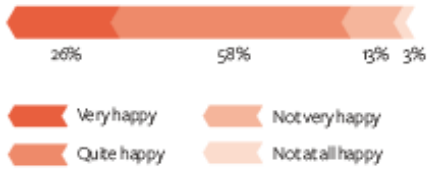
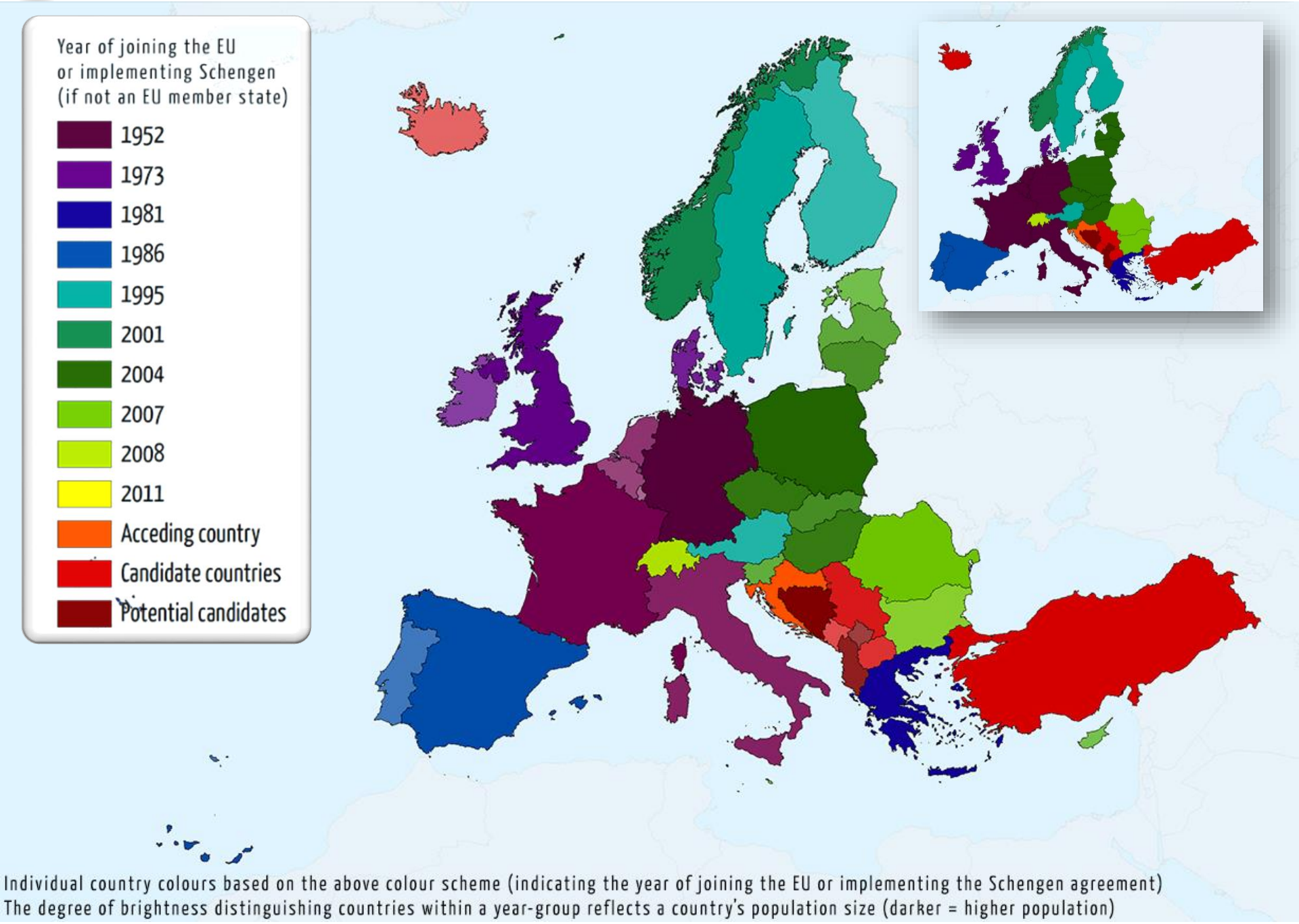
'Taking all things together, how happy are you?' (All of Europe)





Individual country colours based on the above colour scheme (indicating the year of joining the EU or implementing the Schengen agreement)
The degree of brightness distinguishing countries within a year-group reflects a country's population size (darker = higher population)

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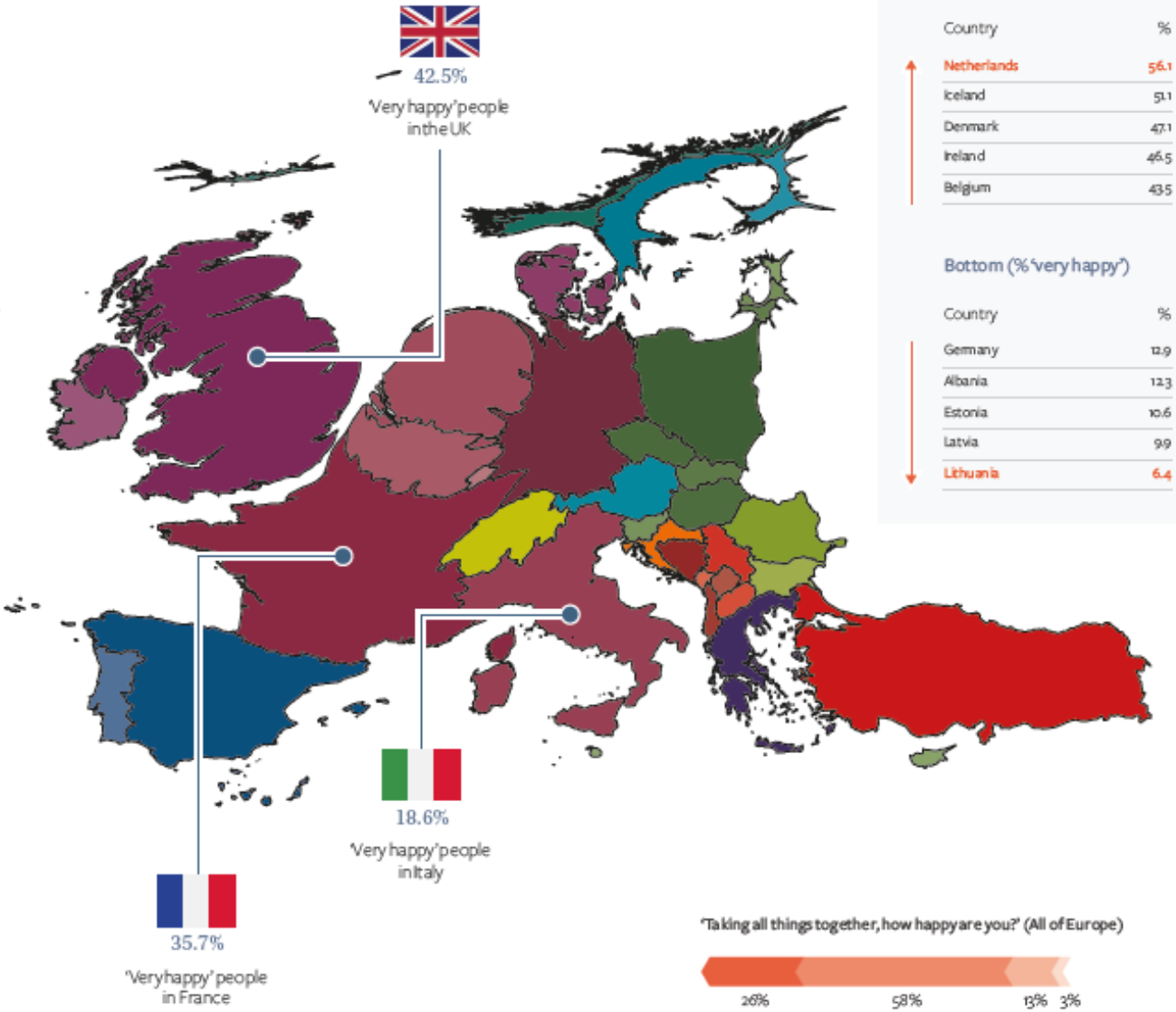

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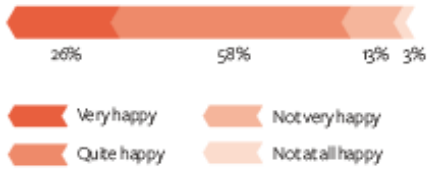


Can happiness be measured?

A person who has had a life of misfortune, with very little opportunities, and rather little hope, may be more easily reconciled to deprivations than others reared in more fortunate and affluent circumstances. The **metric of happiness may, therefore, distort the extent of deprivation in a specific and biased way.**

(Sen, 1987: 45, my emphasis)

Andrew Oswald and colleagues: statistical regression models of happiness measuring the impact of different factors and life events upon human well being

World Database of Happiness (Ruut Veenhoven)

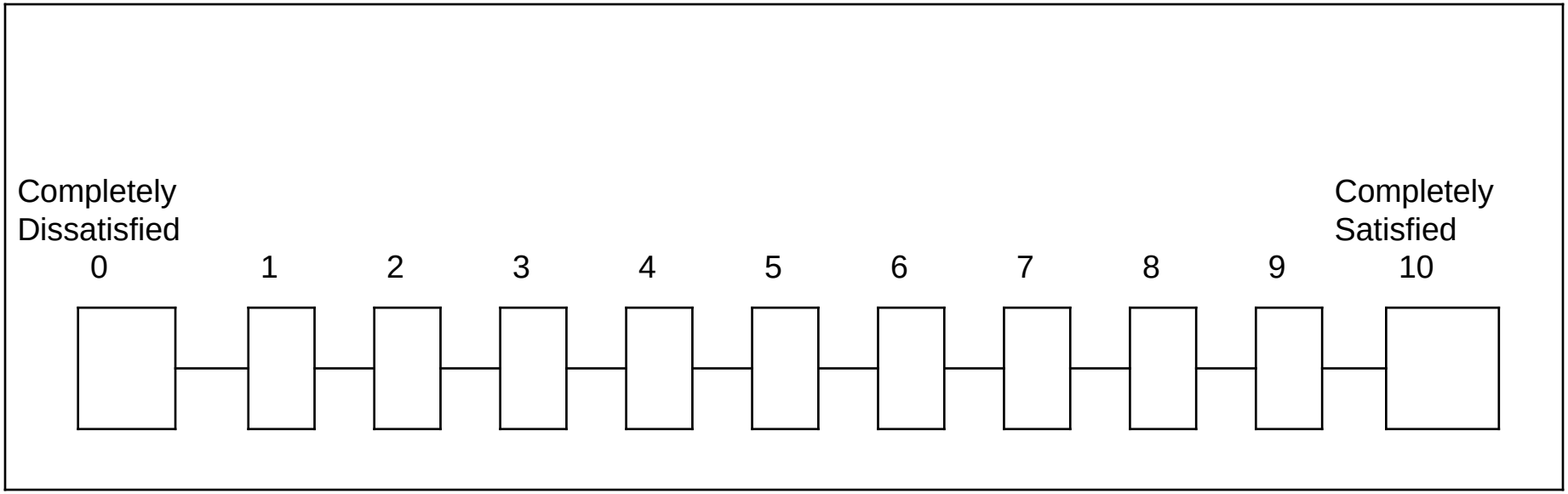
General Health Questionnaire (1)
Have you recently:

- Been able to concentrate on whatever you are doing?
- Lost much sleep over worry?
- Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?
- Felt capable of making decisions about things?
- Felt constantly under strain?
- Felt you could not overcome your difficulties?

General Health Questionnaire (2)
Have you recently:

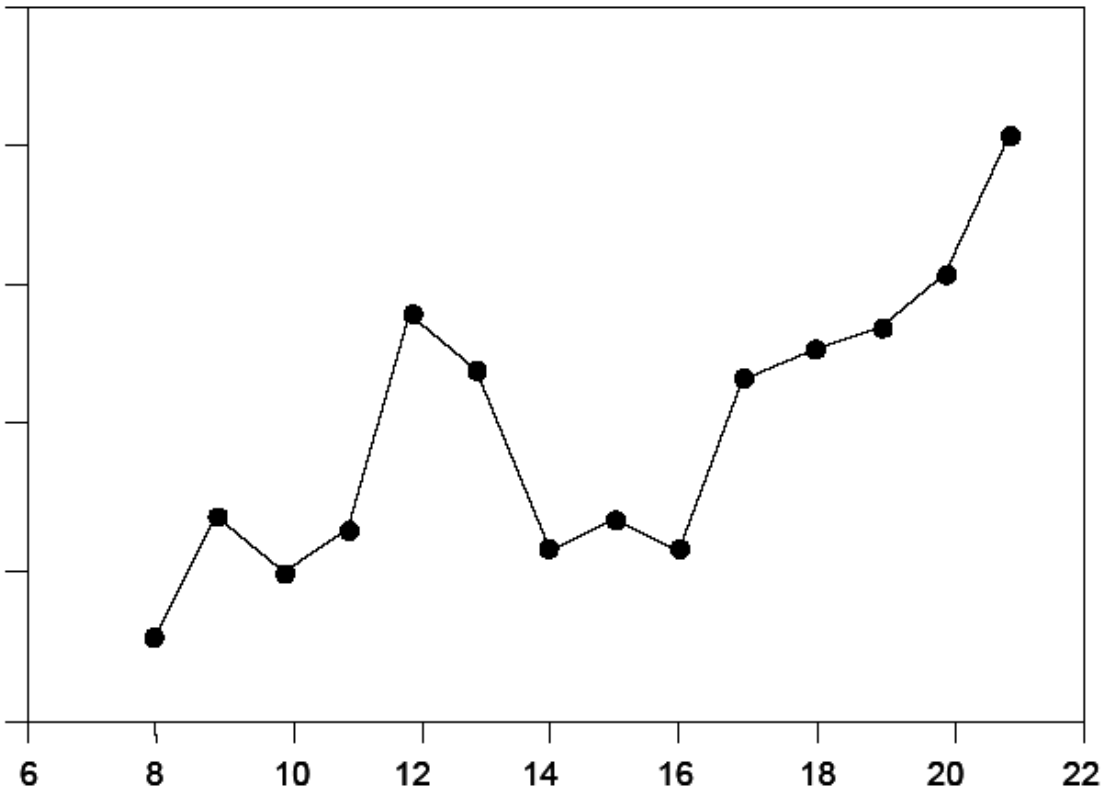
- Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?
- Been able to face up to your problems?
- Been feeling unhappy or depressed?
- Been losing confidence in yourself?
- Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?
- Been feeling reasonably happy all things considered?

"Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?"

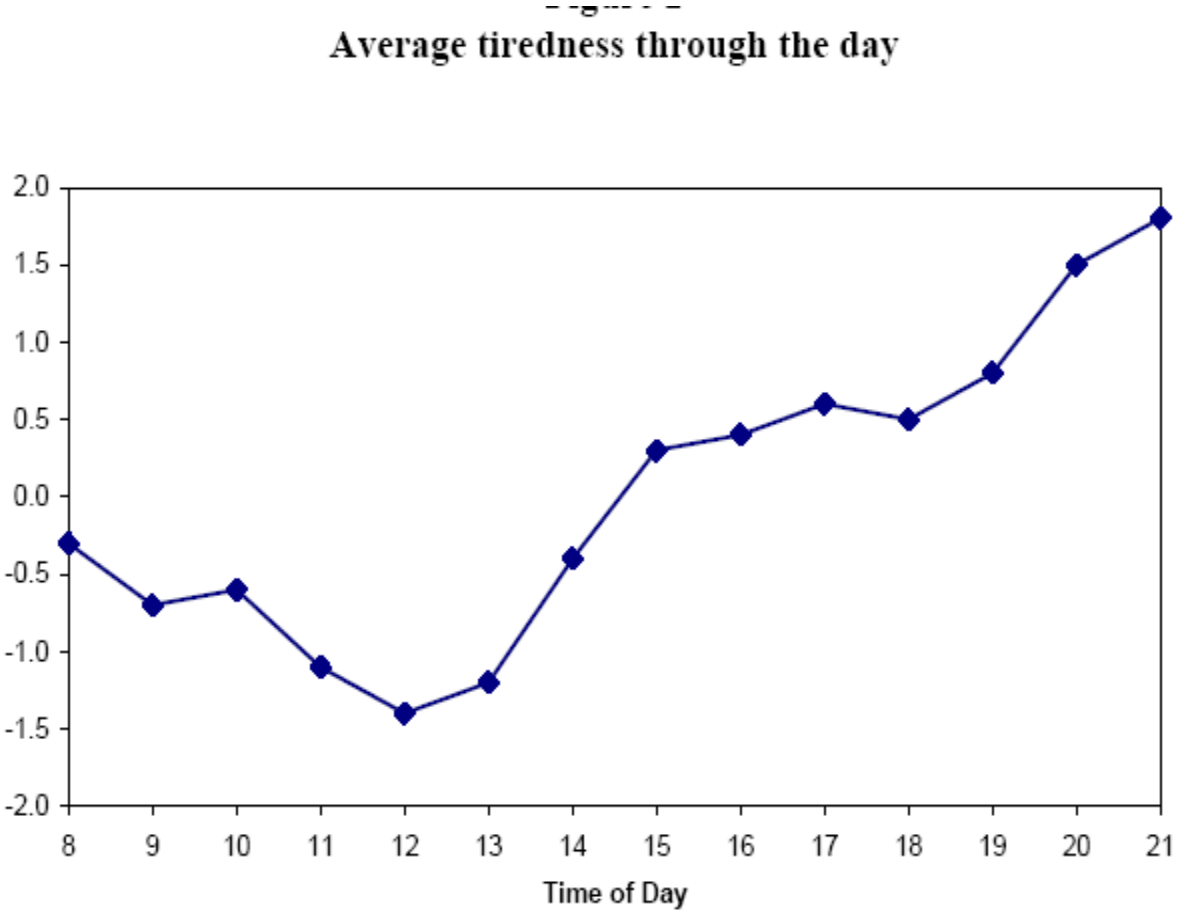


Average happiness through the day (Daniel Kahneman, after Layard, 2005)

Figure 1
Average happiness through the day



Average tiredness through the day (Daniel Kahneman, after Layard, 2005)



Happiness in different activities (Daniel Kahneman, after Layard, 2005)

	Happiness (index)	Average hours per day
Sex	4.7	0.2
Socialising after work	4.1	1.1
Dinner	4.0	0.8
Relaxing	3.9	2.2
Lunch	3.9	0.6
Exercising	3.8	0.2
Praying	3.8	0.5
Socialising at work	3.8	1.1
Watching TV	3.6	2.2
Phone at home	3.5	0.9
Napping	3.3	0.9
Cooking	3.2	1.1
Shopping	3.2	0.4
Computer at home	3.1	0.5
Housework	3.0	1.1
Childcare	3.0	1.1
Evening commute	2.8	0.6
Working	2.7	6.9
Morning commute	2.0	0.4

Note: Based on Day Reconstruction Study. Average happiness is net affect.

Happiness in different activities (Daniel Kahneman, after Layard, 2005)

Interacting with:	Average happiness
Friends	3,3
Parents/relatives	3
Spouse	2,8
My children	2,7
Co-workers	2,6
Clients/customers etc	2,4
Alone	2,2
Boss	2

Factors and variables linked to subjective happiness

- Age
- Education
- Social Class
- Income
- Marital status/relationships
- Employment
- Leisure
- Religion
- Health
- Life events and activities
- Environmental factors / amenities
- Urban versus rural areas / green spaces

"Event"	"Valuation”
Employment to unemployment	-£23,000.00
Single to married	£6,000.00
Married to separated	-£11,000.00
Married to widowed	-£14,000.00
Health excellent to Health good	-£12,000.00
Health excellent to Health fair	-£41,000.00

After Clark, A, Oswald, A, (2002),
A Simple Statistical Method for Measuring How Life Events affect Happiness,
International Journal of Epidemiology, 2002, 31(6), 1139-1144.

Life-events and happiness

- BHPS: What has happened to you (or your family) which has stood out as important?
- 145,408 major life events recorded between 1992-1995

Ballas, D., Dorling, D. (2007) Measuring the impact of major life events upon happiness, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 36, 1244-1252. doi:10.1093/ije/dym182

BHPS Major Life Events

HEALTH MENTIONS

- 01 Ill Health / Concern about Health
- 02 Hospitalisation / Operation
- 03 Accident (Involving Injury)
- 04 Health Tests (Positive & Negative)
- 05 Loss of Mobility / House-Bound
- 06 Recovery / Continuing Good Health
- 09 Health (*not elsewhere classified* - nec)

BHPS Major Life Events

CARING

- 10 Caring Responsibilities - Not Childcare (i.e. Who is Cared For?)
- 11 Babysitting (ie Who is the Sitter?)

BHPS Major Life Events

EDUCATION

- 12 Starting / In School
- 13 Leaving School
- 14 Starting / In Further Education (inc. Sixth Form)
- 15 Leaving Further Education
- 16 Studying For / Passing Educational / Vocational Qualifications / Acquiring Skills / Training (nec)
- 17 Travel Related to Study
- 19 Education (nec)

BHPS Major Life Events

EMPLOYMENT

- 20 Change of Job (inc. Hours, Status) / Starting Own Business
- 21 Planned / Possible Change of Job
- 22 Getting Job (Following Economic Inactivity)
- 23 Work-related Training (inc. Apprenticeship / HGV Licence / Work Experience)
- 24 Redundancy / Unemployment (Threat of or Actual)
- 25 Retirement
- 26 Travel Related to Work (Who Travels?)
- 27 Work-related Problems

BHPS Major Life Events

LEISURE / POLITICAL

- 30 Vacation / Travel (nec)
- 31 Leisure Activities
- 32 Learning to Drive / Passing Test (not HGV)
- 33 Political Participation / Voluntary Work (inc Committee Work)
- 34 Reference to National / World Events (who is Concerned by Event?)

BHPS Major Life Events

NON-FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- 35 Began Friendship (including Girl / Boy Friend)
- 36 End Friendship (including Girl / Boy Friend)
- 37 Spending Time with / Visiting Friends (Coded as Holiday as Appropriate)
- 38 Problems with Neighbours (Who Has the Problem?)
- 39 Non-Family Relationship (nec)

BHPS Major Life Events

FAMILY EVENTS

- 40 Pregnancy / Birth (Identity of Parent?)
- 41 Cohabitation
- 42 Engagements / Weddings
- 43 Separation / Divorce / End of Cohabitation
- 44 Leaving Parental Home
- 45 Death (Who Died?)
- 46 Wedding Anniversaries
- 47 Birthday Celebrations
- 48 Becoming Godparent
- 50 Spending Time / Visits with Relatives (Not Within Household)
- 51 Day-to-day Family Life
- 52 Family Problems (Person Causing Problems?)
- 53 Domestic Incident (eg Fire / Burst Pipes, etc)
- 54 Pets / Animals (Pet Coded)
- 59 Family Event / Family Reference (nec)

BHPS Major Life Events

FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 60 Money Problems / Drop in Income / Debt
- 61 Forced Move (Repossession / Eviction) (Residential Move Not Included)
- 62 Improved Financial Situation
- 63 Received Money (Inheritance / Compensation / Pools)
- 69 Financial Other (nec)

BHPS Major Life Events

CONSUMPTION

- 70 Bought / Buying Vehicle (Car, Caravan, etc)
- 71 Bought / Buying / Building House
- 72 Household Repairs / Improvements / Appliances
- 73 Won Prize (Not Cash) / Award
- 74 Received Present (from whom ?)
- 79 Other Purchases (nec)

BHPS Major Life Events

RESIDENTIAL MOVE

- 80 Moved In Past Year
- 81 Future Intention to Move
- 82 Move into Residential Home (Nursing / Retirement, etc)
- 83 Move into Respondent’s Household (Who is Moving In?)

BHPS Major Life Events

CRIME

- 90 Victim of Crime (Burglary ,etc)
- 91 Committed Crime / In Trouble with Police

BHPS Major Life Events

RELIGION

- 92 Joined / Changed Religion
- 93 Other Religious Reference (Not Confirmation / Baptism of Children)
- 94 Plan Not Fulfilled/ Something That Didn’t Happen (eg Didn’t Have a Holiday)
- 95 Civil Court Action / Battles with Bureaucracy
- 96 Other Occurrence (nec) given low priority
- 97 Nothing Happened
- -1 Don’t Know
- -9 Missing

Subject of event topic

- 00 Not Mentioned
- 01 ’We’/ Household
- 02 Self (Explicit or Inferred or No Pronoun)
- 03 Spouse /Partner
- 04 Daughter(s)
- 05 Son(s)
- 06 Child(ren) (nec)
- 07 Son / Daughter in-law
- 08 Mother
- 09 Father
- 10 Parents (both or not specified)
- 11 Parent(s) in-law
- 12 Siblings (sister / brother)
- 13 Sister-in-law / Brother-in-law
- 14 Grandparent(s)
- 15 Grandchild(ren)
- 16 Other Family Members / Family Members Unspecified
- 17 Friend / Colleague / Neighbour / Employer
- 18 Other
- 19 Pet
- 20 Not Specified

Combining “Event” and “Event Subject” → 34 events

1	14.7%	Nothing important happened (96-99)
		Health
2	7.6%	health (other 1-9)
3	2.6%	health (mine 1-9)
4	1.0%	health (partner 1-9)
5	1.2%	health (child 1-9)
6	1.2%	health (parent 1-9)

		Education
7	4.6%	education (other 12-19)
8	1.4%	education (mine 12-19)
9	2.5%	education (child 12-19)
		Employment
10	3.0%	employment (other 23,26-29)
11	4.0%	employment (job change 20-21)
12	1.8%	employment (job gain 22)
13	2.7%	employment (job loss 24)
		Leisure
14	3.0%	leisure (other 30-31)
15	5.3%	leisure (our holiday 30)
16	2.7%	leisure (my holiday 30)

		Births and Deaths
17	1.4%	pregnancy (other 40)
18	1.3%	pregnancy (mine 40)
19	2.3%	pregnancy (child's 40)
20	1.4%	pregnancy (family 40)
21	1.0%	death (other 45)
22	1.6%	death (parent 45)
23	1.8%	death (family 45)
		Relationships
24	2.0%	relationships (family 35,41-42)
25	2.2%	relationships (mine starting 35,42)
26	1.1%	relationships (child's starting 35,42)
27	1.4%	relationships (mine ending 36,43)
28	6.5%	relationships (family, 46-53,55-59)
29	1.3%	relationships (with pet 54 & subject)

		Finance, etc
30	2.8%	finance (other 60-69,73-79)
31	1.6%	finance (car 70)
32	2.5%	finance (house 71)
33	4.6%	moving home (44,80-81)
34	3.8%	other event (10-11,32-34,37-39,90-95)

So?

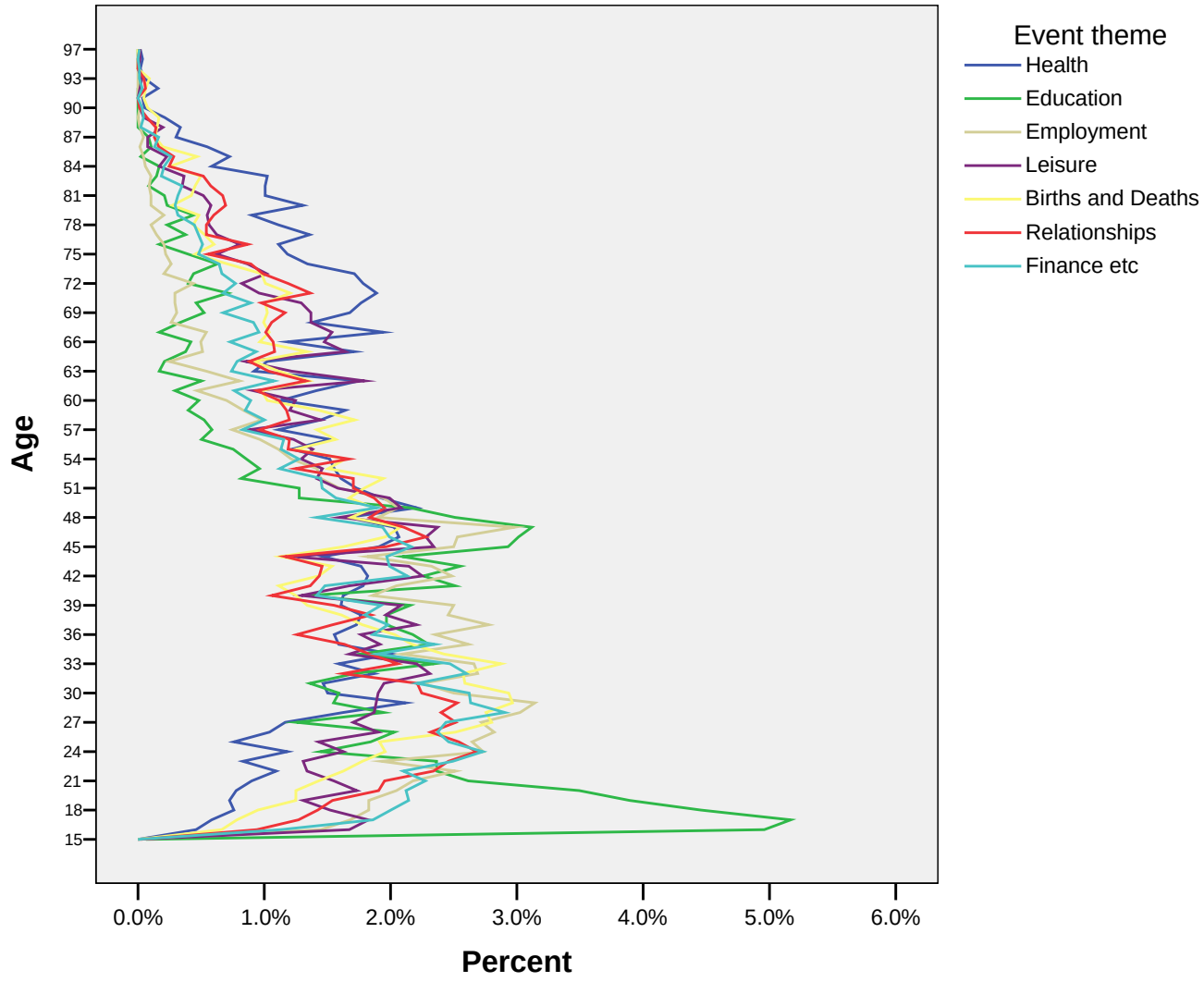
What do you think most makes folk happy and unhappy?

What are your top three ‘events’ most likely to be most strongly positively associated with being happy from the 34 above?

What do you think are the events most commonly associated with folk being unhappy?

Life Event	Coefficient	P value
RELATIONSHIPS (MINE ENDING 36,43)	**-0.178**	**0.00**
DEATH (PARENT, 45)	**-0.166**	**0.00**
HEALTHPARENT (1-9)	**-0.139**	**0.00**
DEATH (OTHER 45)	**-0.137**	**0.00**
EMPLOYMENT JOB LOSS 24	**-0.129**	**0.00**
HEALTH MINE (1-9)	**-0.117**	**0.00**
DEATH (FAMILY 45)	**-0.098**	**0.00**
HEALTH PARTNER (1-9)	**-0.092**	**0.00**
HEALTH CHILD (1-9)	**-0.084**	**0.00**
HEALTH OTHER (1-9)	**-0.073**	**0.00**
EDUCATION CHILD (12-19)	-0.029	0.12
EMPLOYMENT OTHER (23,26-29)	-0.028	0.13
OTHER EVENT (10-11;32-34;37-39;90-95)	-0.026	0.14
NOTHING IMPORTANT HAPPENED	-0.022	0.11
RELATIONSHIPS (WITH PET 54 AND SUBJECT)	-0.020	0.44
FINANCE (OTHER 60-69;73-79)	-0.019	0.27
RELATIONSHIPS FAMILY (46-53;55-59)	-0.014	0.39

Life Event	Coefficient	P value
RELATIONSHIPS (FAMILY 35. 41-42)	0.002	0.91
LEISURE (OUR HOLIDAY 30)	0.010	0.61
MOVING HOME (44;80-81)	0.013	0.46
EDUCATION OTHER (12-19)	0.024	0.27
FINANCE (CAR 70)	0.027	0.22
LEISURE (MY HOLIDAY 30)	0.029	0.07
PREGNANCY (OTHER 40)	0.031	0.56
PREGNANCY (FAMILY 40)	0.034	0.09
RELATIONSHIPS (CHILD'S STARTING 35, 42)	0.037	0.10
EMPLOYMENT JOB CHANGE (20-21)	0.040	0.02
LEISURE (OTHER 30-31)	0.043	0.02
EDUCATION MINE(12-19)	0.052	0.00
PREGNANCY (CHILD'S 40)	0.053	0.01
PREGNANCY (MINE 40)	**0.084**	**0.00**
FINANCE (HOUSE 71)	**0.097**	**0.00**
EMPLOYMENT JOB GAIN 22	**0.097**	**0.00**
RELATIONSHIPS (MINE STARTING 35. 42)	**0.160**	**0.00**


Event theme
Health
Education
Employment
Leisure
Births and Deaths
Relationships
Finance etc
Age
97
93
90
87
84
81
78
75
72
69
66
63
60
57
54
51
48
45
42
39
36
33
30
27
24
21
18
15
0.0%
1.0%
2.0%
3.0%
4.0%
5.0%
6.0%
Percent

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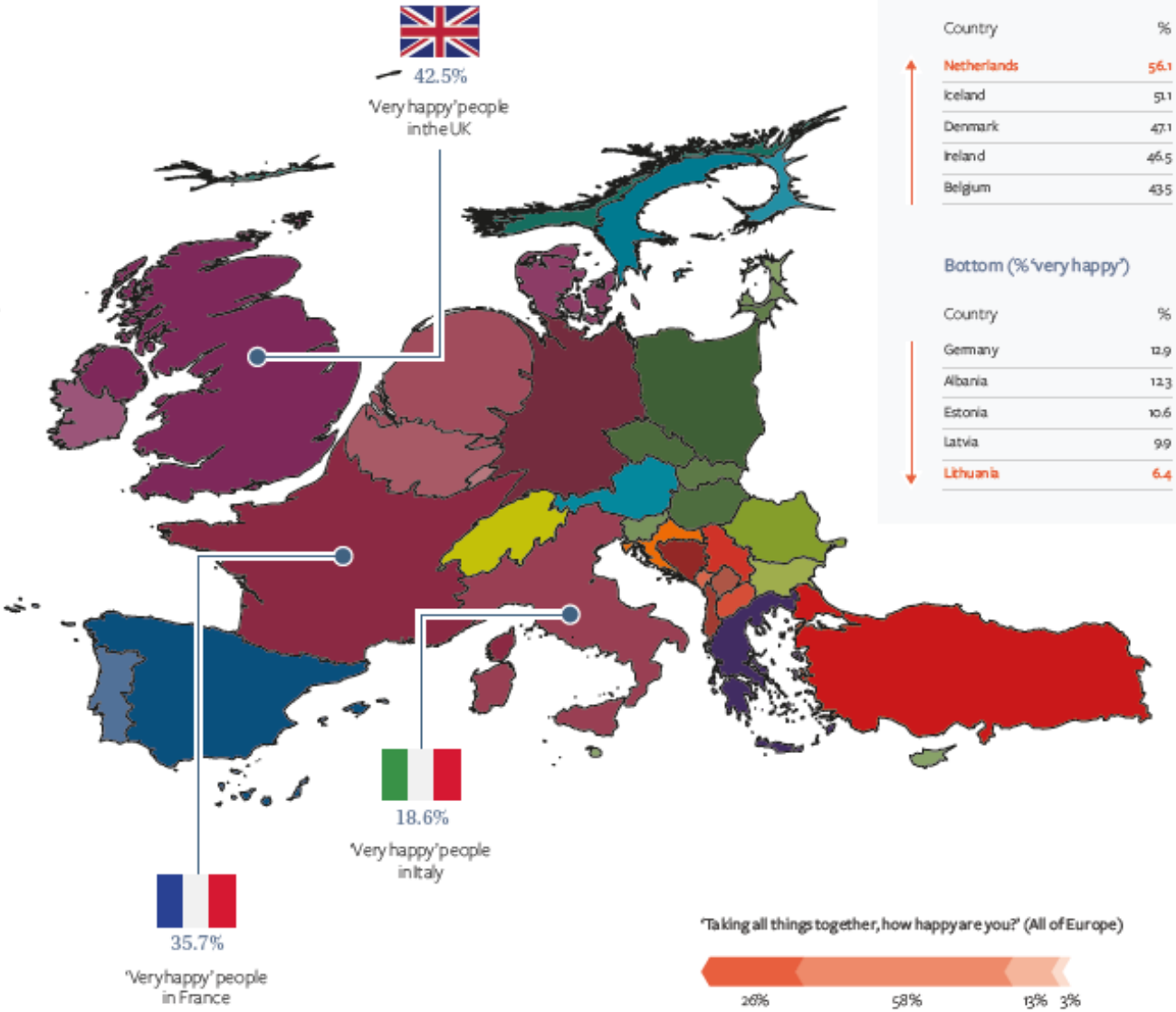

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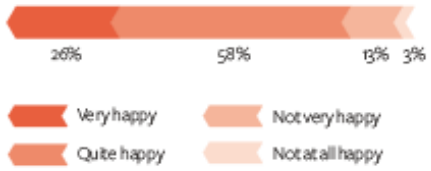
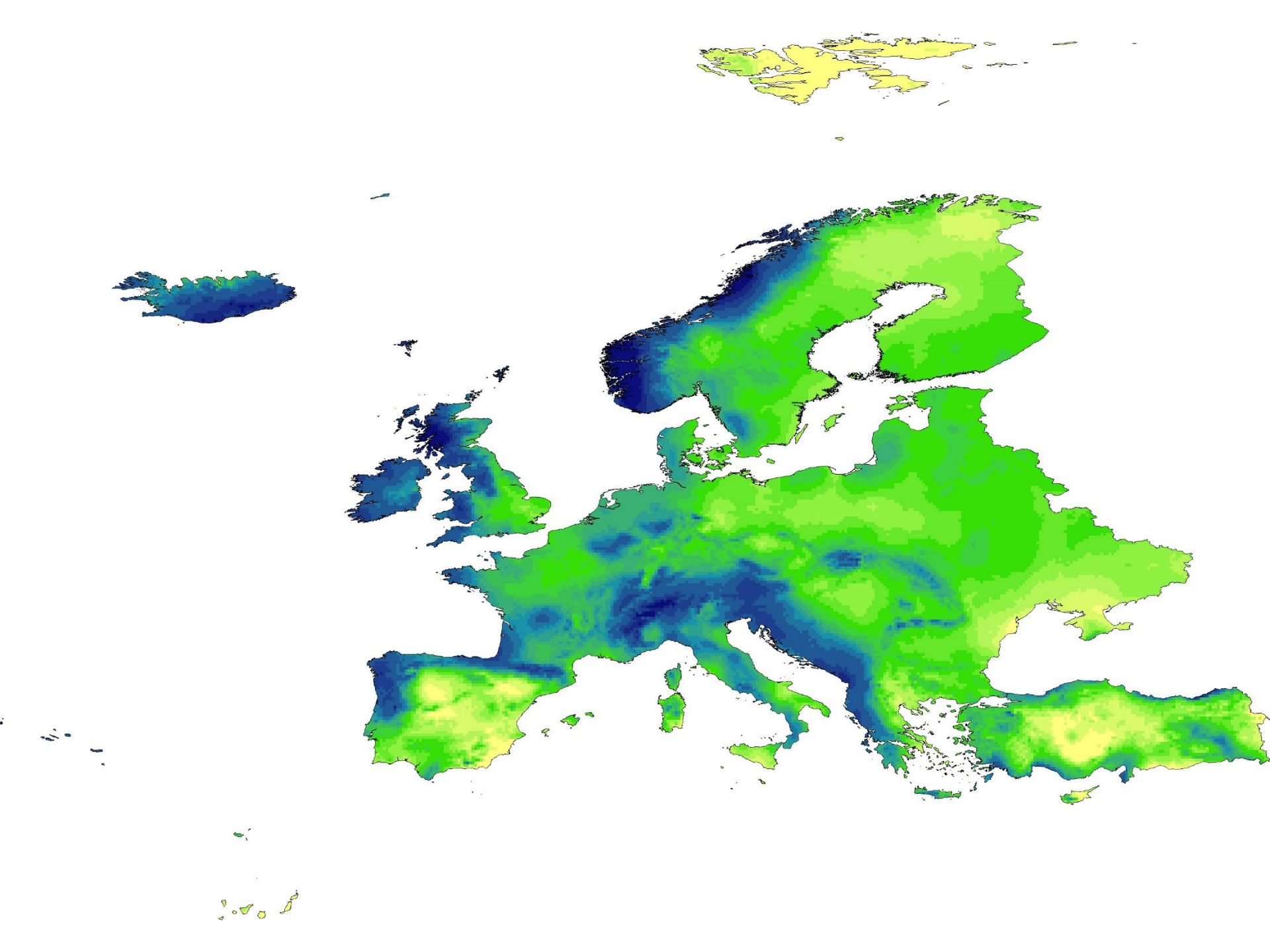
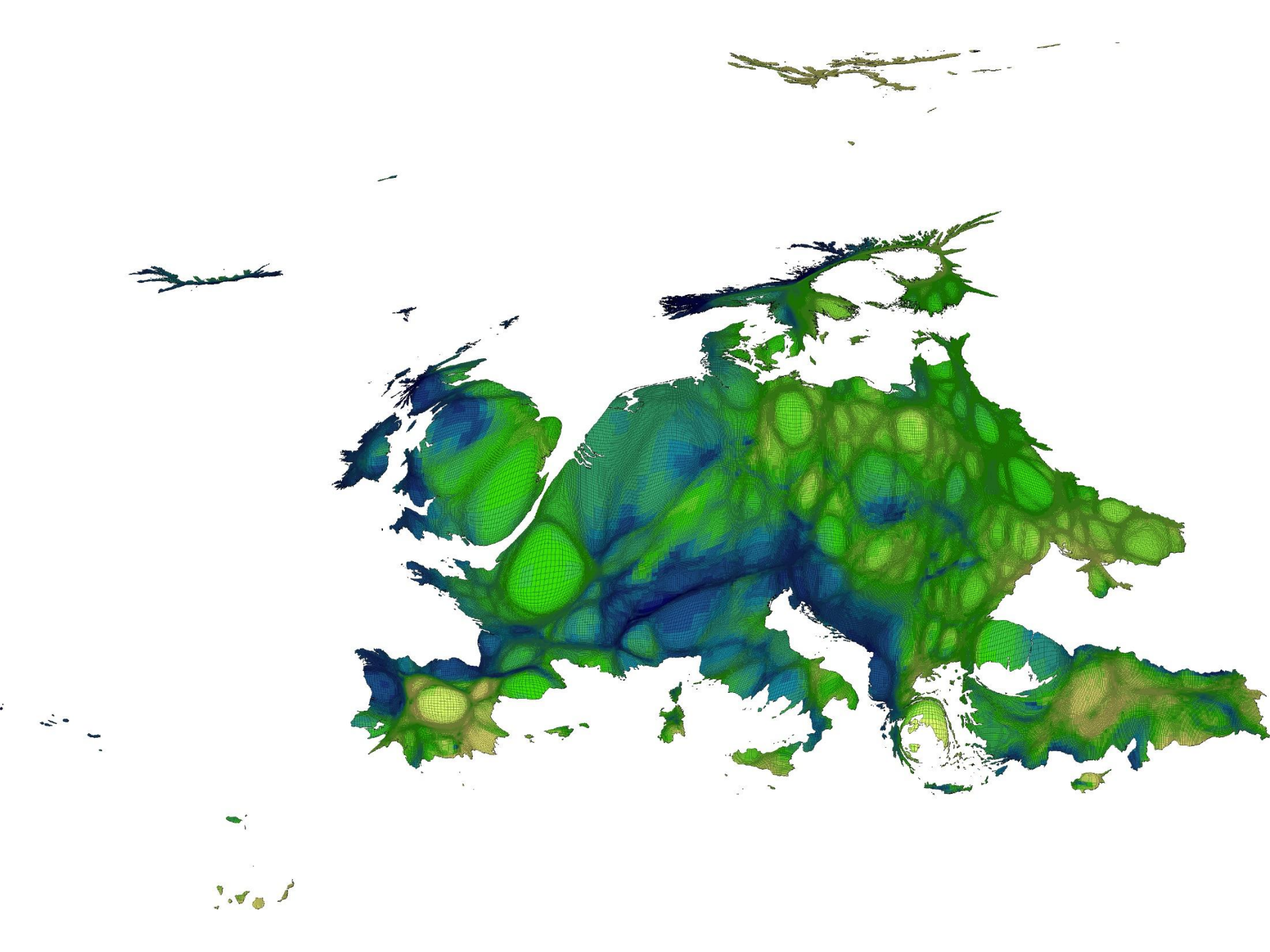






Happiness and the environment (1)

Photos source (creative commons license): https://hubblecontent.osi.office.net/

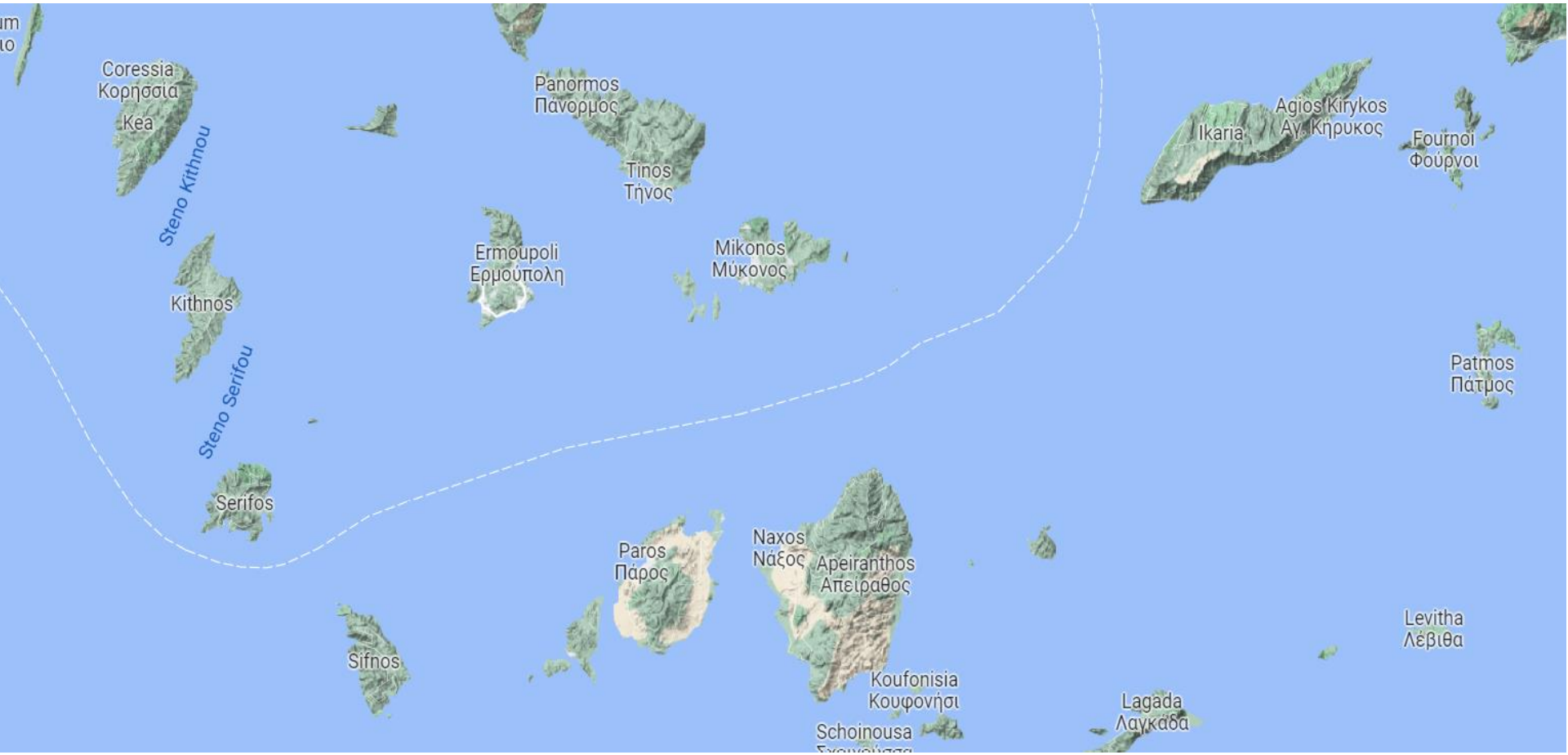
- living in highly urbanised dense environments lowers subjective measures of life satisfaction and happiness (Morrison, 2007)
- subjective well-being in American cities and found that small towns and rural areas have higher scores, possibly due to natural amenities such as more space, nicer views, clean air and low crime (Berry and Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2011)

Happiness and the environment (2)

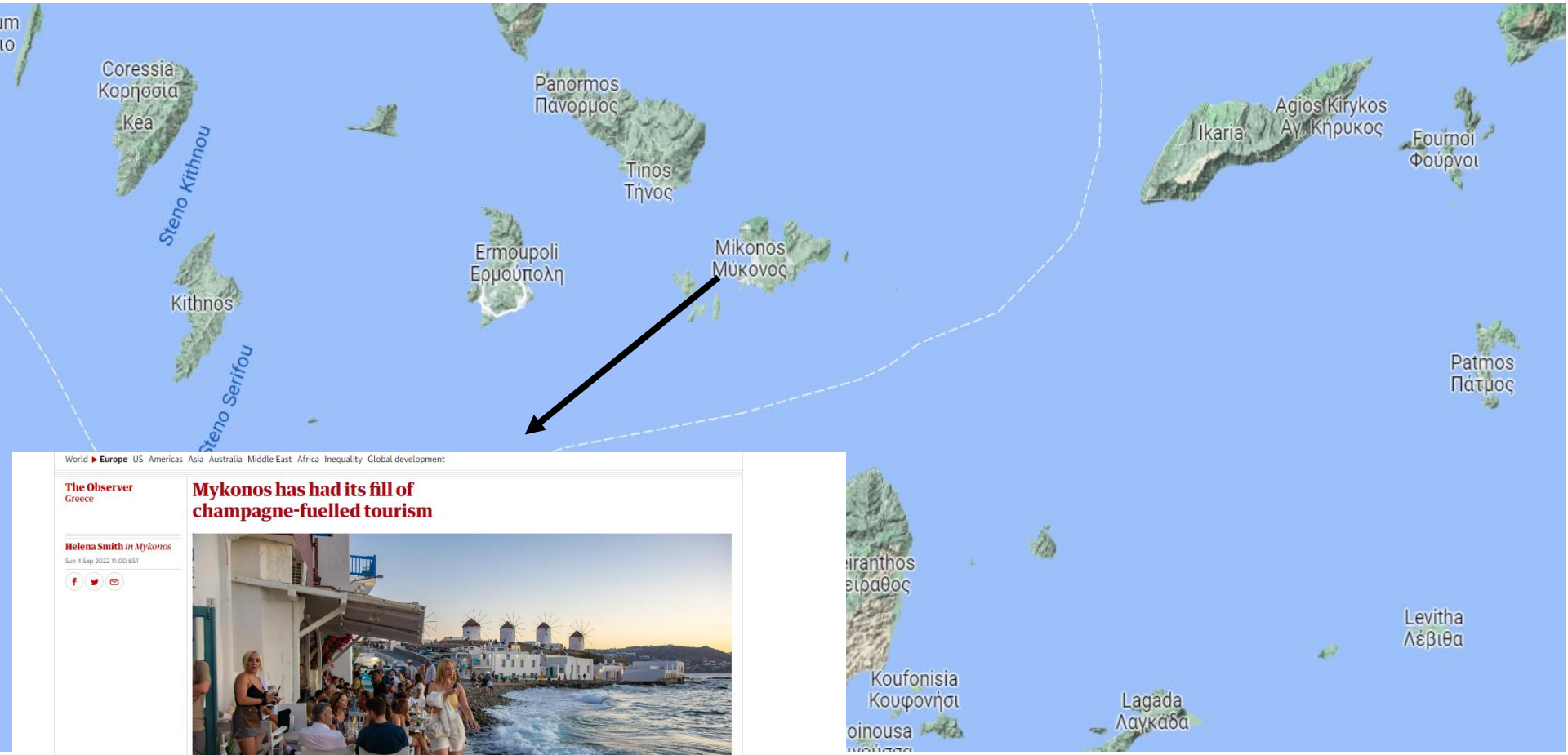
- living in Dublin results in lower subjective well-being scores, compared to living in the countryside (Brereton et al, 2008)
- there is a consistently high life satisfaction in rural Ireland (Brereton, Bullock, Clinch, and Scott, 2011)
- although greener neighbourhoods do not seem to be healthier "people who actually visit and use green spaces, whether for exercise, or just to get away from it all for a while, *do* seem to have better mental health and more life satisfaction, all else being equal" (Mitchell, 2013)

For more details and the full list of references see:

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264275113000504#b0080



What makes a happy island?



World ▸ Europe US Americas Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality Global development

The Observer
Greece

Mykonos has had its fill of champagne-fuelled tourism

Helena Smith *in Mykonos*
Sun 4 Sep 2022 11.00 BST

A seafront restaurant at Little Venice, Mykonos, with the island's famous windmills in the background. Photograph: NurPhoto/Getty Images

The Greek island makes a mint as a playground for rich and famous visitors. But locals say development has gone too far

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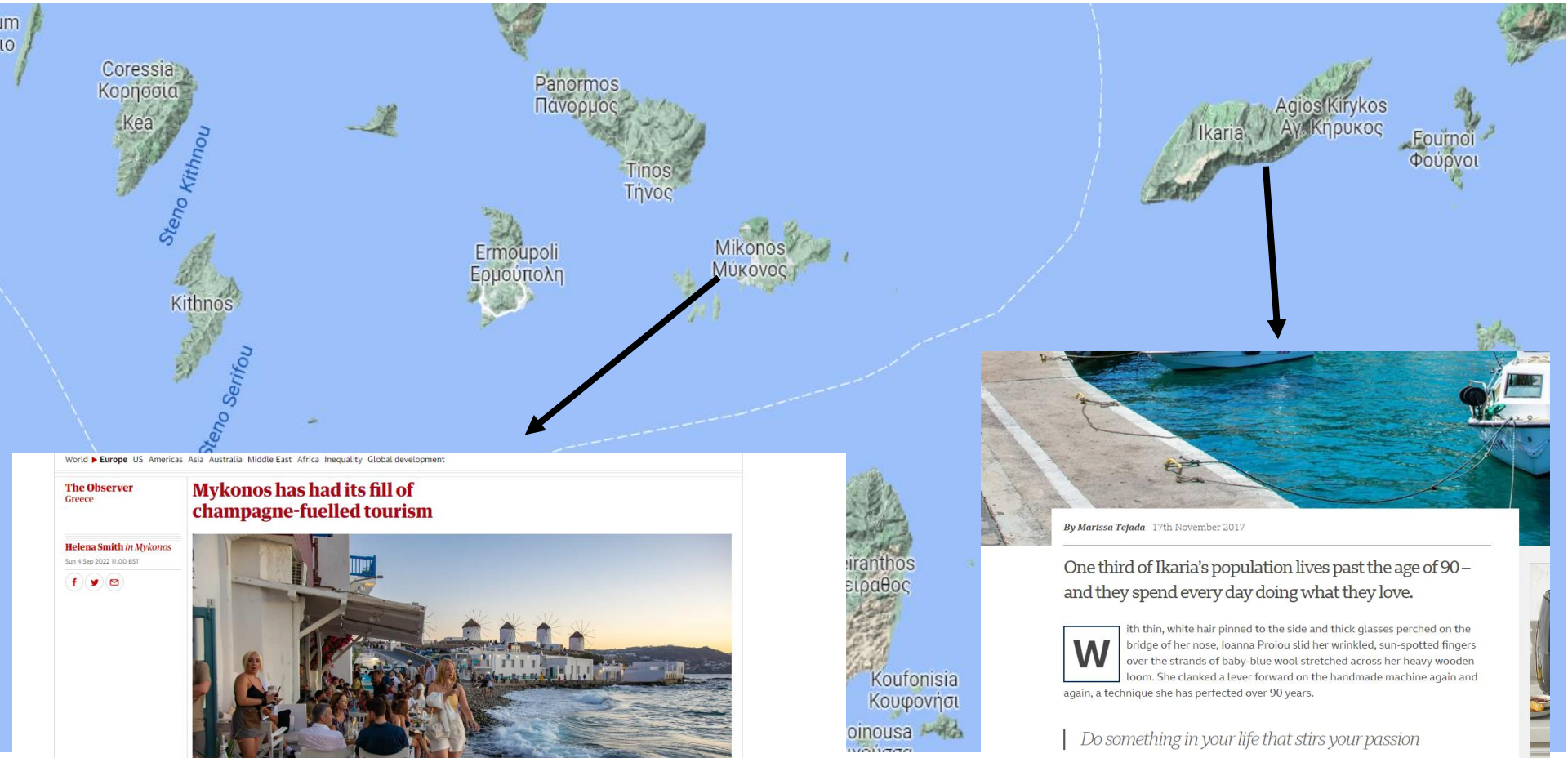
UITGELICHT- Griekenland – Sofoula Schalkwijk

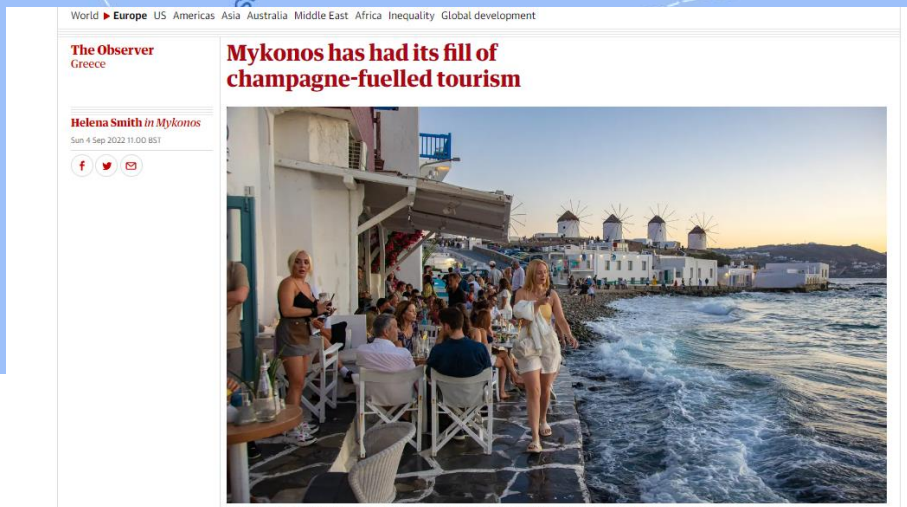
Het Griekse eiland Mykonos trekt miljoenen toeristen. Ook Kate Moss, Elon Musk en The Kardashians zijn er graag. Maar de bewoners zijn ze intussen behoorlijk zat, zij doen 's nachts geen oog meer dicht.

Presentatie: Bram Vermeulen

A seafront restaurant at Little Venice, Mykonos, with the island's famous windmills in the background. Photograph: NurPhoto/Getty Images

The Greek island makes a mint as a playground for rich and famous visitors. But locals say development has gone too far





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The Greek island makes a mint as a playground for rich and famous visitors. But locals say development has gone too far

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By Marissa Tejada 17th November 2017

One third of Ikaria's population lives past the age of 90 – and they spend every day doing what they love.

With thin, white hair pinned to the side and thick glasses perched on the bridge of her nose, Ioanna Proiou slid her wrinkled, sun-spotted fingers over the strands of baby-blue wool stretched across her heavy wooden loom. She clanked a lever forward on the handmade machine again and again, a technique she has perfected over 90 years.

Do something in your life that stirs your passion

With that loom, Proiou creates the woven bags and clothing she sells from her little shop in Christos Raches, a village of 300 residents on the Greek island of Ikaria, a nine-hour ferry ride across the Aegean Sea from Athens. As her arms moved in rhythmic fashion, the loom shaking slightly, the 105-year-old told me how much she still loves her job.

"Do something in your life that stirs your passion," she advised me. "When my husband

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Cultural and Linguistic issues

What do you take me for, an idiot?
General Charles de Gaulle when a journalist asked him if he was happy

(Source: The Telegraph, 2008)

“By necessities, I understand not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the customs of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lower order, to be without. A creditable day labourer would be ashamed to appear in public without a linen shirt.”

(Smith, 1759: 383)

“A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But if a palace arises beside the little house, the little house shrinks to a hovel… [and]… the dweller will feel more and more uncomfortable, dissatisfied and cramped within its four walls.”

(Marx, 1847)

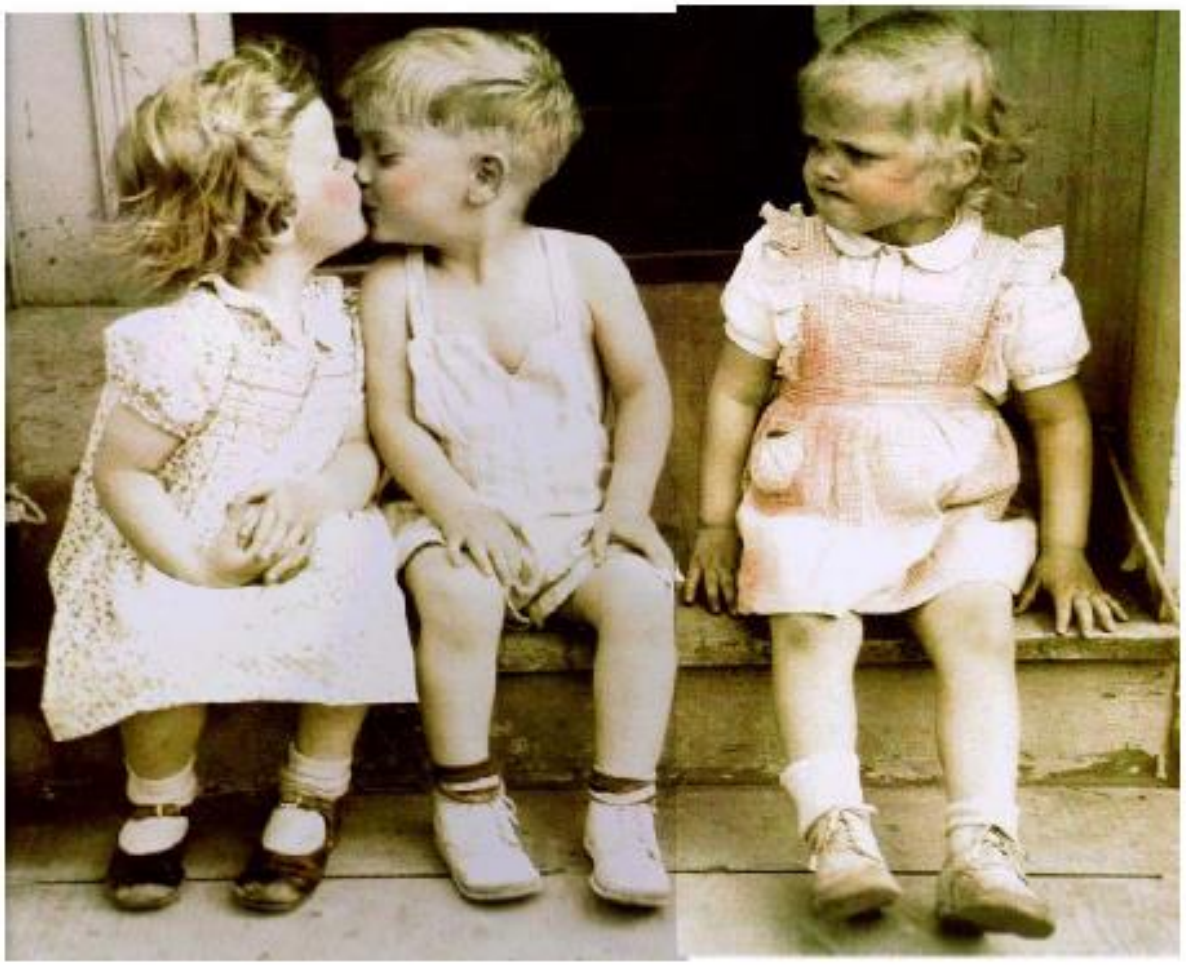


Figure 6.1. Il Bacio (The Kiss of Death).
Photograph courtesy of Furman S. Baldwin.
Copyright 2007 Tushita Verlags GMBH.

(source: Frank, 2005)

Happiness and social comparisons

https://youtu.be/meiU6TxysCg

Cooperation and fairness

https://youtu.be/2BYJf2xSONc

Please choose between the following worlds which are identical in every way except one

- WORLD A: You will live in a 4000-square-foot house and all others will live in 6000-square-foot houses.
- WORLD B: You will live in a 3000-square-foot house and all others in 2000-square-foot houses.

Please choose between the following worlds which are identical in every way except one

- WORLD C: You have four weeks vacation a year of vacation time and all others have six weeks.
- WORLD D: You have two weeks vacation a year of vacation time and all others have one week.

Positional and non-positional goods (Hirsch, 1976; after Frank, 2005)

- *Positional good*: goods for which the link between context and evaluation is strongest.
- *Non-positional good*: goods for which the link between social (and spatial) context is weakest.

Relative consumption and "positional arms races" (Frank, 2005)

1. People care about relative consumption, more in some domains than in others.
2. Concerns about relative consumption lead to "positional arms races," or expenditure arms races focused on positional goods.
3. Positional arms races divert resources from nonpositional goods, causing large welfare losses.

Choosing between different forms of consumption

	Society A	Society B
1	Everyone lives in 4000-square-foot houses and has no free time for exercise each day.	Everyone lives in 3000-square-foot houses and has 45 minutes available for exercise each day.
2	Everyone lives in 4000-square-foot houses and has time to get together with friends one evening each month.	Everyone lives in 3000-square-foot houses and has time to get together with friends four evenings each month.
3	Everyone lives in 4000-square-foot houses and has one week of vacation each year.	Everyone lives in 3000-square-foot houses and has four weeks of vacation each year.
4	Everyone lives in 4000-square-foot houses and has a relatively low level of personal autonomy in the workplace.	Everyone lives in 3000-square-foot houses and has a relatively high level of personal autonomy in the workplace.

(Frank, 2005)

Smart for one, dumb for all

Figure 9.1. Big Antlers: Smart for one, dumb for all?

(Frank, 2005)

Smart for one, dumb for all

"The list of consumption items that get short shrift could be extended considerably. Thus we could ask whether living in slightly smaller houses would be a reasonable price to pay for higher air quality, for more urban parkland, for cleaner drinking water, for a reduction in violent crime, or for medical research that would reduce premature death. And in each case the answer would be the same as in the cases we have considered thus far."

(Frank, 2005: 100 my emphasis)

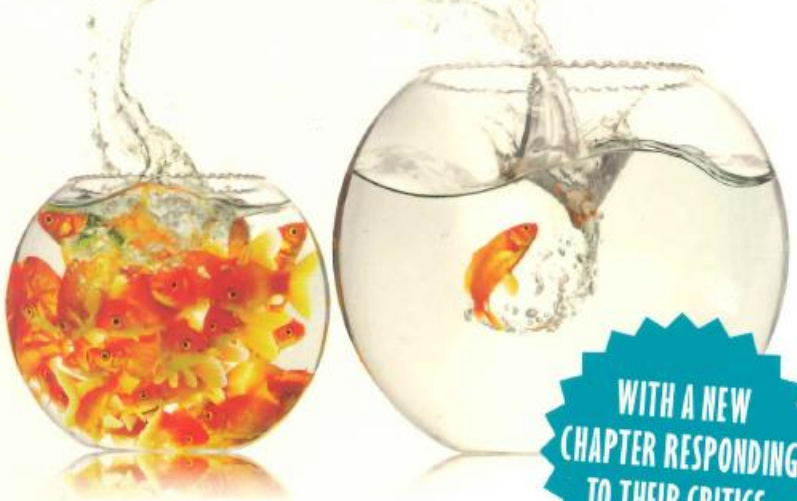
The Spirit Level

Why Equality is Better for Everyone

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

'A big idea, big enough to change political thinking'
Sunday Times

'A sweeping theory of everything'
Guardian



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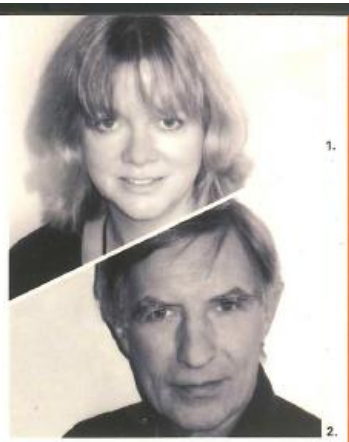

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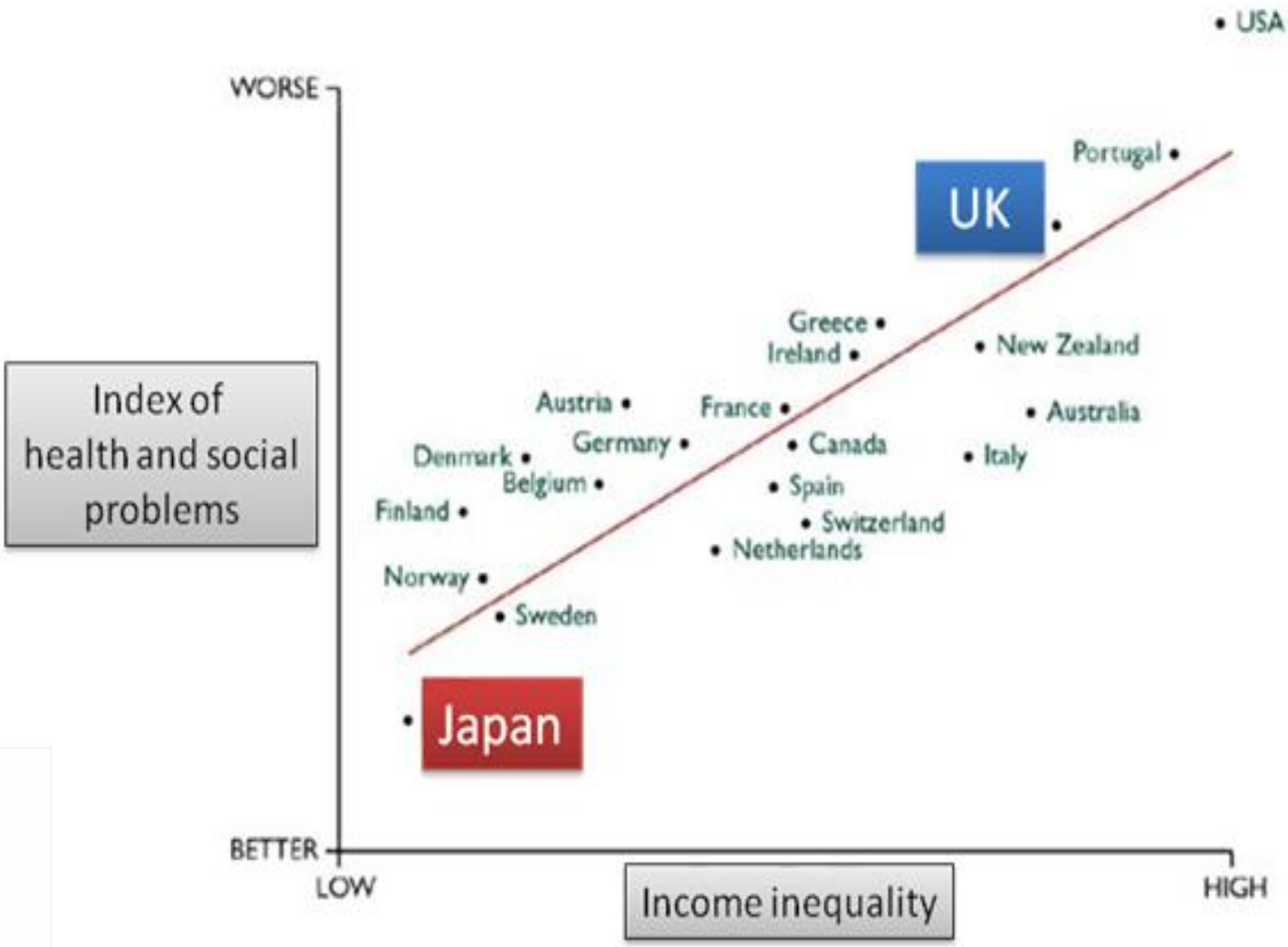
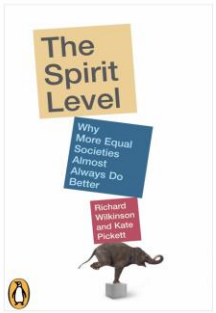
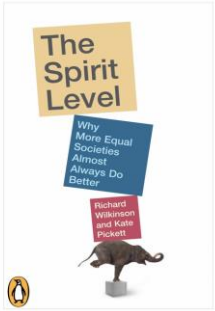
PENGUIN
Sociology

‘The Spirit Level’
by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett





http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk



'The Spirit Level'
Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

"Politics was once seen as a way of improving people's social and emotional well-being by changing their economic circumstances. But over the last few decades the bigger picture has been lost. People are now more likely to see psychosocial well-being as dependent on what can be done at the individual level, using cognitive behavioural therapy – one person at a time – or on providing support in early childhood, or on the reassertion of religious or family values. However, **it is now clear that income distribution provides policy makers with a way of improving the psychosocial wellbeing of whole populations**. Politicians have an opportunity to do genuine good."

(Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 233; my emphasis)

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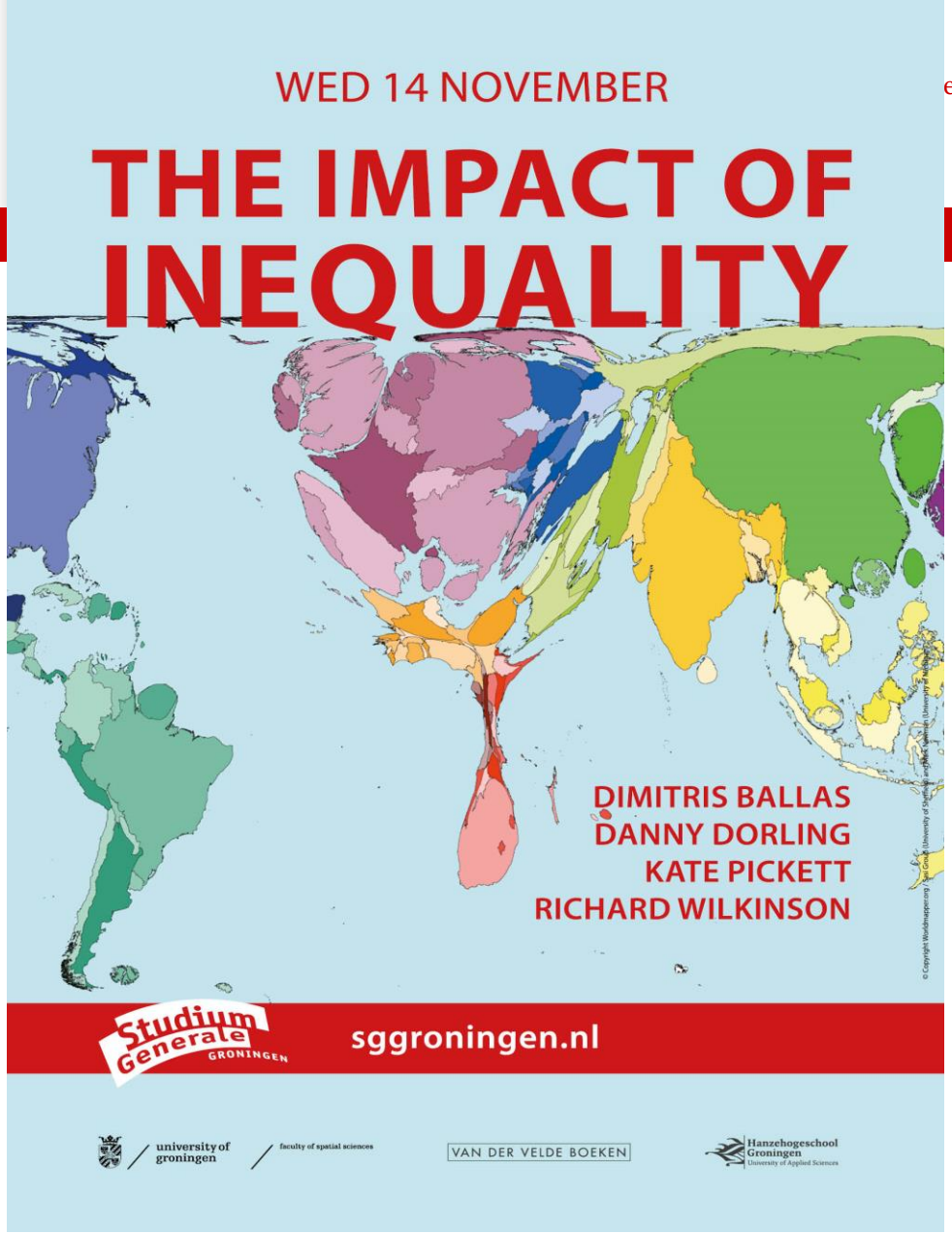
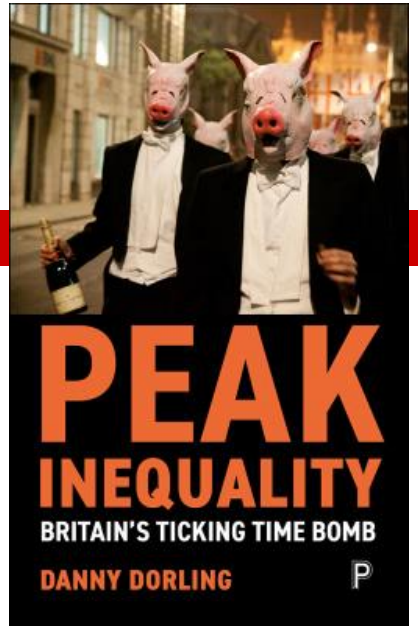
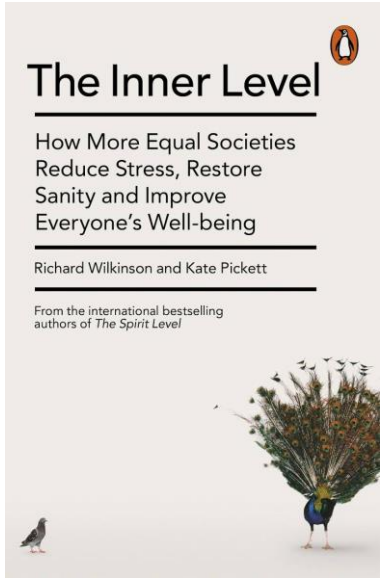


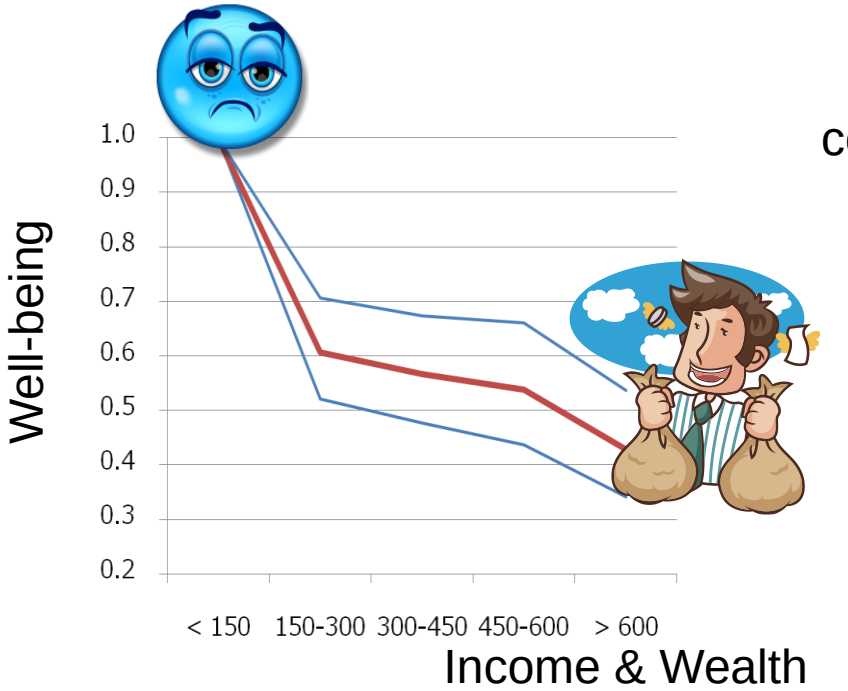




https://sggroningen.nl/evenement/impact-inequality

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ncLTGsIOM&feature=emb_logo

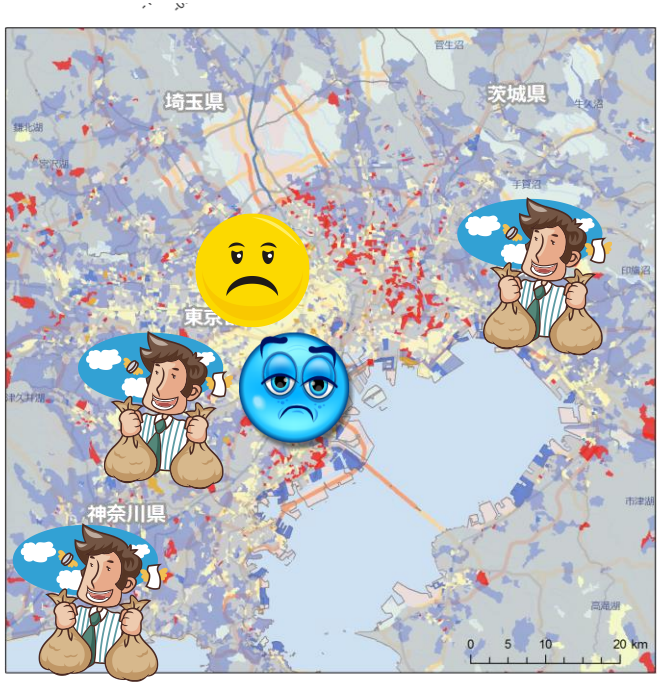
Can composition of individual socio-economic status explain the geographic inequalities of well-being and happiness?



compositional

?

contextual

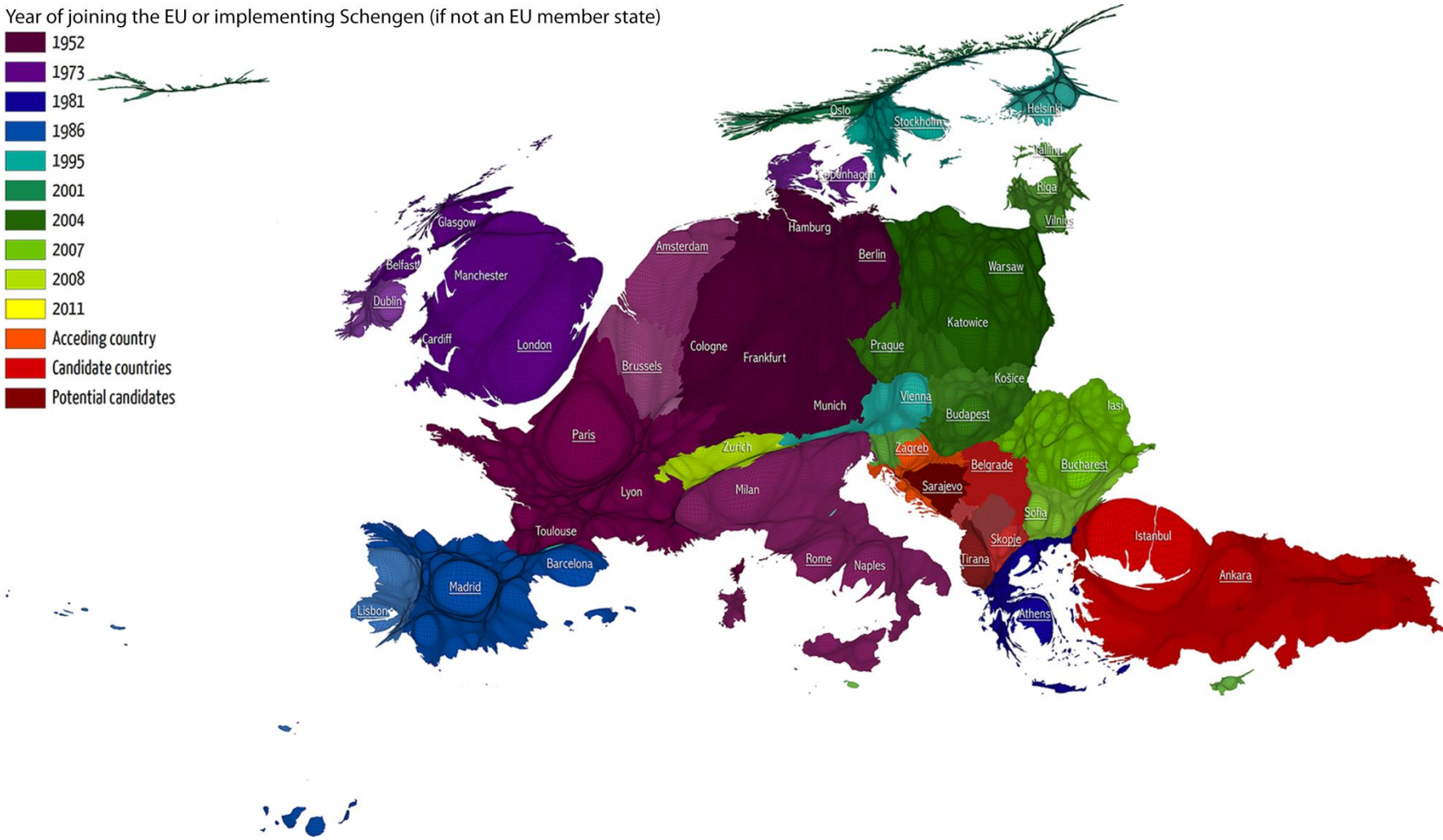


Individual-level
social gradient Of happiness

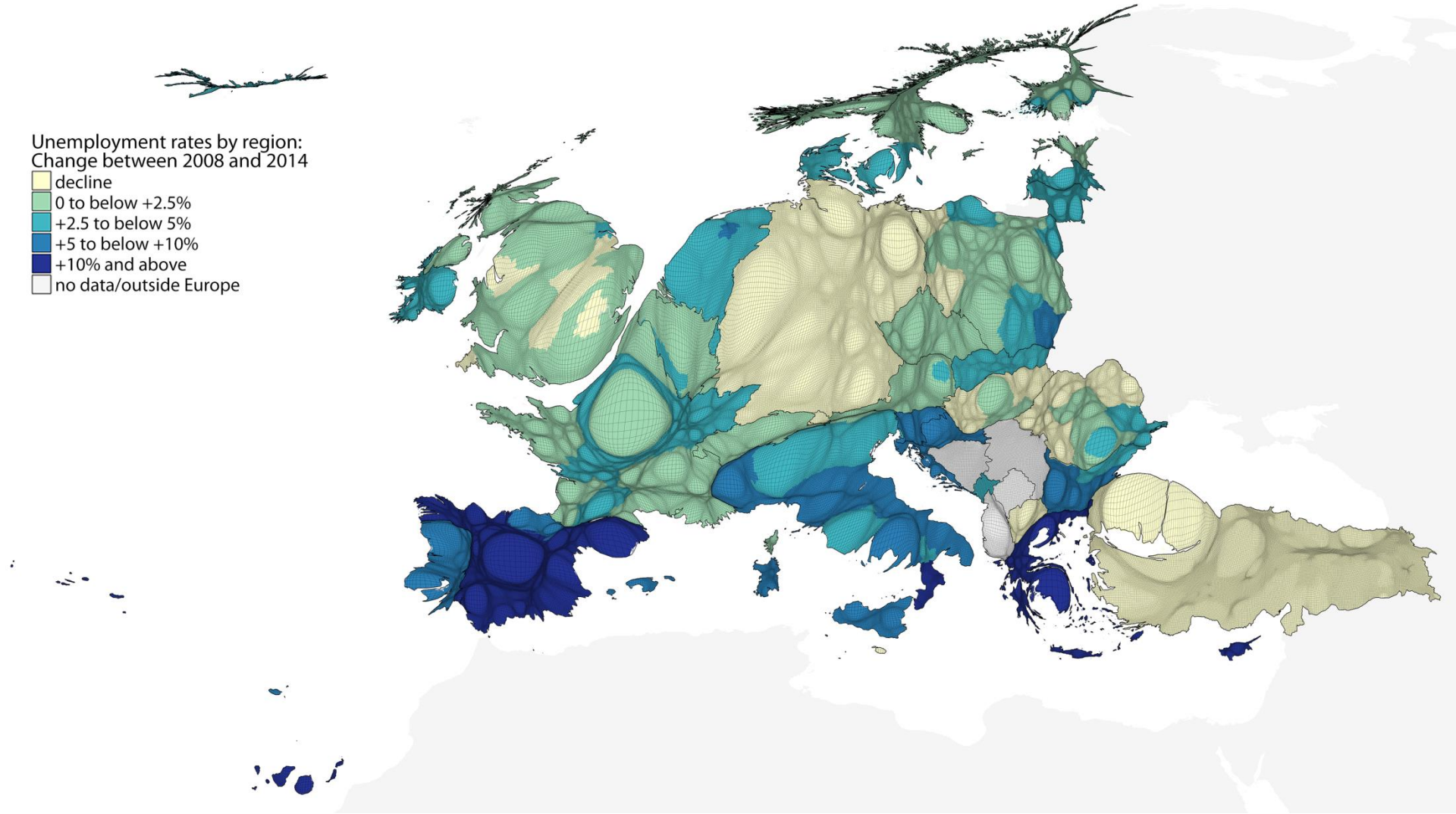
Geographic
social gradient of happiness

(after Nakaya and Hanibuchi, 2009; Ballas et al. 2016)

Ballas, D, Dorling, D, Hennig, B (2017), Analysing the regional geography of poverty, austerity and inequality in Europe: a human cartographic perspective, *Regional Studies,* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2016.1262019)

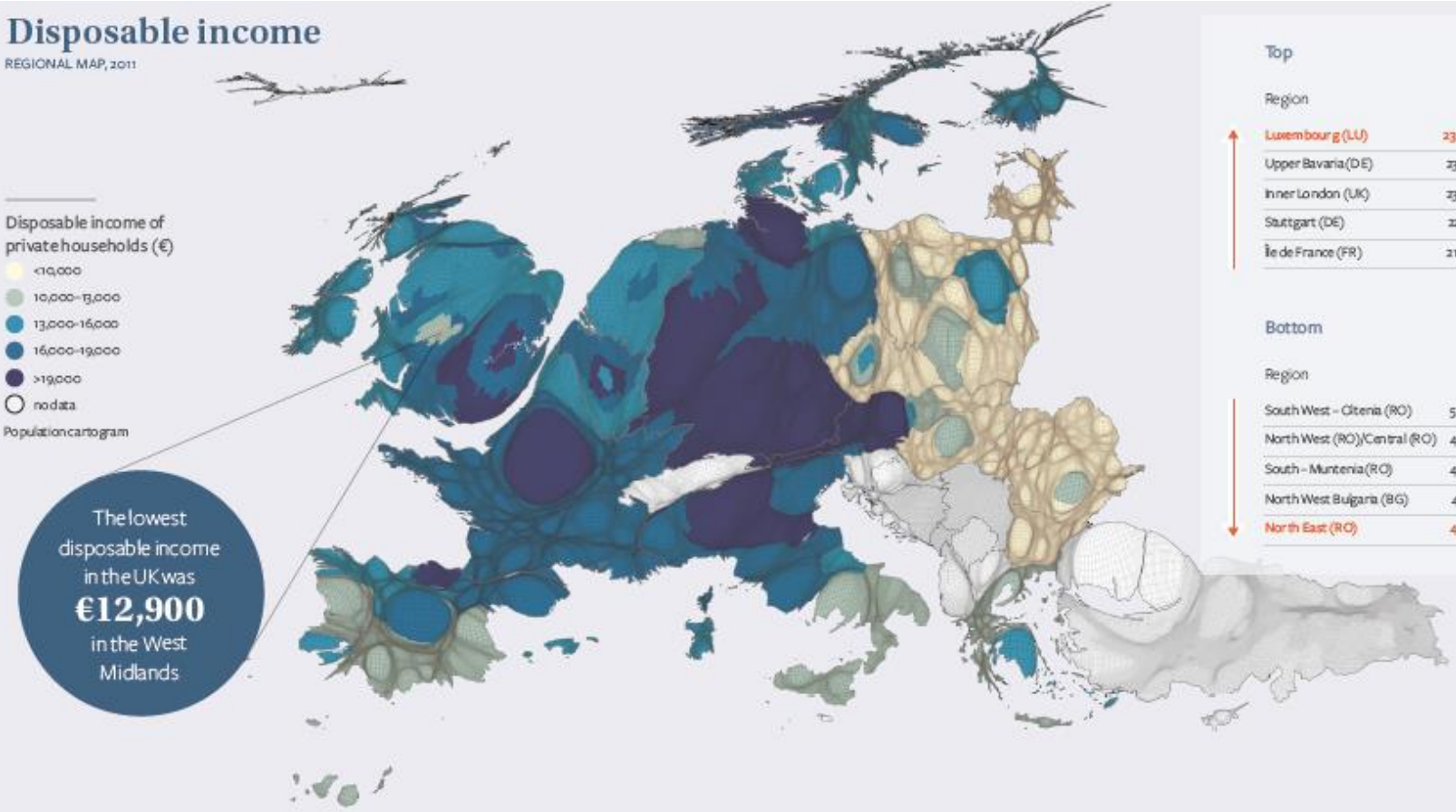


Ballas, D, Dorling, D, Hennig, B (2017), Analysing the regional geography of poverty, austerity and inequality in Europe: a human cartographic perspective, *Regional Studies,* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2016.1262019



Disposable income

REGIONAL MAP, 2011



Top

Region	€
Luxembourg (LU)	23,800
Upper Bavaria (DE)	23,700
Inner London (UK)	23,500
Stuttgart (DE)	22,100
Île de France (FR)	21,600

Bottom

Region	€
South West – Oltenia (RO)	5,000
North West (RO)/Central (RO)	4,900
South – Muntenia (RO)	4,800
North West Bulgaria (BG)	4,700
North East (RO)	4,300

Disposable income is the income after tax from all sources, including paid employment, property rental income and welfare benefits in cash. It does not include social transfers made in kind, such as the provision of universal healthcare or education free at the point of delivery.

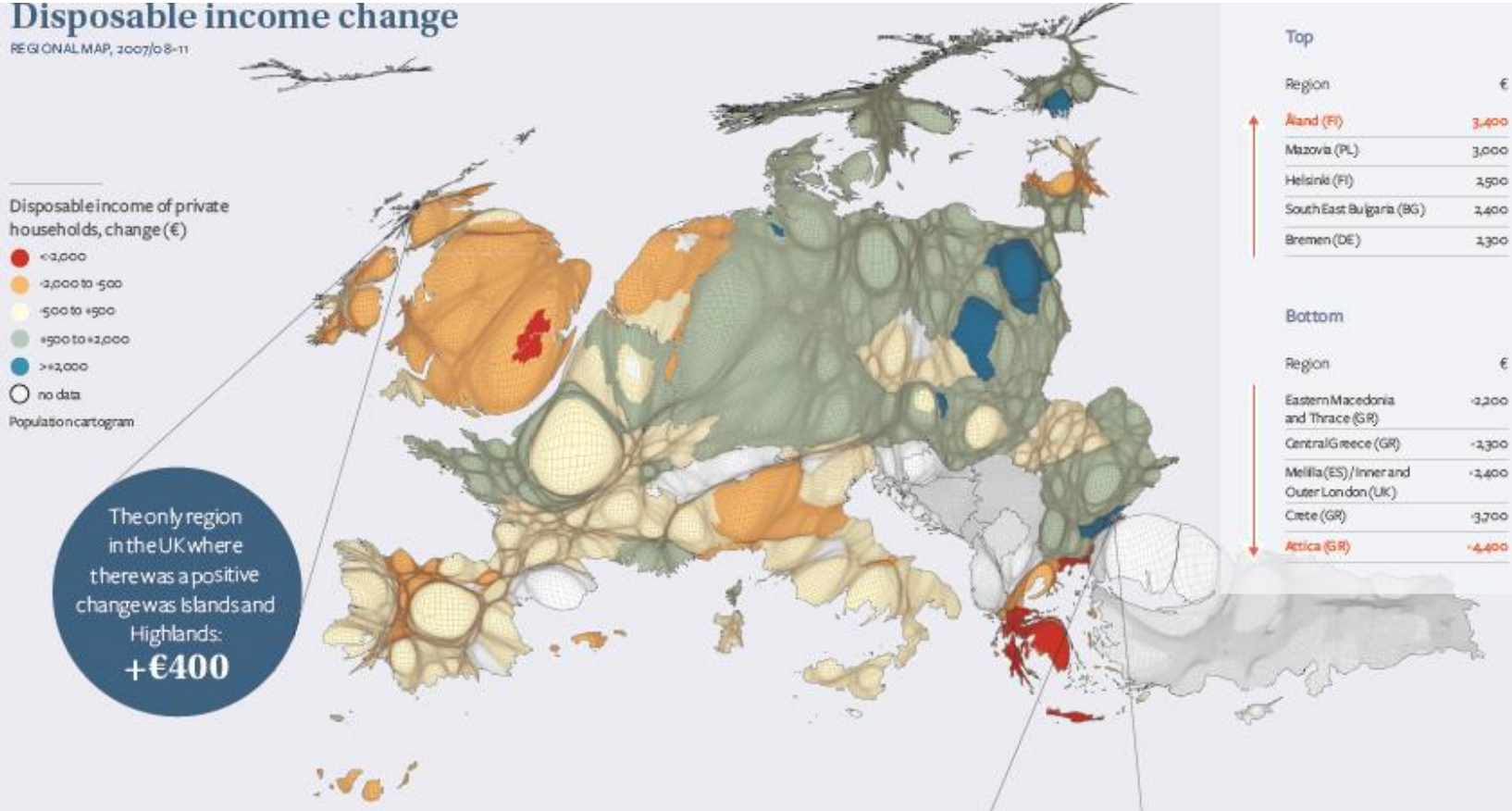
Regions with very high average household incomes are found in Germany, especially in the West of Germany, and in France, Austria, Northern Italy and a small slither of the South of England and Inner London.

Regions in the lowest household income category – where households survive on below €10,000 per year on average – are all in Eastern Europe, in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovak Republic.

Most households will be living on less than these amounts, particularly in regions where income inequalities are high, such as in Southern England. Most people are generally not well off in richer regions.

Disposable income change

REGIONAL MAP, 2007/08-11



Top

Region	€
Åland (FI)	3,400
Mazovia (PL)	3,000
Helsinki (FI)	2,500
South East Bulgaria (BG)	2,400
Bremen (DE)	2,300

Bottom

Region	€
Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (GR)	-2,200
Central Greece (GR)	-2,300
Melilla (ES) / Inner and Outer London (UK)	-2,400
Crete (GR)	-3,700
Attica (GR)	-4,400

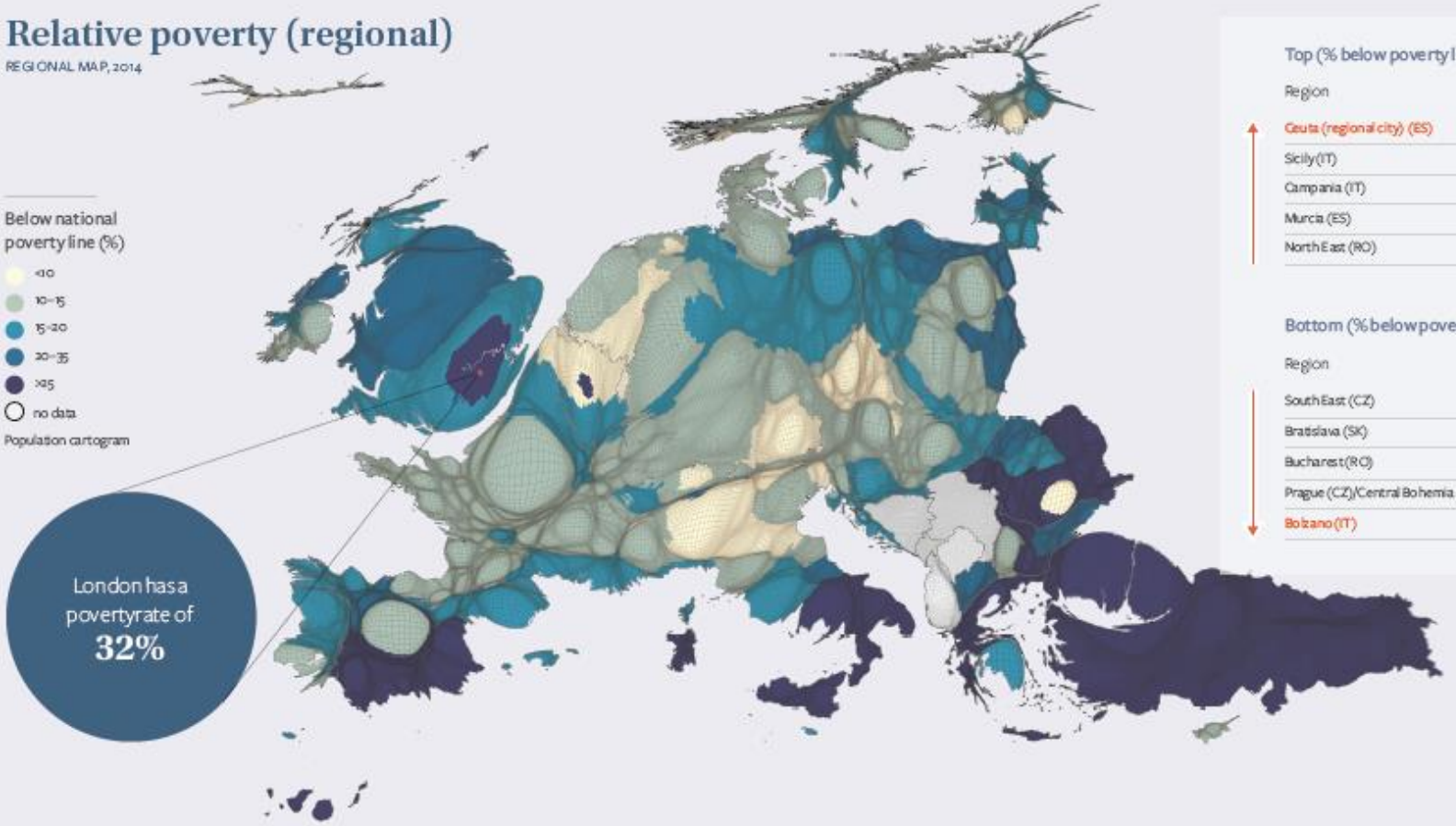
Following the beginning of the financial crisis and recession in Europe in 2007/08 through to 2011, the largest falls in income were seen in Greece, with the greatest decline recorded in the Athens capital city region of Attica. Considerable falls in average income were also experienced in some regions of Italy, Spain and the UK, including in London, where bankers' bonuses were cut for a few years.

There were also some considerable increases in household income, with the highest in the Åland island region of Finland, followed by the capital city regions of Poland and Finland, and South East Bulgaria, which includes the historic city of Burgas on the Black Sea.

Most of the regions where average household incomes increased are generally found in Central and Eastern Europe.

Relative poverty (regional)

REGIONAL MAP, 2014



Top (% below poverty line)

Region	%
Ceuta (regional city) (ES)	44.3
Sicily (IT)	41.2
Campania (IT)	38.6
Murcia (ES)	37.2
North East (RO)	35.6

Bottom (% below poverty line)

Region	%
South East (CZ)	8.1
Bratislava (SK)	7.8
Bucharest (RO)	5.5
Prague (CZ)/Central Bohemia (CZ)	5.3
Bolzano (IT)	4.9

In all European countries, poverty is not spread evenly but concentrated in particular regions. High rates of poverty have been a persistent stark feature within the most affluent cities in countries with high income inequality, such as London in the UK, and Brussels in Belgium, although in other large European capitals such as Berlin, Paris, Madrid and Rome such extreme poverty is considered unacceptable.

On this map, about 40 regions have extremely high poverty rates (over 25% of their populations being poor), and all these are shaded deep blue. This includes Turkey, mapped here as a single region due to a lack of data for its smaller areas. These poorer regions are mostly in Southern and Eastern Europe, where severe economic crises and unfair austerity measures have led to much more poverty in recent years, and particularly in Bulgaria, all Greek regions except the capital city region of Athens, Southern Italy and Spain (including the Canary Islands).

Billionaires

2015, DATA FROM *FORBES* MAGAZINE

In 2015 there were an estimated 420 billionaires across Europe, with their combined assets valued at US$1.6 trillion. Twenty-four of the 43 states mapped here had at least one resident with a personal fortune of US$10 billion or more.

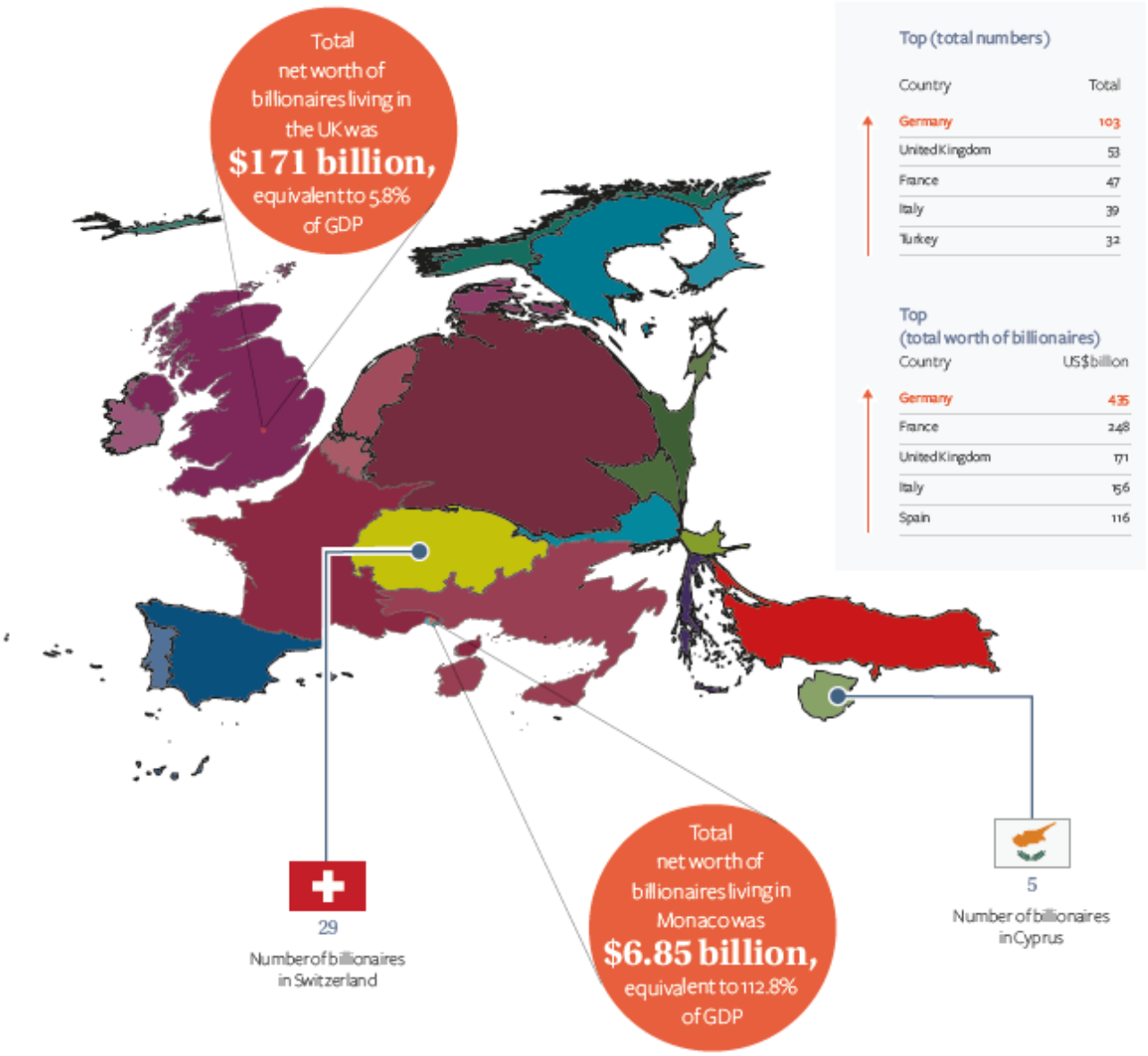
The number of billionaires in the US in 2015 was 1,741 – far higher than the European total, despite the US having a smaller population. Far more people live in extreme and average poverty in the US.

Just over a quarter of the estimated US$1.6 trillion total wealth of Europe's US$ billionaires was found in Germany, with most of the rest in other countries of North and West of Europe.

However, these figures only show where the wealth of billionaires is officially held. In reality, many billionaires split their time between different homes across Europe and are not officially resident in any one country. For tax purposes they may say they live in, for example, the Middle East, Russia, or a small tax haven island, but they cannot spend more than 90 days in any one place to avoid being taxed on their wealth and income there.

Most of the 19 countries mapped in this atlas with no billionaires are in Eastern Europe and the Baltic States.

Colour key, see Reference map A1, p10



Top (total numbers)

Country	Total
Germany	103
United Kingdom	53
France	47
Italy	39
Turkey	32

Top (total worth of billionaires)

Country	US$billion
Germany	435
France	248
United Kingdom	171
Italy	156
Spain	116

Multilevel Analysis – from macro to local and microlevel

World → Nation → Region → District→Electoral Wards → Neighbourhood → Household → Individual

Ballas, D, Tranmer M (2012), Happy People or Happy Places? A Multi-Level Modelling Approach to the Analysis of Happiness and Well-Being, *International Regional Science Review,* vol. 35, 70-102. (doi:10.1177/0160017611403737)

Concluding comments

- There is a renewed interest in happiness from a geographical perspective
- Social justice issues can have a huge impact on overall levels of happiness of a city
- There is a great potential for urban researchers to contribute to happiness research.
- Happy People, Happy Households or Happy Places?

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