



# HAPPINESS: How does the built environment impact our happiness?

Meik Wiking, CEO, The Happiness Research Institute



Happiness Research  
Institute



$$2x_1 + x_2 = 7$$

$$x_1 + x_2 - 3x_3 = -10$$

$$6x_2 - 2x_3 + x_4 = 7$$

$$2x_3 - 3x_4 = 13$$

# **THE UNITED NATIONS**

The United Nations Happiness Resolution

International Day of Happiness

UN World Happiness Report



“We will start measuring our progress as a country, not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving. Not just by our standard of living, but by our quality of life.”

**The Government of the UK**







United Arab Emirates

البرنامج الوطني  
للسعادة والإيجابية

The National Program for  
Happiness and Positivity



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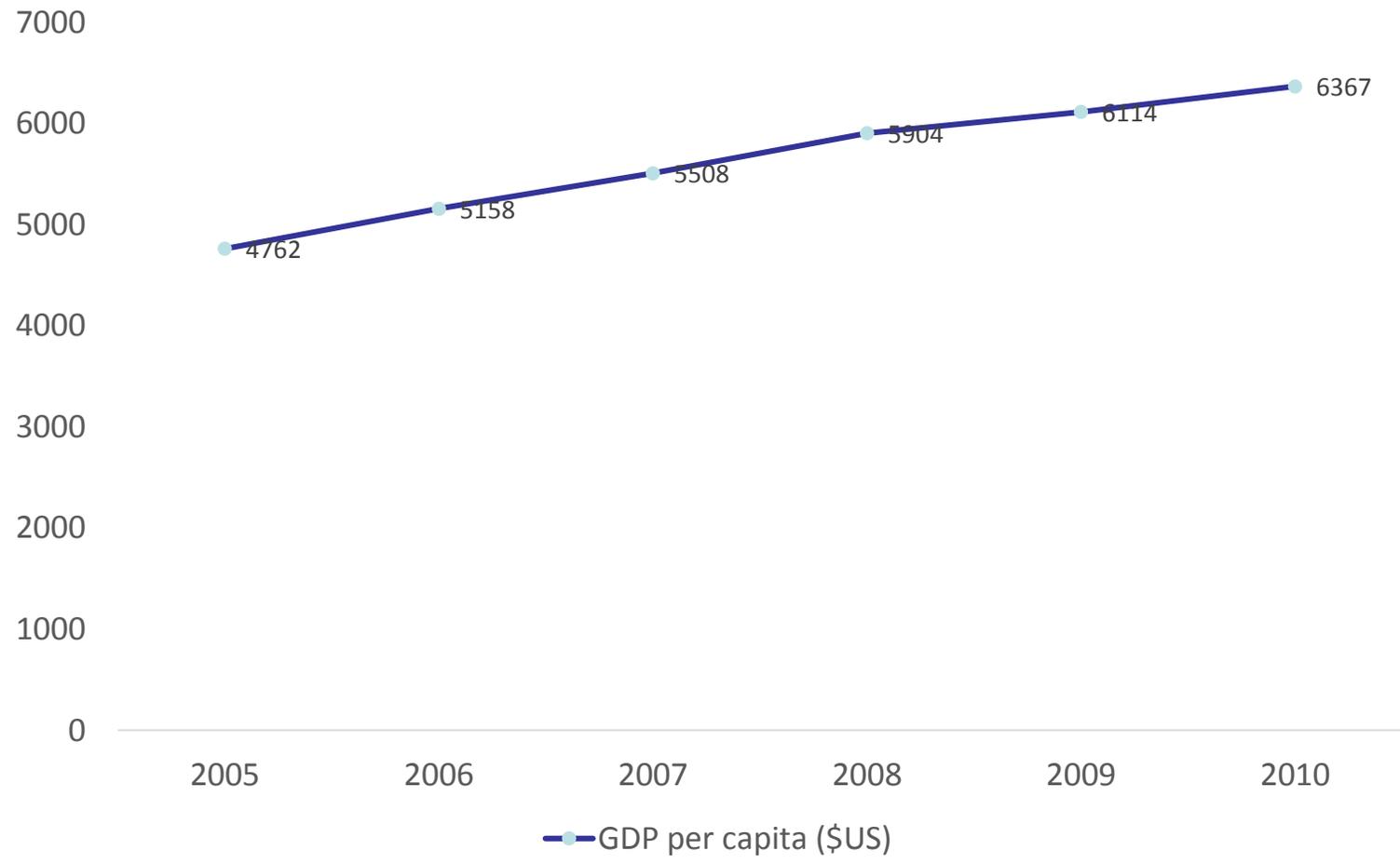
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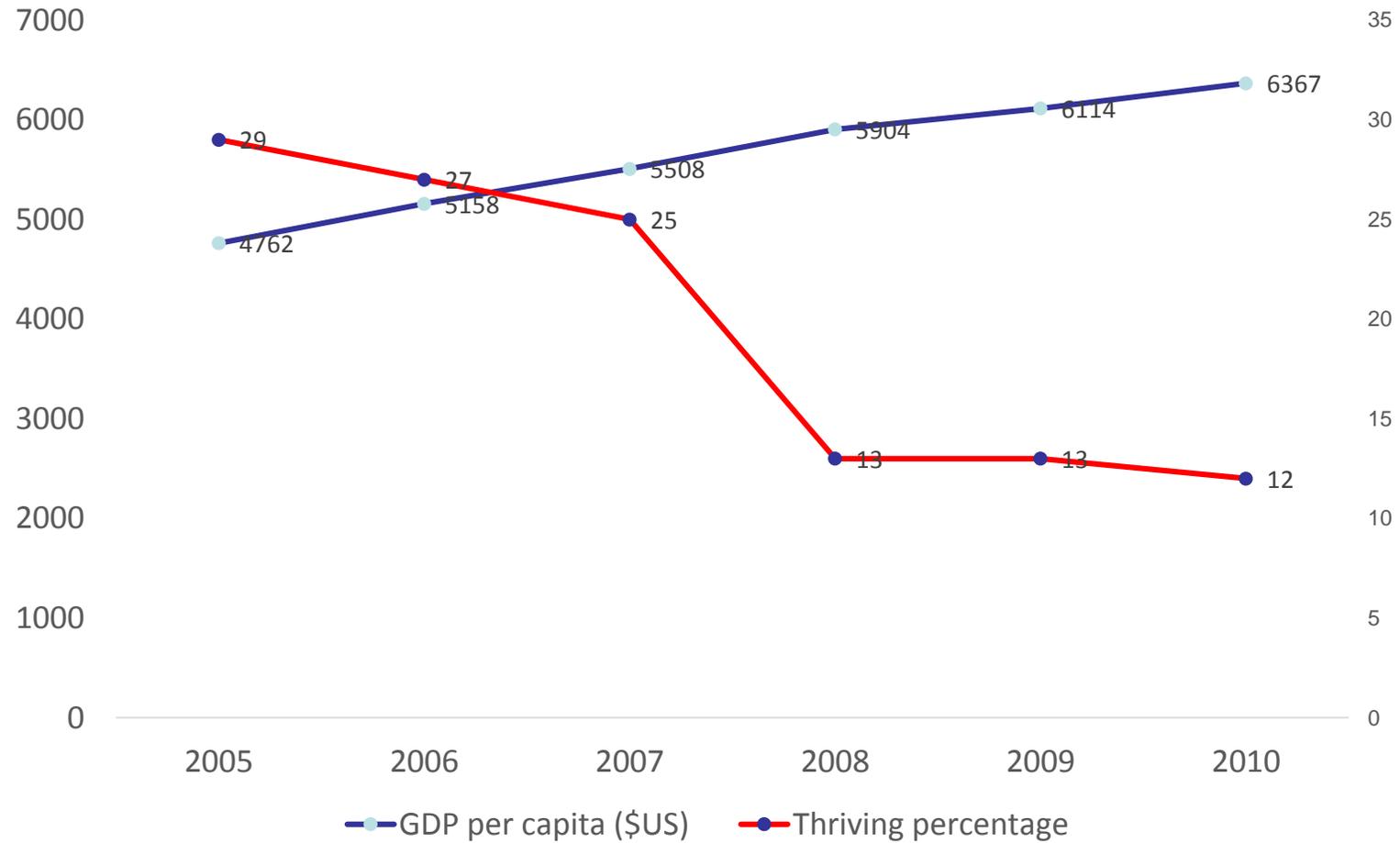


# EGYPT BEFORE THE ARAB SPRING



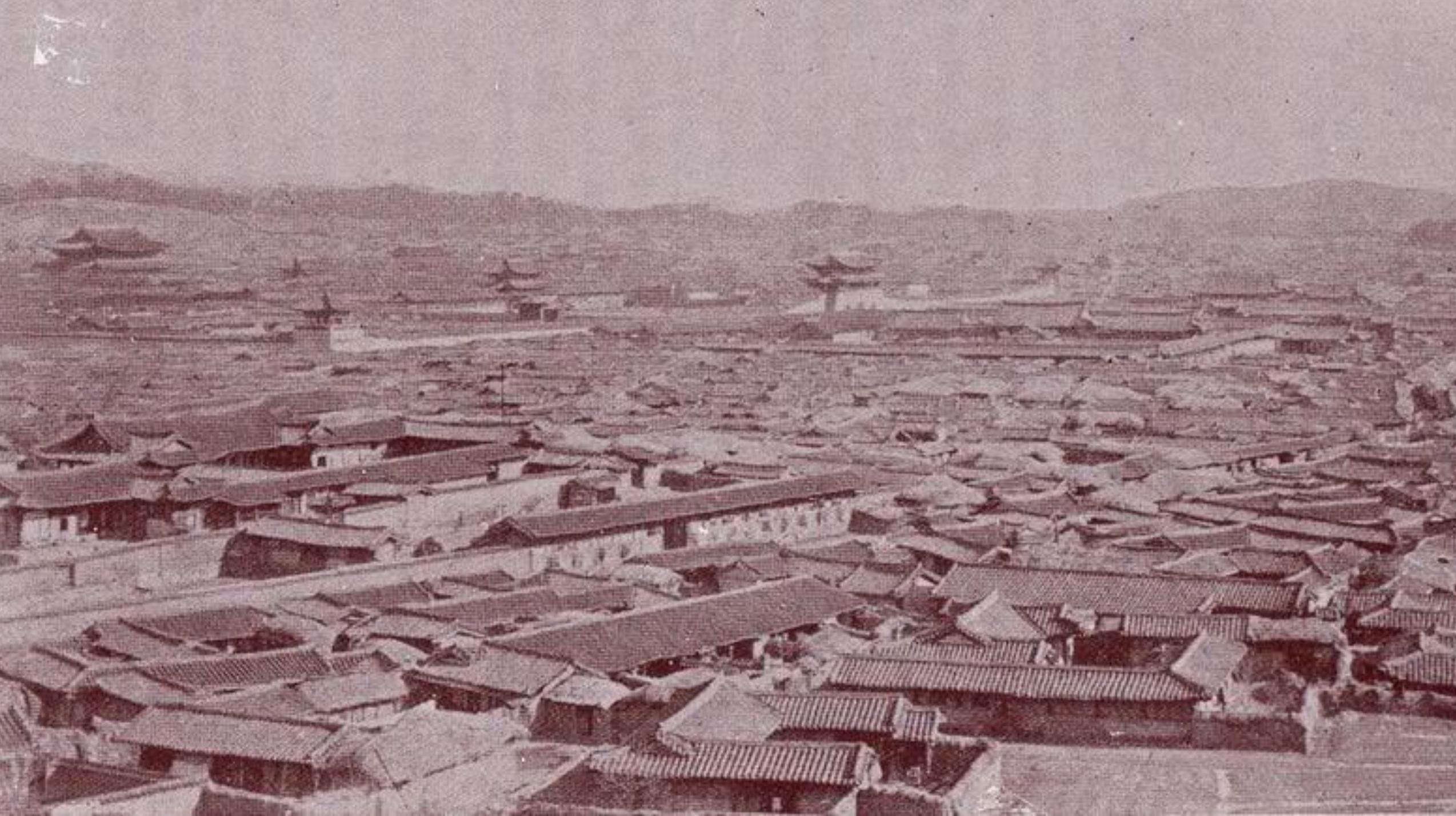
Source: OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being, 2013

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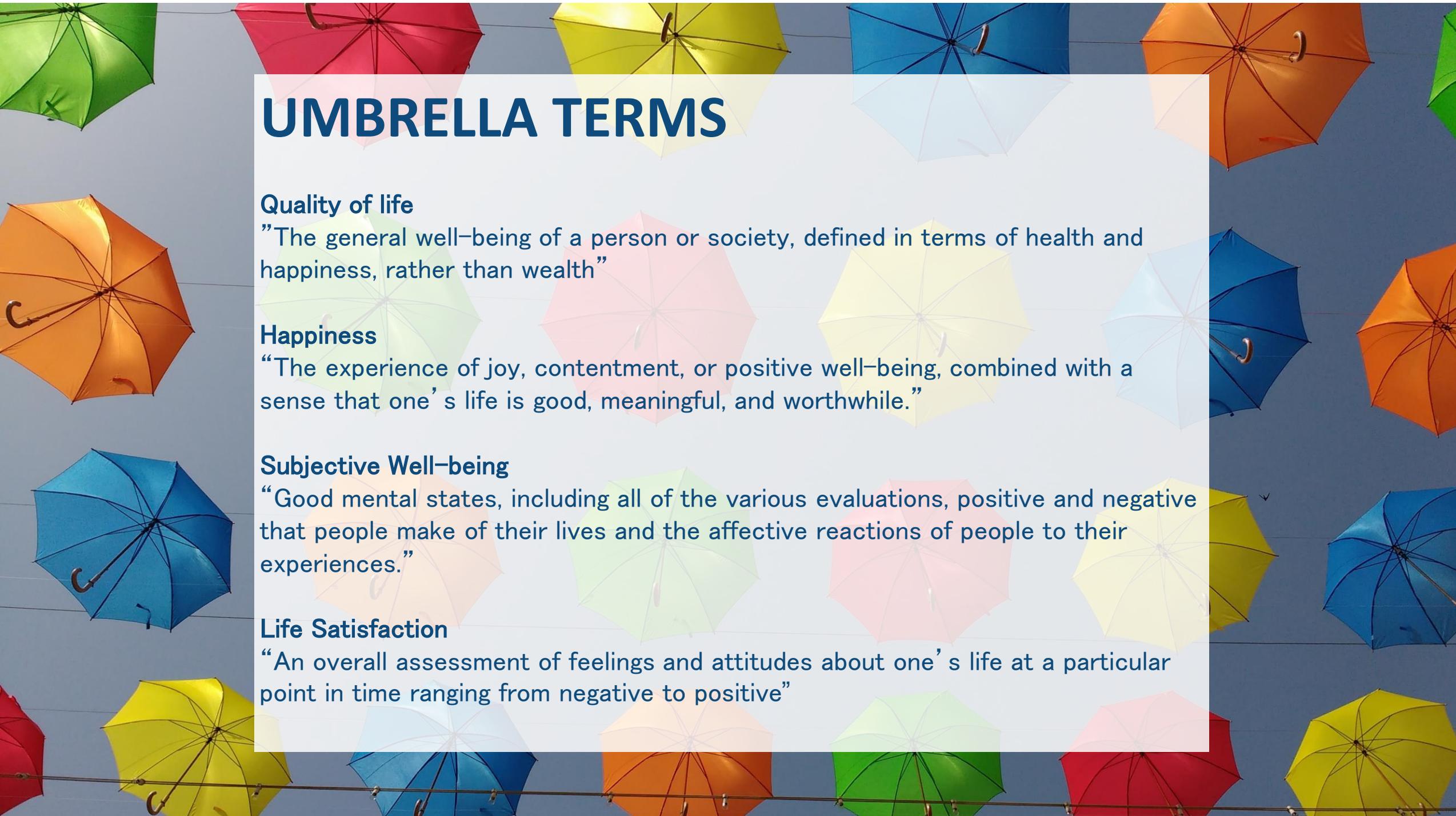
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HOW CAN WE  
MEASURE HAPPINESS?





# UMBRELLA TERMS

## **Quality of life**

”The general well-being of a person or society, defined in terms of health and happiness, rather than wealth”

## **Happiness**

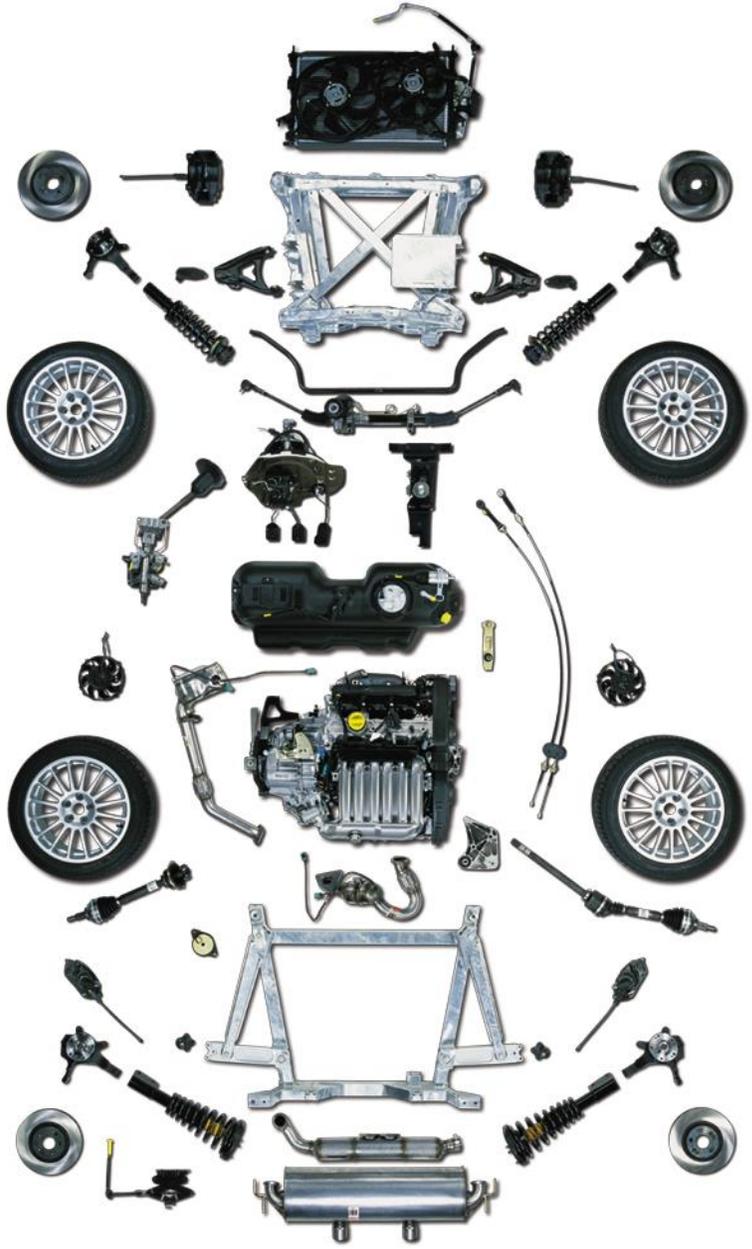
“The experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile.”

## **Subjective Well-being**

“Good mental states, including all of the various evaluations, positive and negative that people make of their lives and the affective reactions of people to their experiences.”

## **Life Satisfaction**

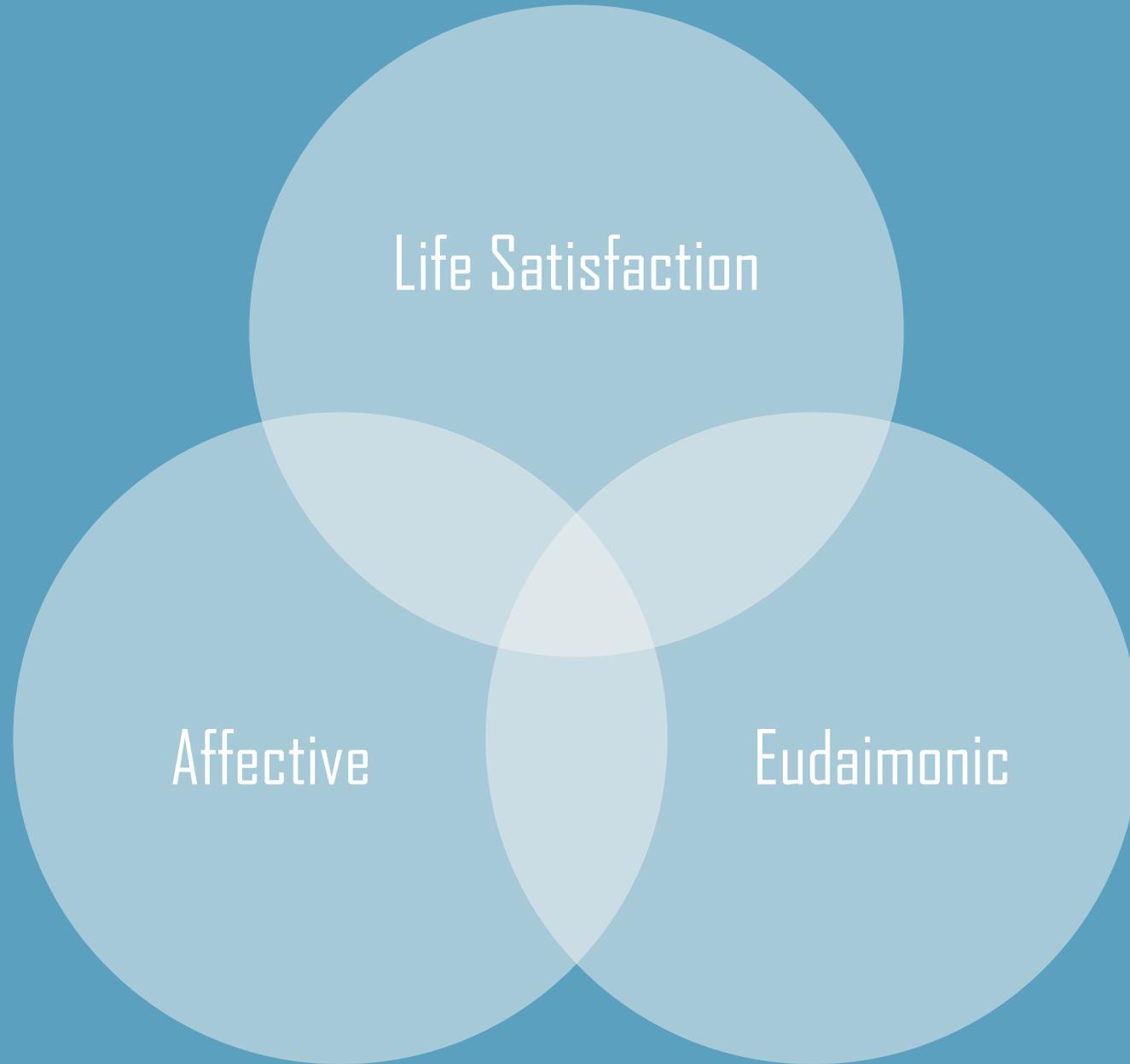
“An overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one’s life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive”





## THE ECONOMY

A social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material expressions associated with the production, use, and management of resources.



Life Satisfaction

Affective

Eudaimonic

## PRINCIPLES

1) break happiness down

2) measure what matters

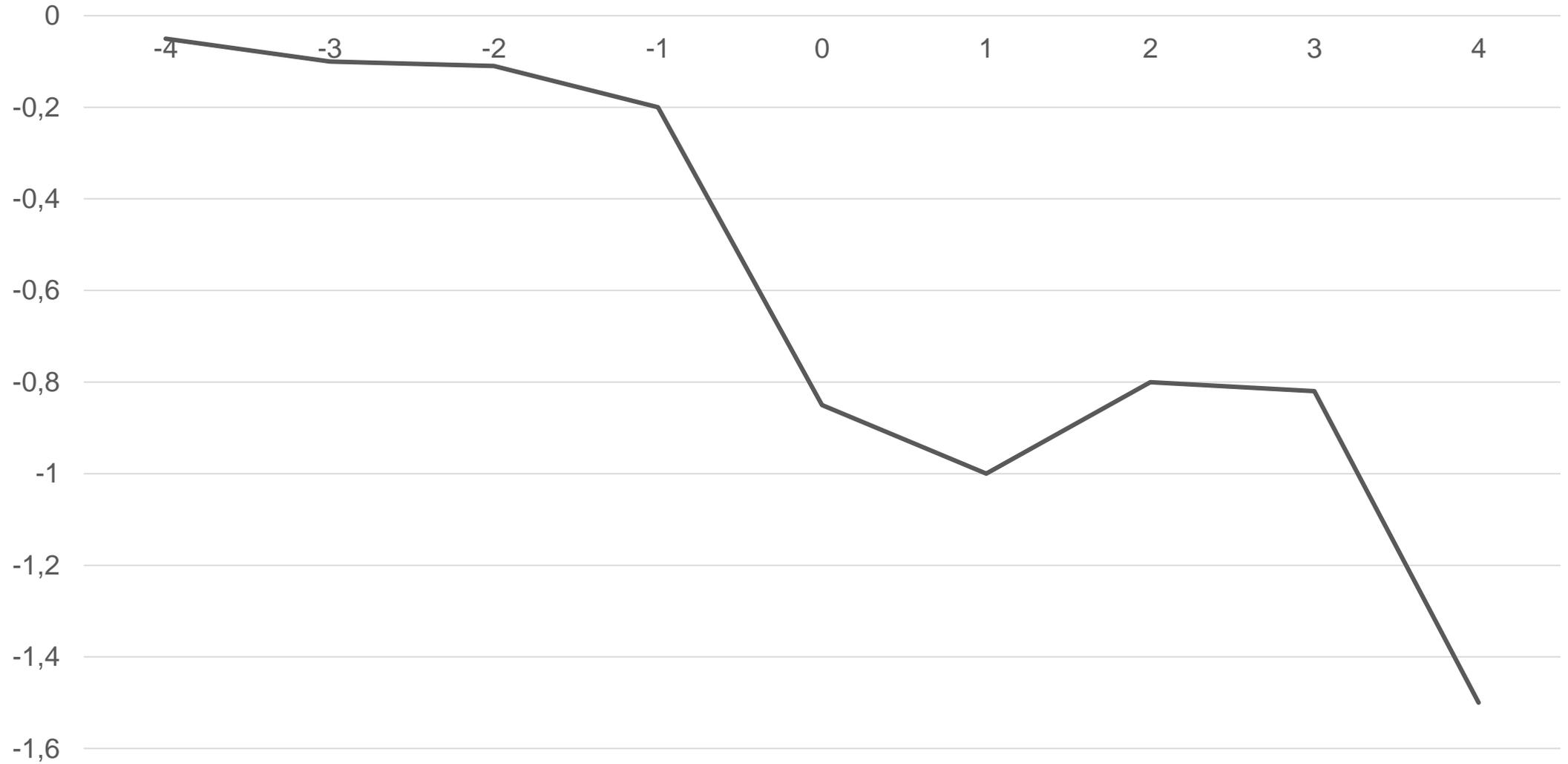
there is only one judge of whether she is happy or not

emotions are subjective – happiness, loneliness, depression

3) look for change

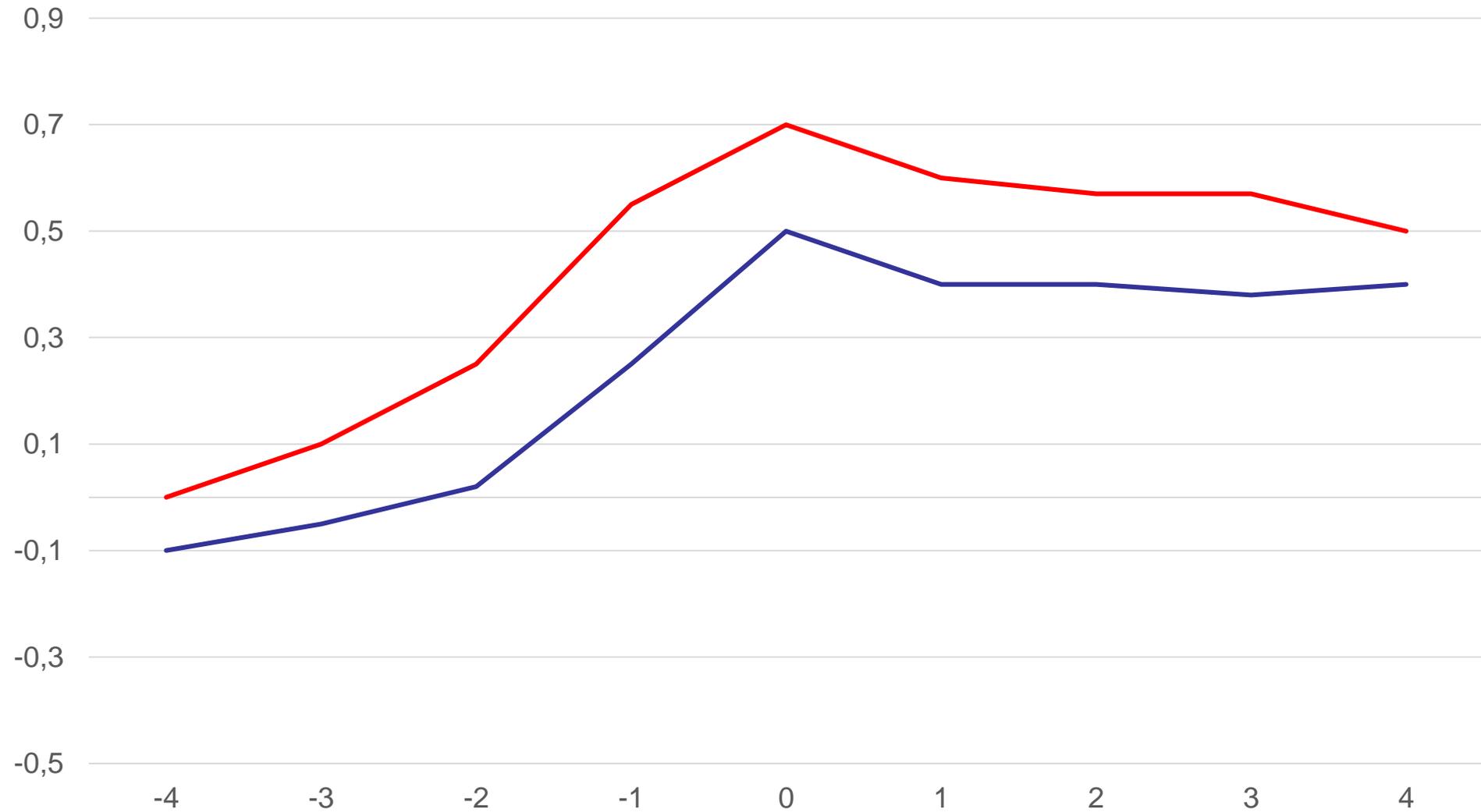


# EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON HAPPINESS



Source: British Household Panel

# EFFECT OF MARRIAGE ON HAPPINESS



Source: British Household Panel

Genetics

Conditions

Behavior

We shape our buildings  
and then they shape us



- There are five times as many bikes as cars in Copenhagen
- 63 per cent of all members of the Danish Parliament bike to work daily
- 58 per cent of children cycle to school in Copenhagen
- 17 per cent of all families with kids have a cargo bike
- 9 out of 10 Danes own a bicycle





A photograph of a park at sunset. The sun is low in the sky, creating long shadows and a warm, golden light. In the foreground, several bicycles are parked in a rack. In the middle ground, a group of people is sitting on the grass, some standing and some sitting. The background shows a modern building and a street lamp. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and communal.

How do we most efficiently  
convert wealth into well-being?

# THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2012

1. DENMARK
2. FINLAND
3. NORWAY
4. NETHERLANDS
5. CANADA
6. SWITZERLAND
7. SWEDEN
8. NEW ZEALAND
9. AUSTRALIA
10. IRELAND

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2013

1. DENMARK
2. NORWAY
3. SWITZERLAND
4. NETHERLANDS
5. SWEDEN
6. CANADA
7. FINLAND
8. AUSTRIA
9. ICELAND
10. AUSTRALIA

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2015

1. SWITZERLAND
2. ICELAND
3. DENMARK
4. NORWAY
5. CANADA
6. FINLAND
7. NETHERLANDS
8. SWEDEN
9. NEW ZEALAND
10. AUSTRALIA

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2016

1. DENMARK
2. SWITZERLAND
3. ICELAND
4. NORWAY
5. FINLAND
6. CANADA
7. NETHERLANDS
8. NEW ZEALAND
9. AUSTRALIA
10. SWEDEN

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2017

1. NORWAY
2. DENMARK
3. ICELAND
4. SWITZERLAND
5. FINLAND
6. NETHERLANDS
7. CANADA
8. NEW ZEALAND
9. AUSTRALIA
10. SWEDEN

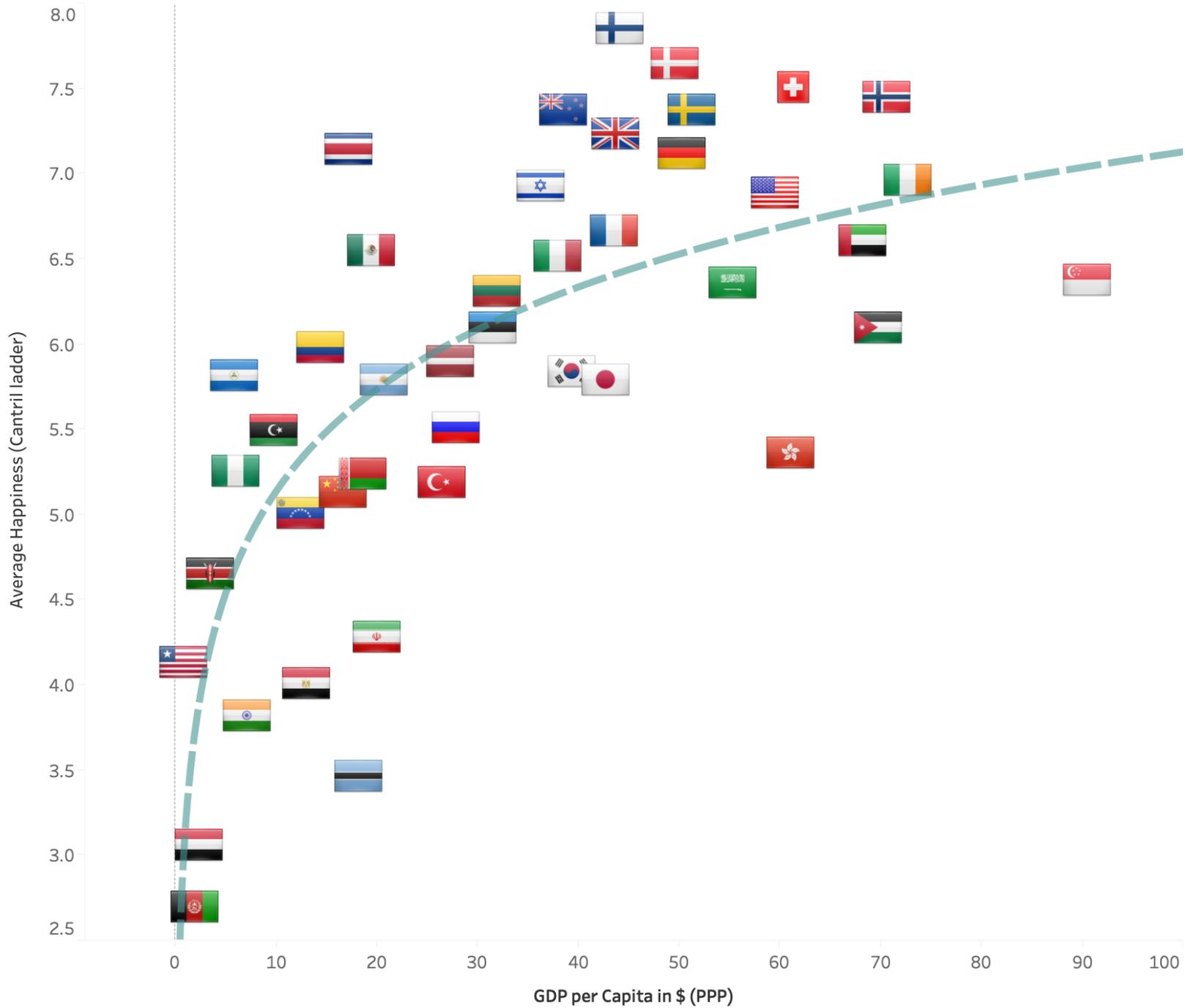
## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2018

1. FINLAND
2. NORWAY
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8. NEW ZEALAND
9. SWEDEN
10. AUSTRALIA

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2019

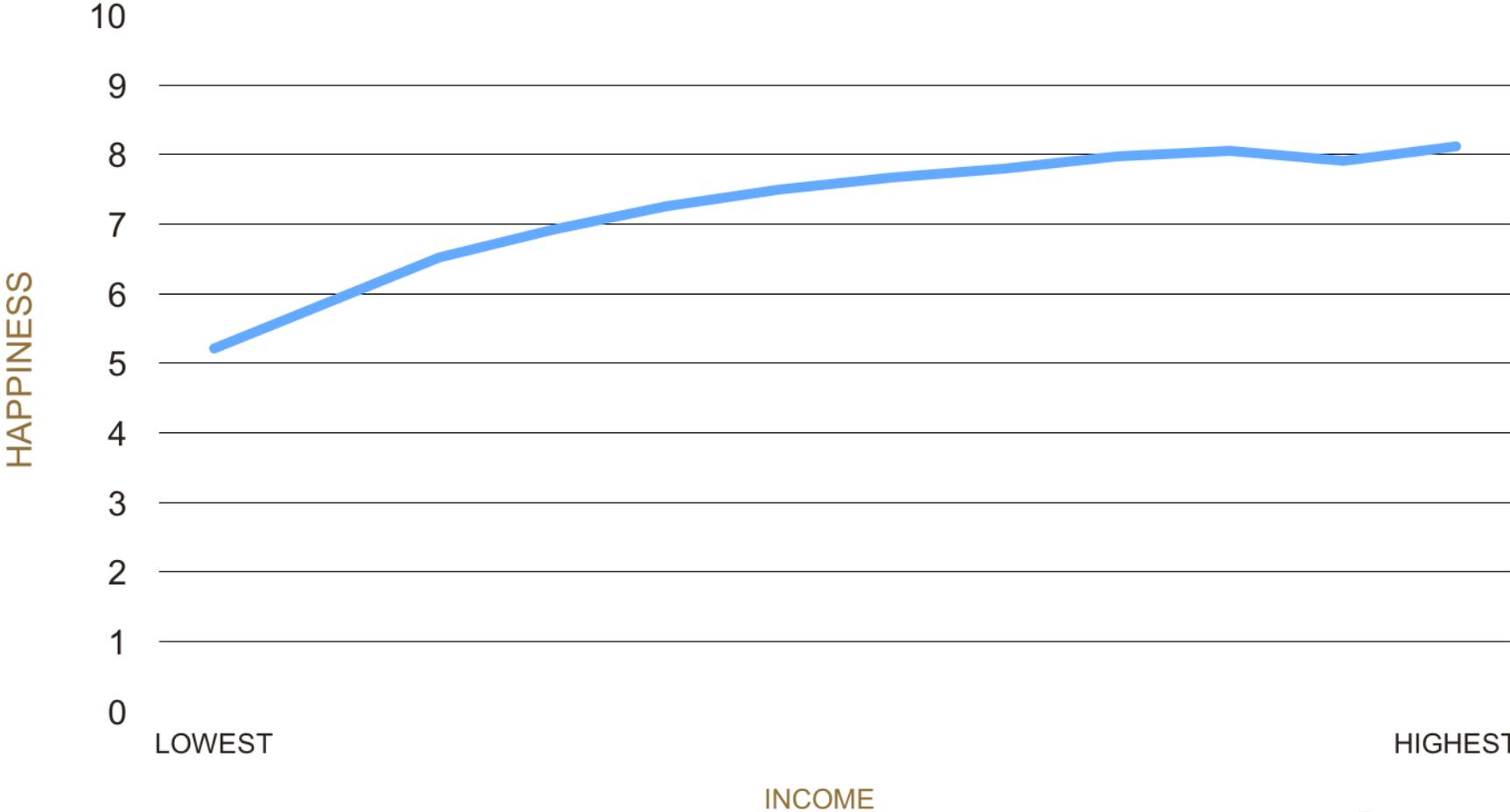
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# GDP AND HAPPINESS



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# INCOME AND HAPPINESS



Source: European Social Survey 2006



# INCOME AND HAPPINESS



Source: European Social Survey 2006



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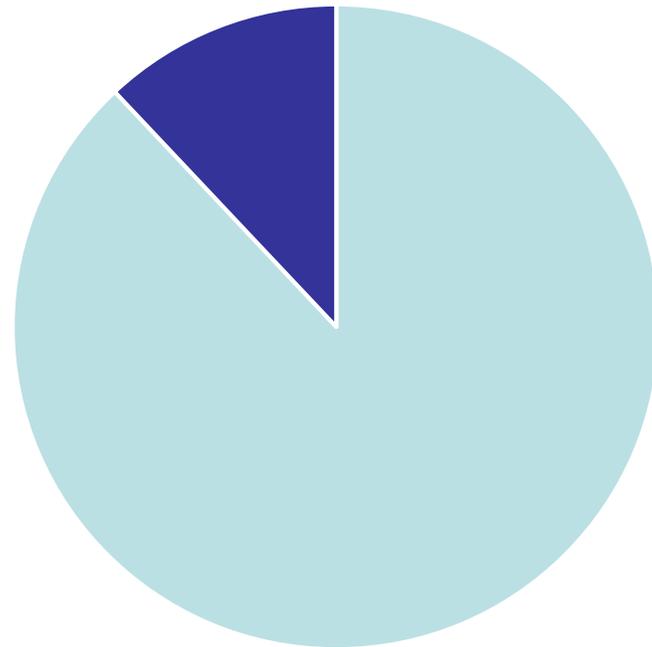
### **SERENITY DOG POD**

Treat your pampered pet to the ultimate luxury experience by having them float away on a cloud like bed into a bliss state with calming color changing light.

\$1,000



# Are you happily paying your taxes?



■ Yes ■ No

Source: Gallup for the Danish paper Berlingske, 2014



Taxes - collective investment in quality of life





A happy city  
removes the  
price tag on  
happiness



# SOCIAL SUPPORT



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NO  
PHONE  
FRIDAYS?

# The GoodHome Report 2019

## quantitative data

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**13,489**

respondents

**10**

countries

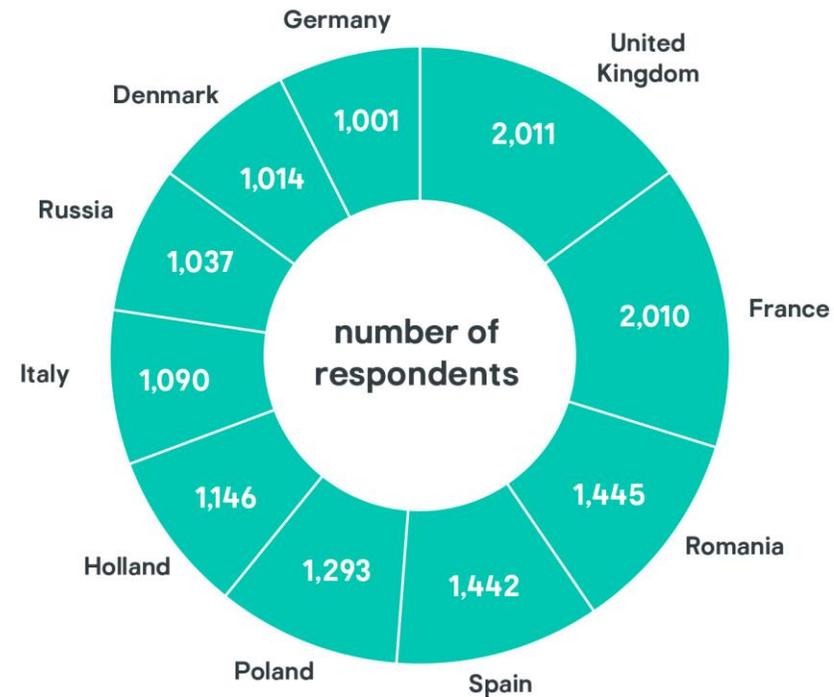
**44**

questions

social media survey of  
300 #happyhome tags

**593,516**

data points





# 73%

of people who are  
happy at home are  
also happy in life



Our homes account for

**15%**

of our overall happiness.  
Much more than  
our **income (6%)** or  
**employment status (3%)**

**comfort**

**pride**

**identity**

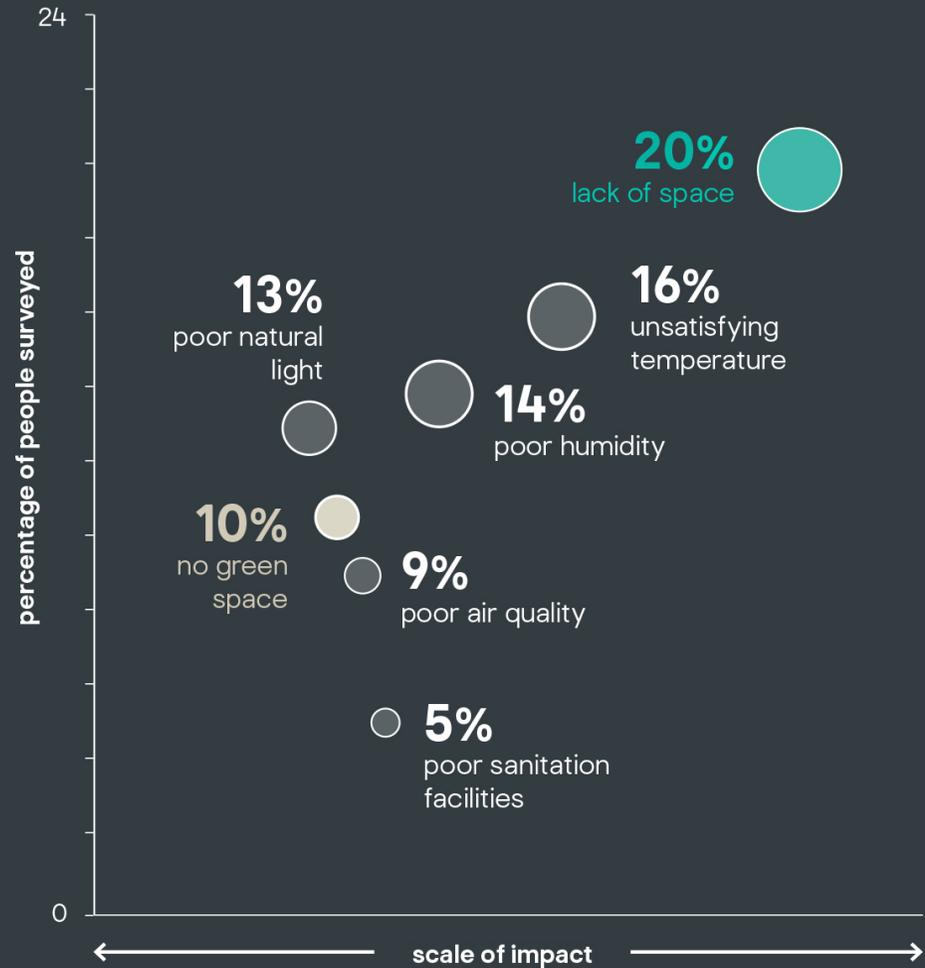
These **five emotions**  
ultimately decide how  
happy we feel at home

**safety**

**control**

## what are the biggest problems with our homes?

We tested how lack of space undermines how happy we are with our home relative to other fundamental problems such as poor natural light and poor air quality.



If you cannot measure it,  
you cannot manage it.

Thank you for your attention!  
Stay in touch.



@MeikWiking



Meik Wiking



[www.happinessresearchinstitute.com](http://www.happinessresearchinstitute.com)



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