

Quality of Life - our shared responsibility



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Overview

- **Ideas about progress**
- **Quality of Life research and application**
- **Conclusion & Reflections**

What is progress?

The conventional view

- progress is seen as increasing standard of living (i.e. material welfare) – yardstick is the ‘\$\$\$’
- **economic growth** is the main measure of progress & it is **an end in itself** (i.e. more is better!!)

Hedonic view of happiness

The aim is to maximize pleasure through the fulfillment of desires

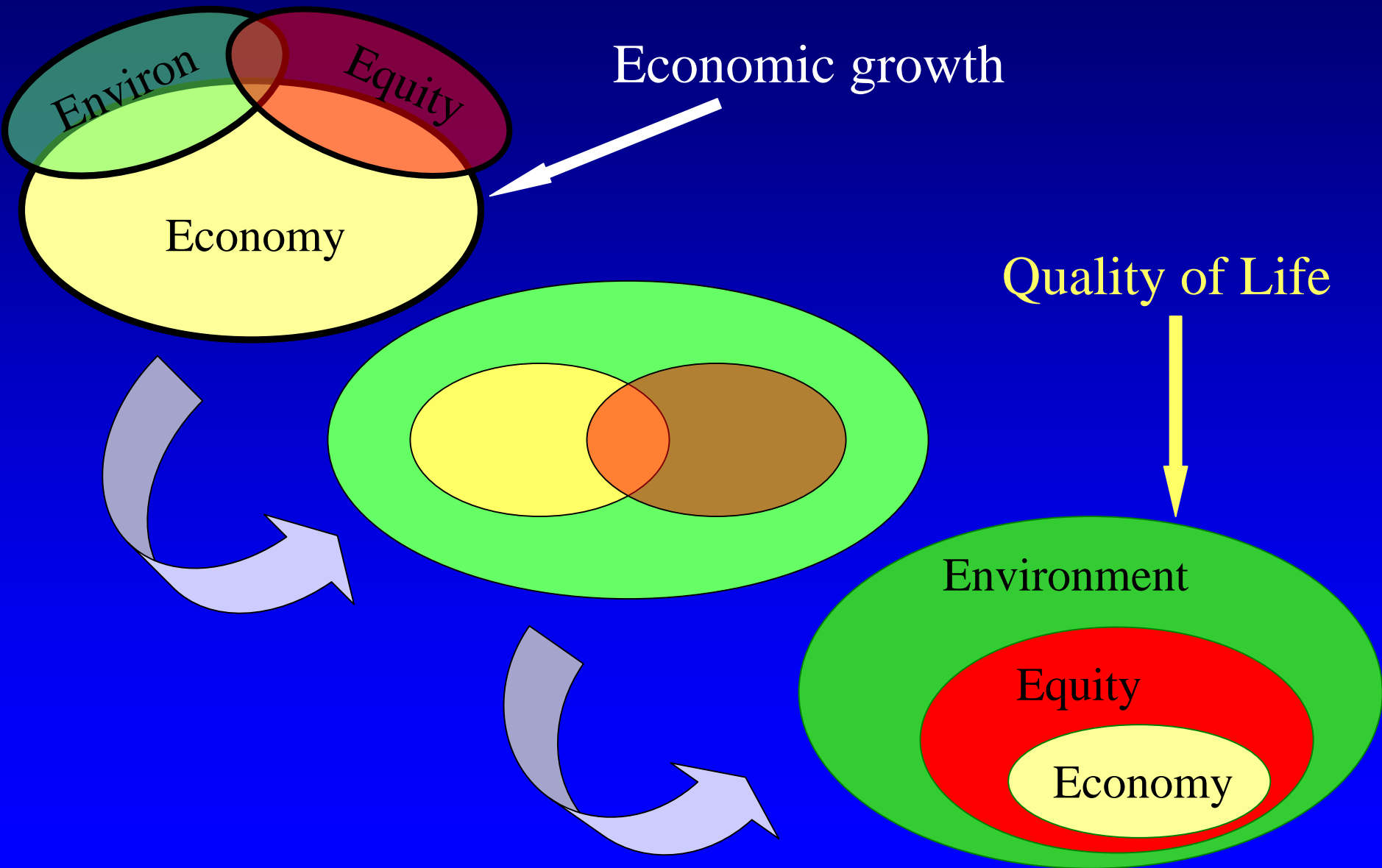
Problem is that fulfillment of personal desires as a goal on its own can have negative consequences for our collective wellbeing!!

An alternative view of progress

Progress is multi-dimensional and has to take into account *E*conomic, *E*quity (social) and *E*nvironmental factors

→ Economic growth is a means to an end (i.e. enhancing Quality of Life)

Interconnectedness of 3Es



Empirical data

Wellbeing Indicators

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graph TD; A[Wellbeing Indicators] --> B[OBJECTIVE]; A --> C[SUBJECTIVE]; B --> D["• income<br>• life expectancy<br>• literacy rate<br>• population density"]; C --> E["• perception of the value of income<br>• perception of value of one's life<br>• perception of the value of education<br>• perception of effect of crowdedness on one's wellbeing"]
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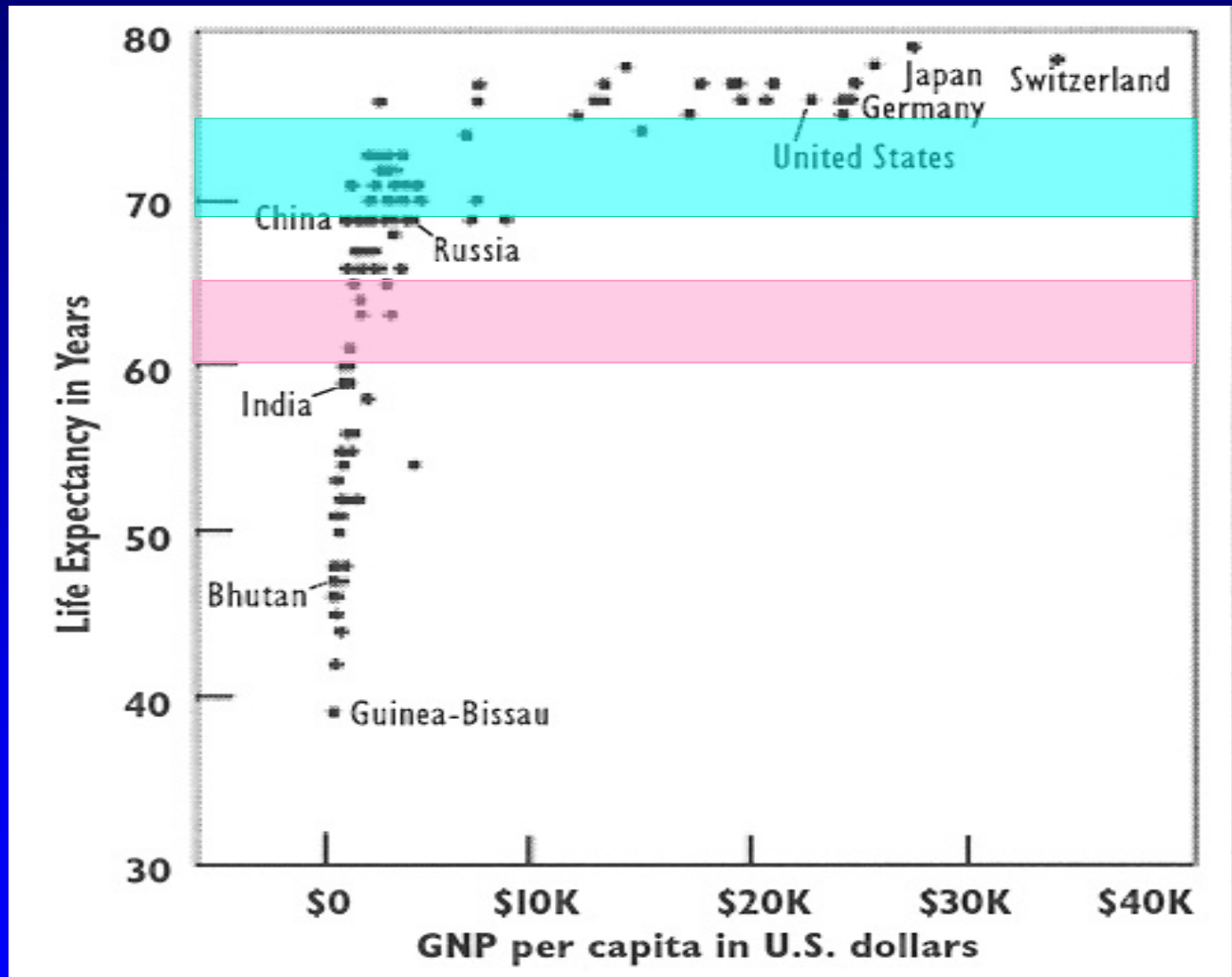
OBJECTIVE

- income
- life expectancy
- literacy rate
- population density

SUBJECTIVE

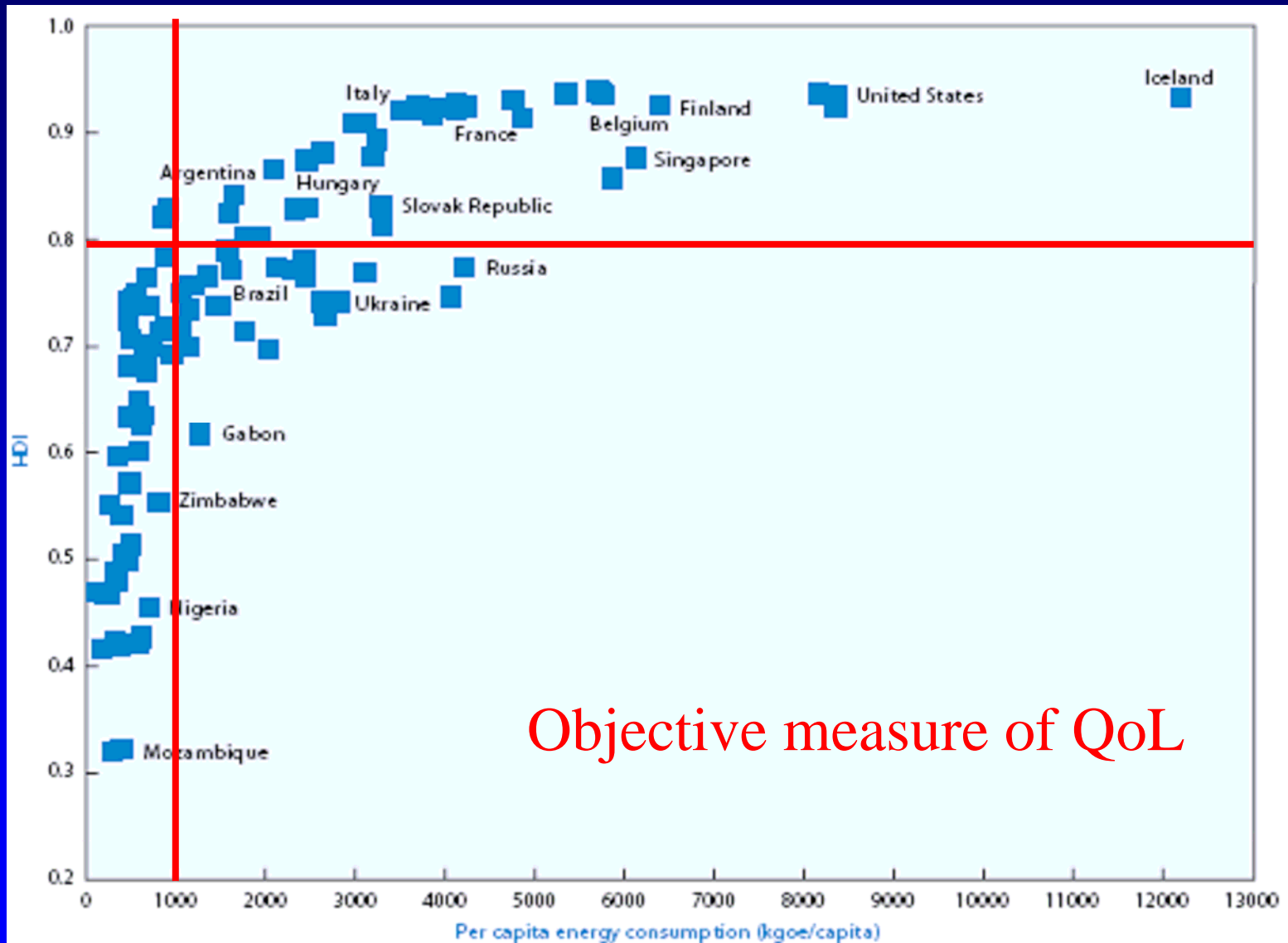
- perception of the value of income
- perception of value of one's life
- perception of the value of education
- perception of effect of crowdedness on one's wellbeing

Life Expectancy by Income



(Courtesy: Eckersley, 2005)

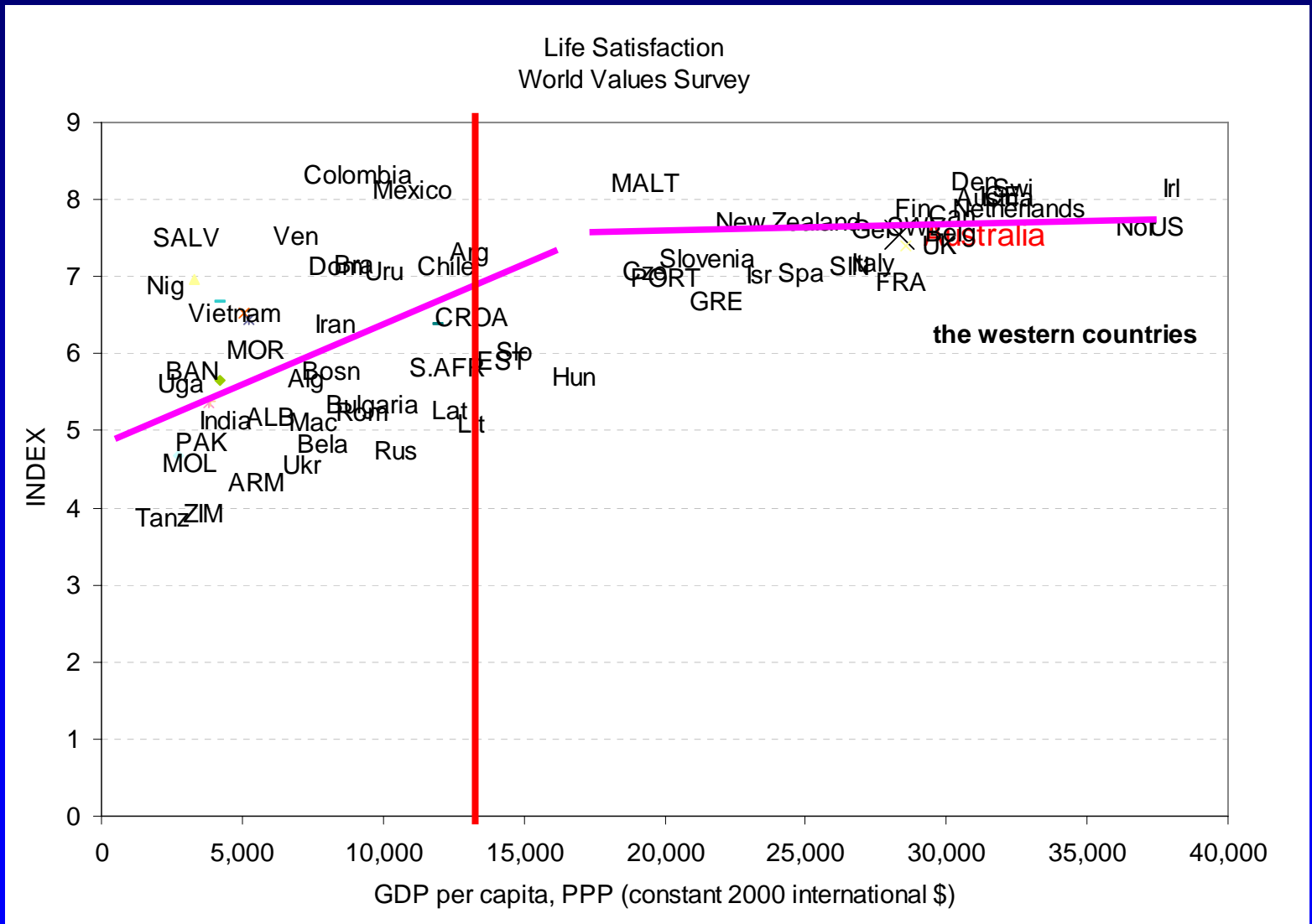
HDI vs Per Capita Energy Use, 1999-2000



Objective measure of QoL

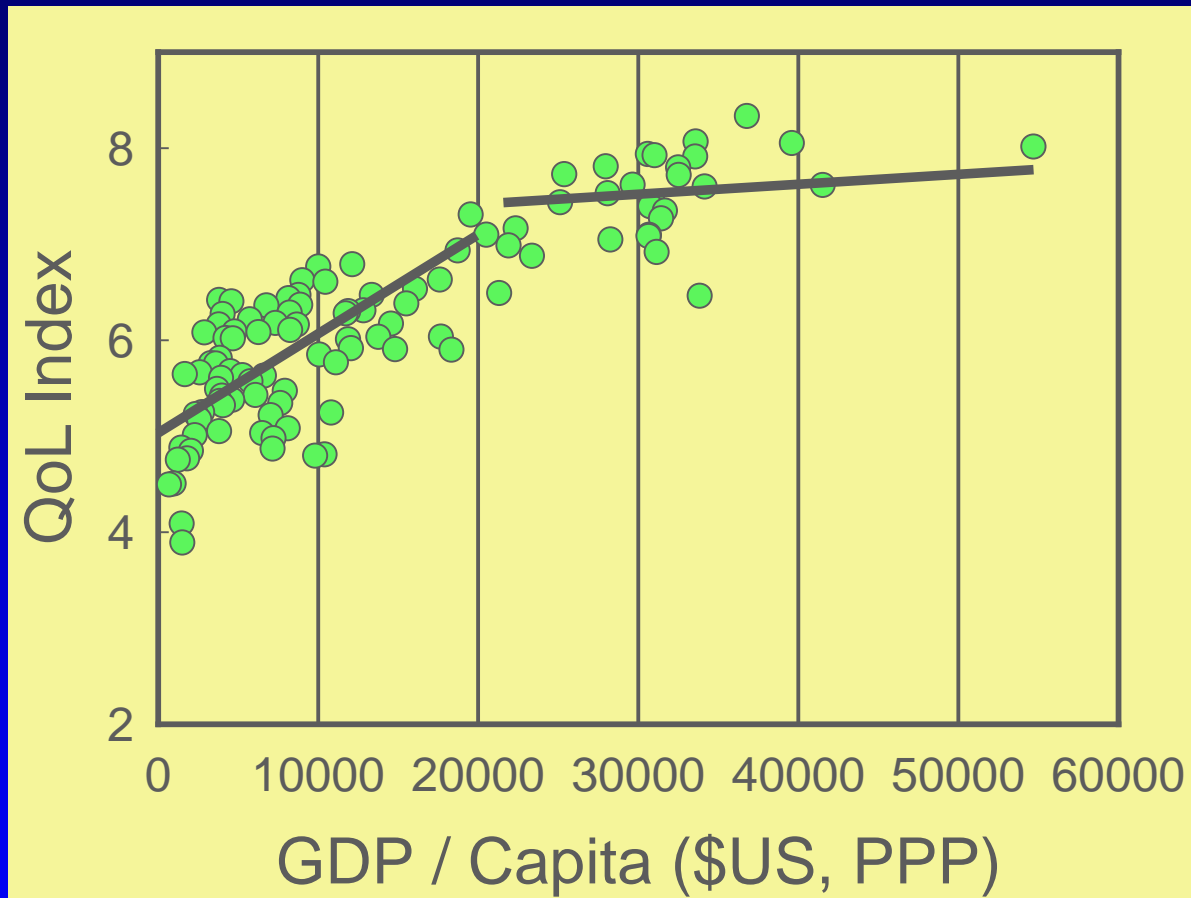
Source: WEA 2004

Life Satisfaction vs Per Capita GDP



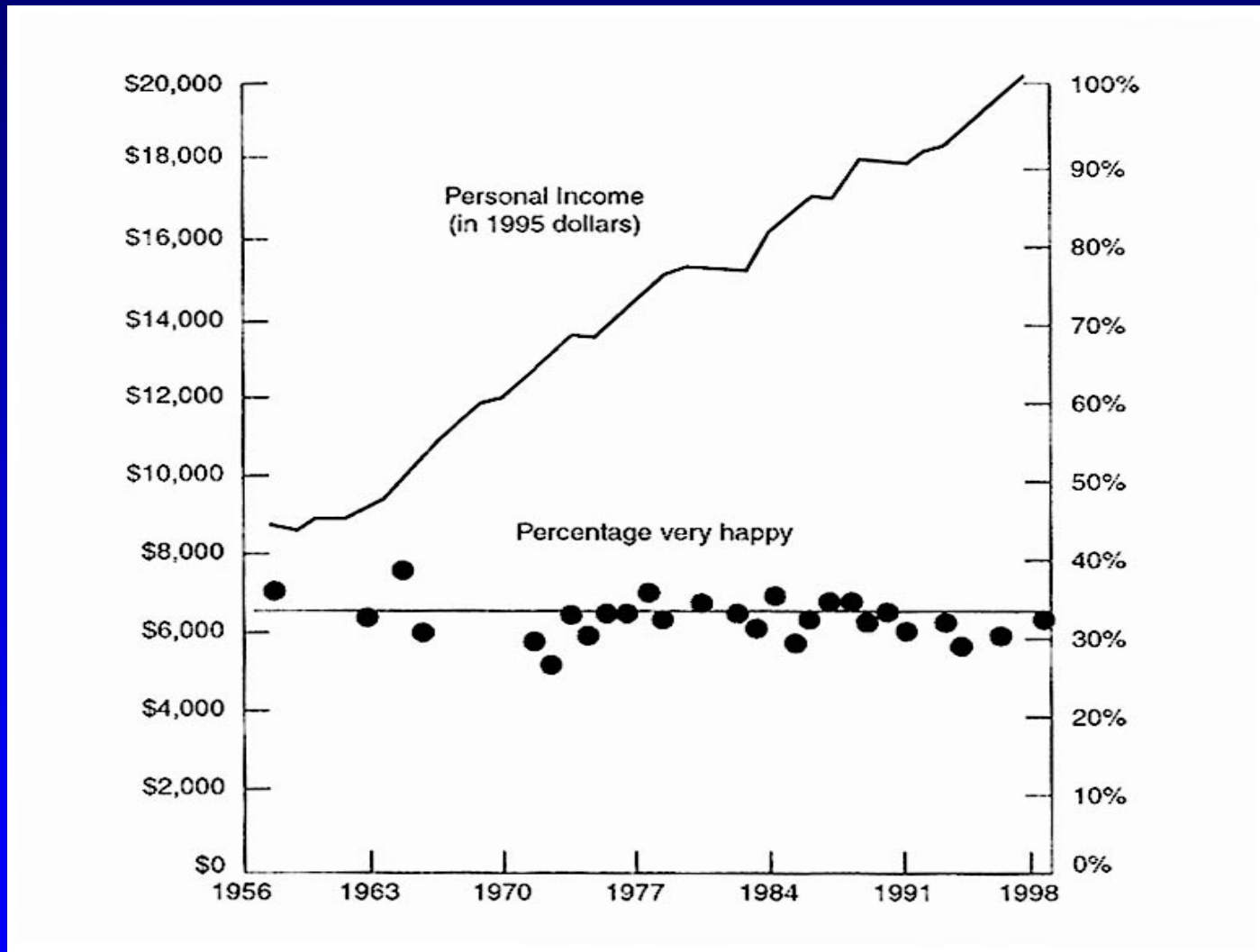
WVS 1995/2000 (Courtesy: Dr Paul Frijters, ANU)

Validity of Subjective Wellbeing Data



Economist Intelligence Unity, 2005

Happiness vs Income, USA 1956-98



Source: Myers and Diener, 1996

(Courtesy: Richard Eckersley)

Quality of Life research & application

What is QoL or Wellbeing?

“QoL or Wellbeing is more than pleasure. It is about happiness and meaning, about developing as a person, and feeling that your life is fulfilling and worthwhile.”

Eudemonic view of wellbeing (Aristotle)

Source: A wellbeing manifesto for a flourishing society, The Australia Institute (2005)

Multidimensionality

Our Quality of Life is influenced by:

values & attitude in life

personal situation

experiences and choices

the society around us

our natural environment

Subjective Wellbeing Index

- Adults (Personal Wellbeing Index)
- Children (for kids as young as 6-8 years of age)
- Intellectually & cognitively disabled persons
- National Wellbeing Index (NWI)

Domains of life satisfaction (PWI)

- Standard of living
- Health
- Achieving in life
- Relationships
- Safety
- Community-connectedness
- Future security
- Religiosity/Spirituality
- Any other for Mauritius?

Domains of Satisfaction (NWI)

- Economic situation
- State of the Environment
- Social conditions
- Government
- Business security
- National Security?
- Any other for Mauritius?

Methodology

1. Designing questionnaire & determining sample population
2. Scale administration (verbal or written)
3. Checking data integrity
4. Statistical analysis
- 5. Synthesis**

Scale administration

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

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral					Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2

1. "How satisfied are you with your standard of living?"

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral					Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statistical analysis

- Compute Mean and Std. Dev. of scores for each domain
- Aggregate scores into PWI & NWI
- Internal reliability check - Cronbach's alpha & item-total as well as item-domain correlations
- Validity testing – Exploratory Principal Component Analysis for PWI & NWI
- Regress individual domain scores onto 'satisfaction with life as a whole' using binary correlations and multiple regression analysis

An Example (New Zealand)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	% Deviation from PWI/ NWI
Life as a whole	69.21	20.52	
PWI	67.39	15.5	
Standard of Living	69.50	21.07	2.11
Health	66.62	22.45	-0.77
Achieving in Life	67.69	21.44	0.30
Personal Relationships	73	25.1	5.61
Safe	71.20	20.72	3.81
Feeling part of your Community	63.68	20.27	-3.71
Future Security	60.31	22.99	-7.08
NWI	52.01	15.5	
Economic Situation	52.75	20.46	0.74
State of NZ environment	53.69	20.2	1.68
Social conditions in NZ	49.03	20.11	-2.98
Government	47.96	24.59	-4.05
Business in NZ	54.93	17.61	2.92
National Security	53.87	21.39	1.86

Table 3: Summary for Personal- and National-Wellbeing Index

Example continued (NZ)

	Life as a whole		PW I mean		Standard of Living	
	Mean	<i>Std.Dev.</i>	Mean	<i>Std.Dev.</i>	Mean	<i>Std.Dev.</i>
Under 20	62.6	<i>21.7</i>	61.6	<i>17.0</i>	65.6	<i>21.3</i>
20 - 24	67.3	<i>18.9</i>	66.9	<i>14.1</i>	69.7	<i>19.1</i>
25 - 29	68.3	<i>20.5</i>	67.7	<i>14.8</i>	71.0	<i>19.2</i>
30 - 34	68.3	<i>20.6</i>	66.5	<i>15.6</i>	67.8	<i>20.7</i>
35 - 39	70.2	<i>19.9</i>	67.6	<i>15.2</i>	69.7	<i>19.6</i>
40 - 44	65.3	<i>20.8</i>	65.8	<i>15.7</i>	65.9	<i>21.0</i>
45 - 49	67.8	<i>21.1</i>	65.8	<i>16.0</i>	67.3	<i>22.1</i>
50 - 54	70.7	<i>20.1</i>	67.8	<i>16.1</i>	69.7	<i>22.5</i>
55 - 59	70.7	<i>20.5</i>	67.3	<i>16.5</i>	70.7	<i>22.9</i>
60 - 64	72.7	<i>22.2</i>	70.0	<i>18.1</i>	71.3	<i>24.0</i>
Over 65	76.3	<i>19.0</i>	71.9	<i>15.2</i>	74.8	<i>21.6</i>
p-value	< 0.01		< 0.01		< 0.01	

Table 9: IWI for Different Age Groups

Study impact of parameters like level of education, ethnicity, gender, marital status, type of employment, and other socio-economic & demographic variables

Model

*Life satisfaction of Western populations
average 75±2.5*

Theory of Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis:

“proposes that subjective wellbeing, under normal circumstances, is actively controlled and maintained within a limited positive range by a set of psychological devices and personality” Cummins (2003)

Analogous to body temperature

Synthesis

Synthesis is the drawing together and critical analysis, by individuals or groups, of knowledge from different fields, disciplines and sciences (and the humanities and arts) to address social and scientific questions.

How to integrate results into Policy?

Conclusion & Reflections

Quality of Life – our shared responsibility

- A multidimensional approach
- To acknowledge & respect the inter-connectedness and inter-relatedness of our lives
- The outcome of a co-creative process
- A gift of learning & a gift to share with others

Two questions to take home

What do you contribute to
your Quality of Life and that of others?

How can you enhance
the *quality* of this contribution?

THANK YOU!!



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