

Measuring Happiness and Well-being

- A Happy Planet Index

Asian Cultural Co-operation Forum,

Hong Kong

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economics

real wealth
means well-being



environment

lifestyles must
become sustainable



society

communities need
power and influence

Happiness and Well-being

- What do we mean by well-being?
- Measuring happiness and well-being
- Findings from well-being research
- Re-thinking progress
 - A Happy Planet Index
- What can governments do?

What do we mean by “well-being”?

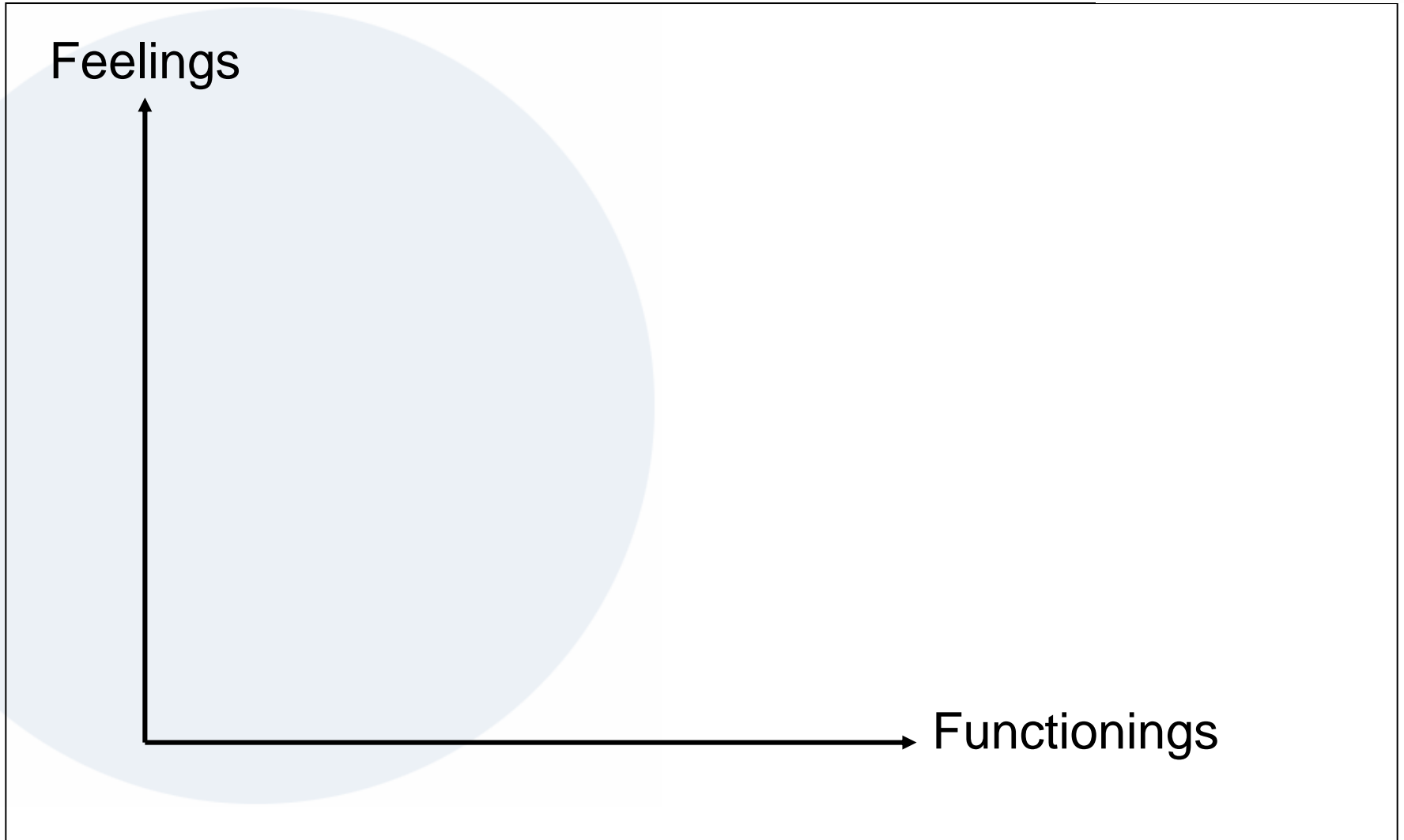


Well-being = People’s experience
of their quality of life

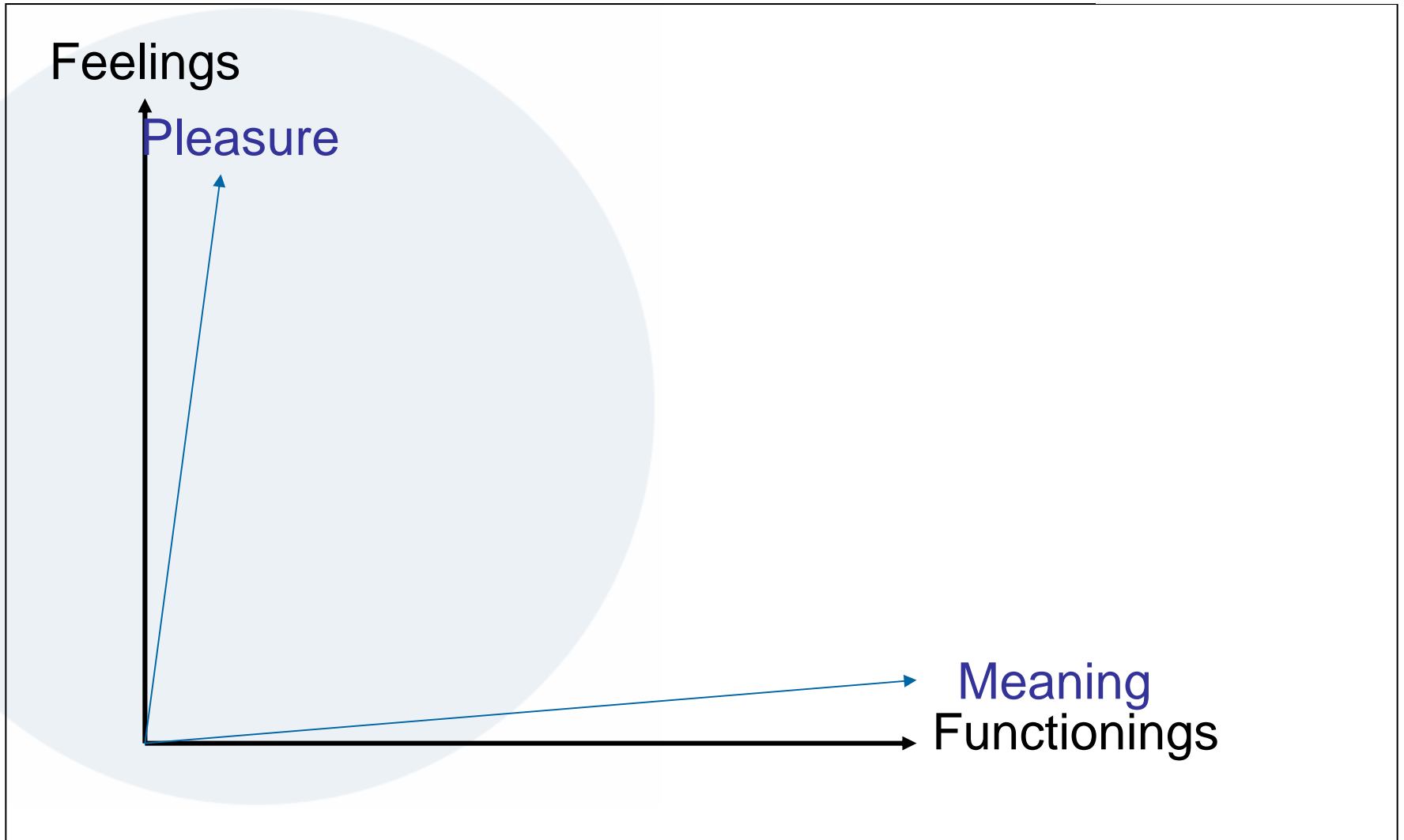
WHO definition of health as:

“A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity”: 1946

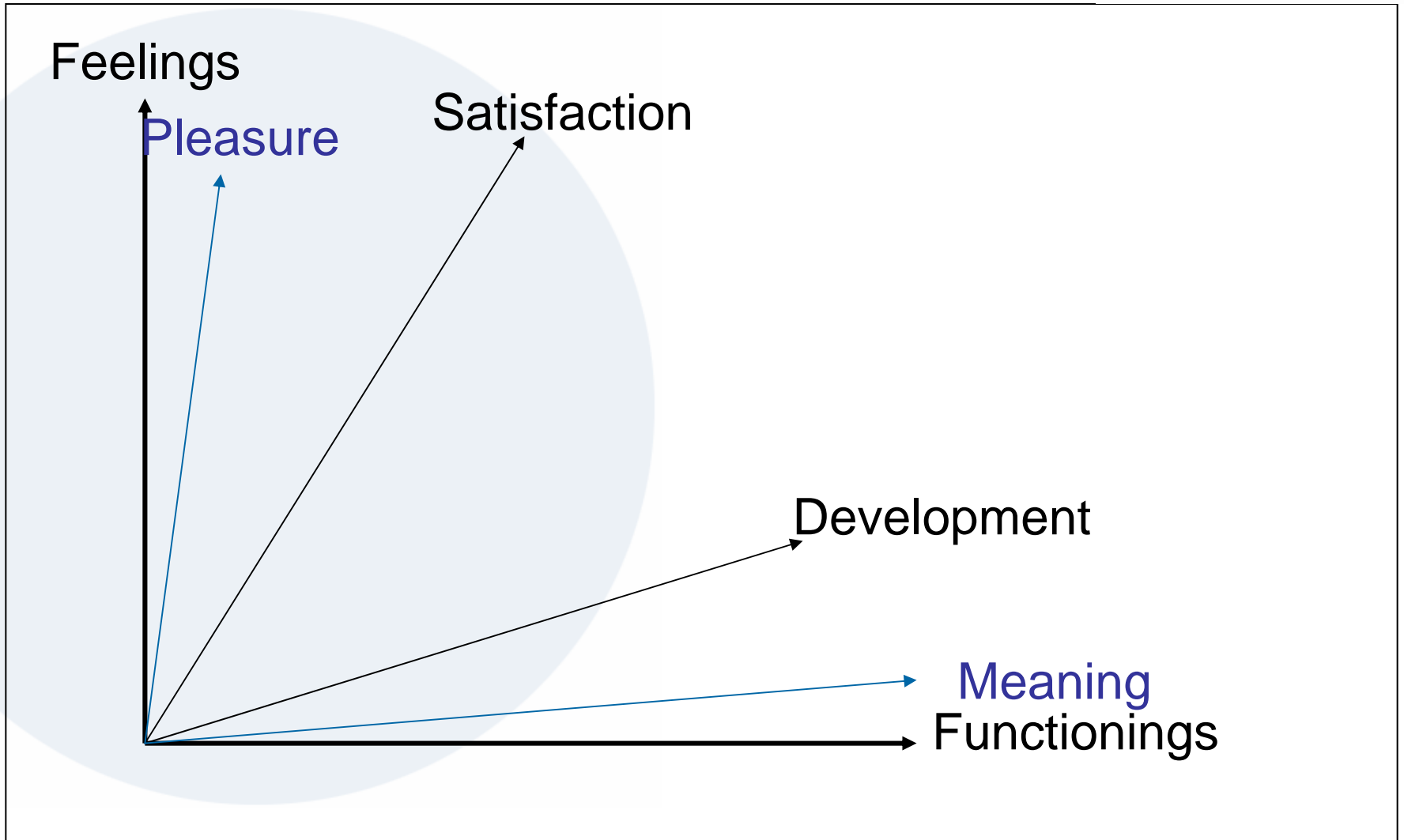
Measuring Personal Well-being



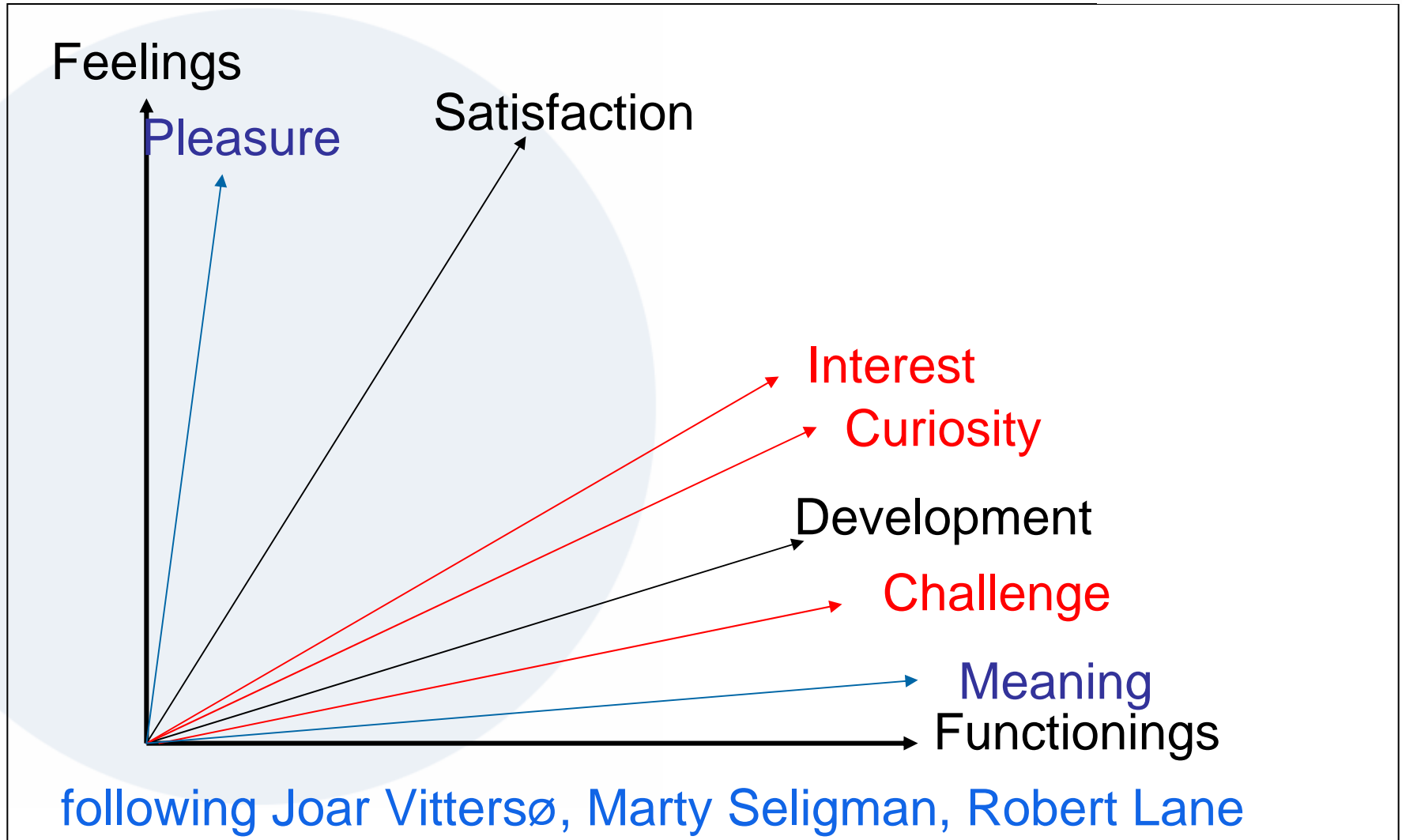
Measuring Personal Well-being



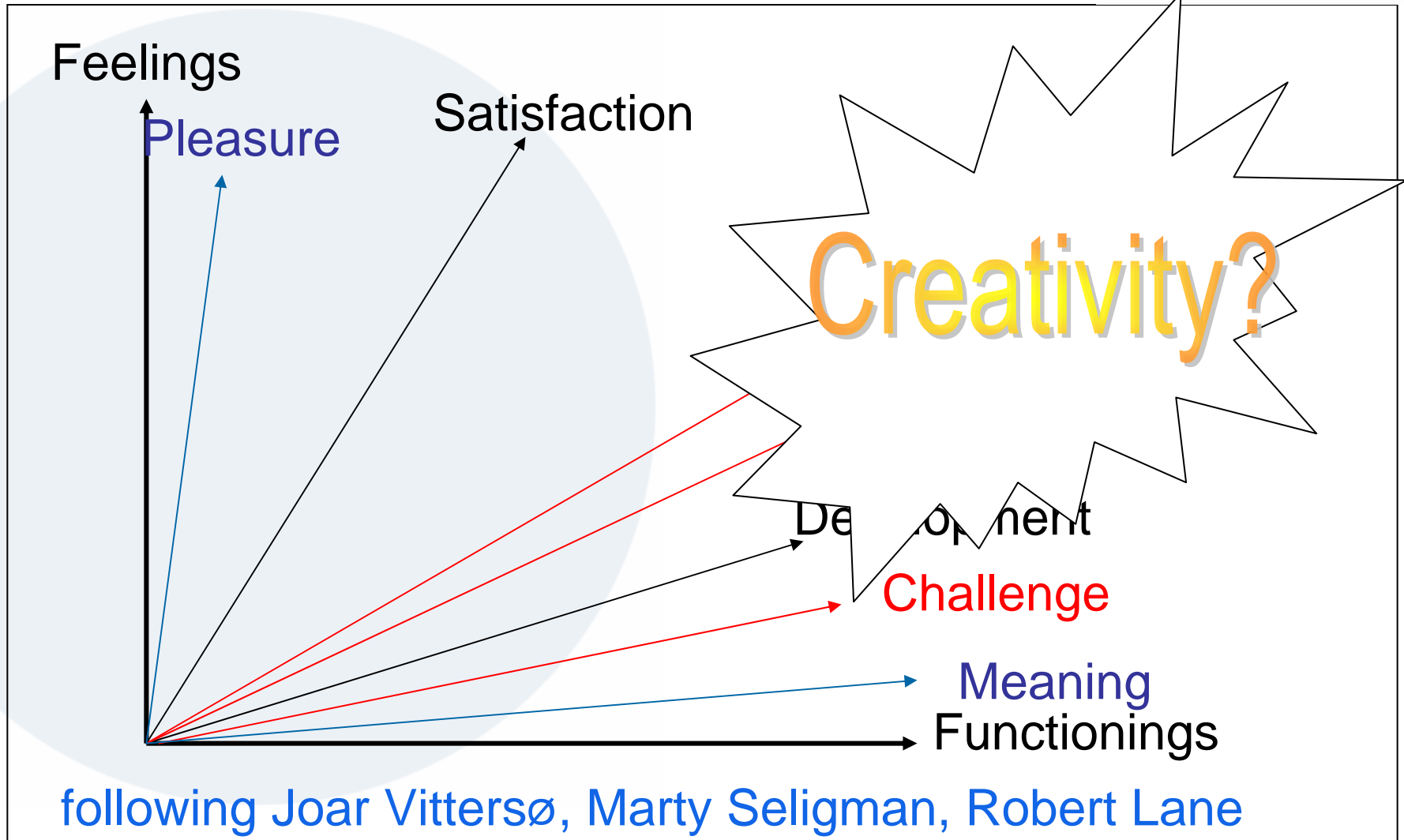
Measuring Personal Well-being



Measuring Personal Well-being



Measuring Personal Well-being



following Joar Vittersø, Marty Seligman, Robert Lane

Measuring Well-being

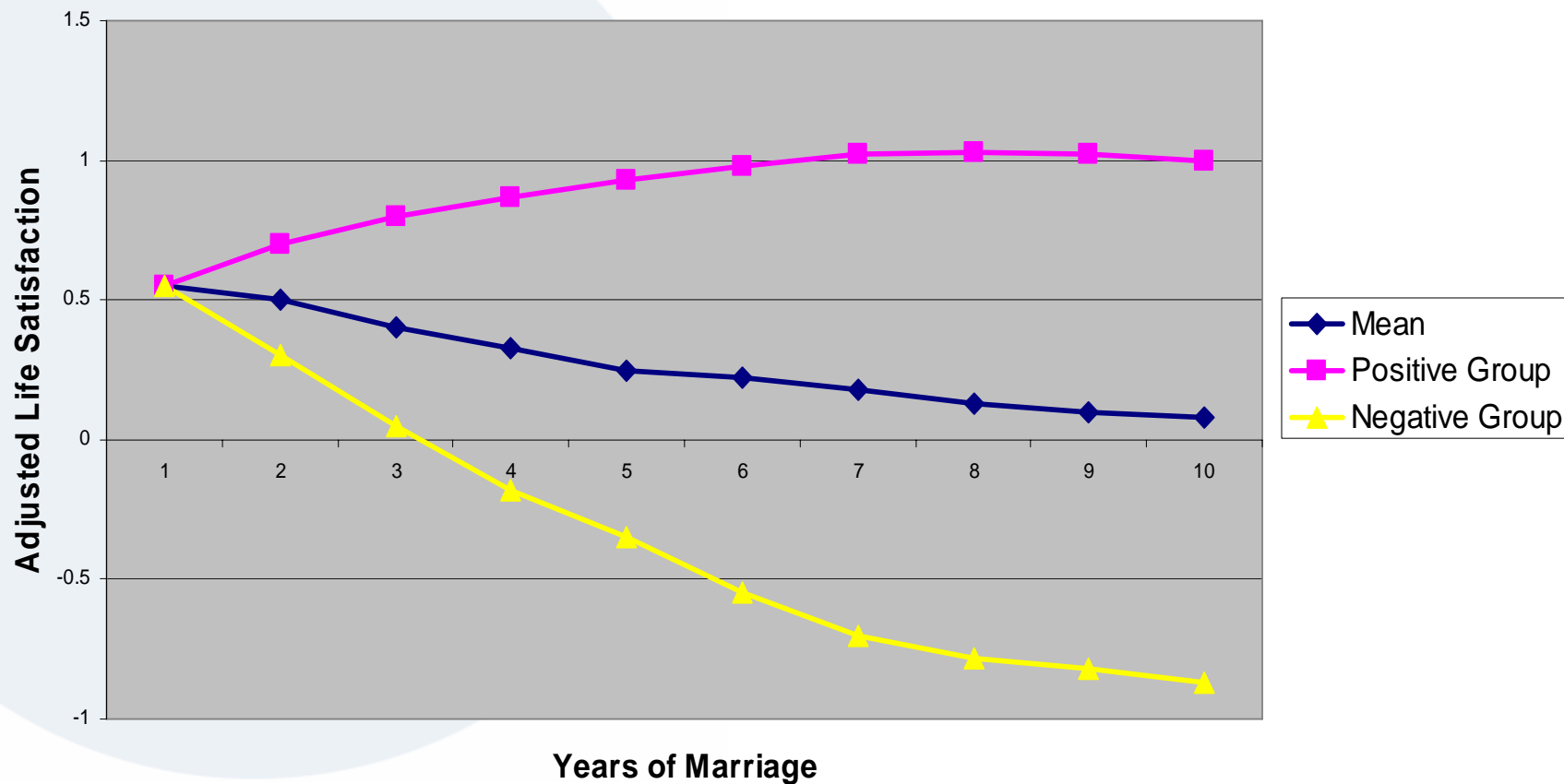
Currently most data is limited to Life Satisfaction, but it is pretty robust and useful:

- Converges with other measures
- Predicts people's behaviour consistently
- Many predictors are malleable to policy

GDP and Life Satisfaction

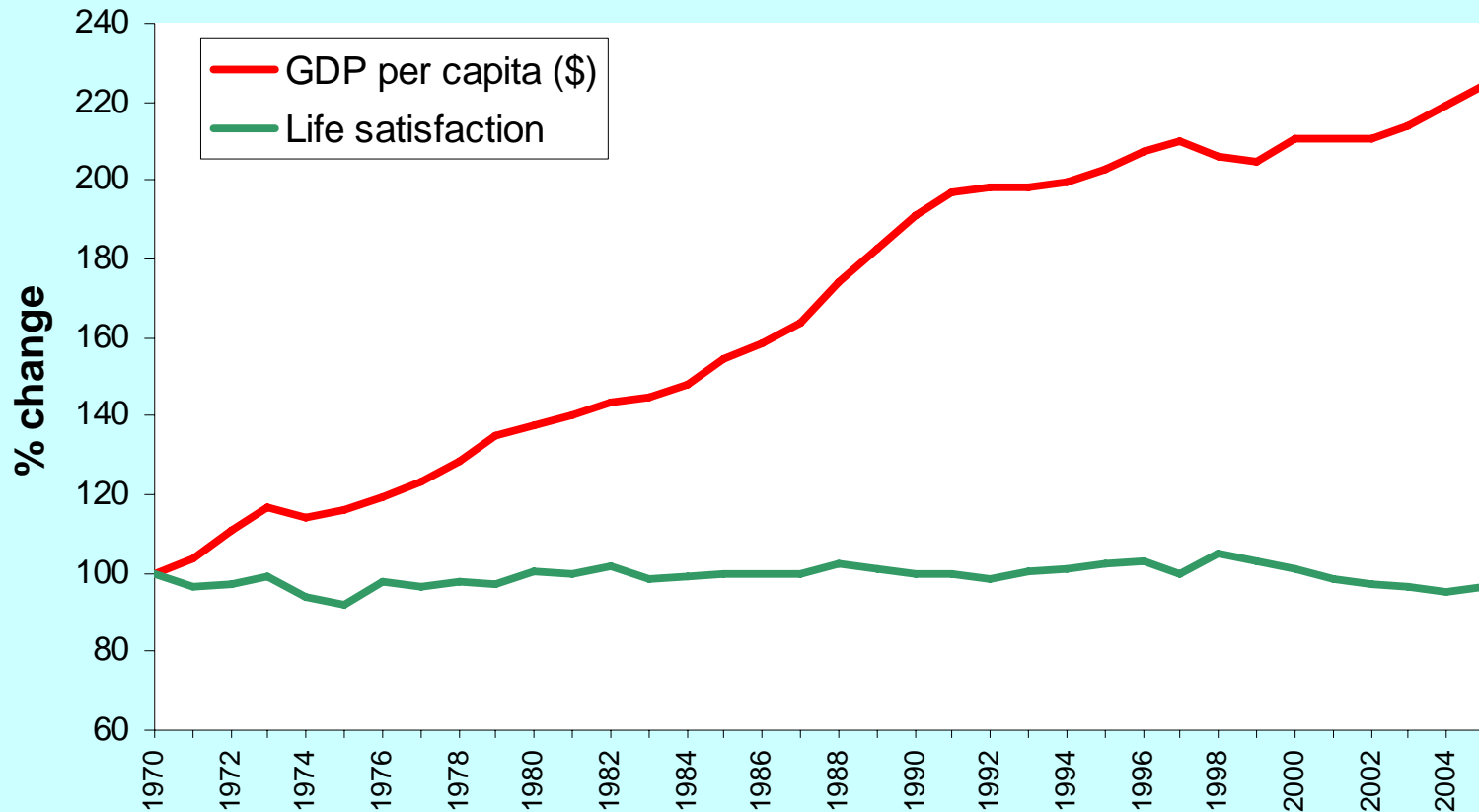
A Challenge to the Political Status Quo

Marriage Paths of Life Satisfaction



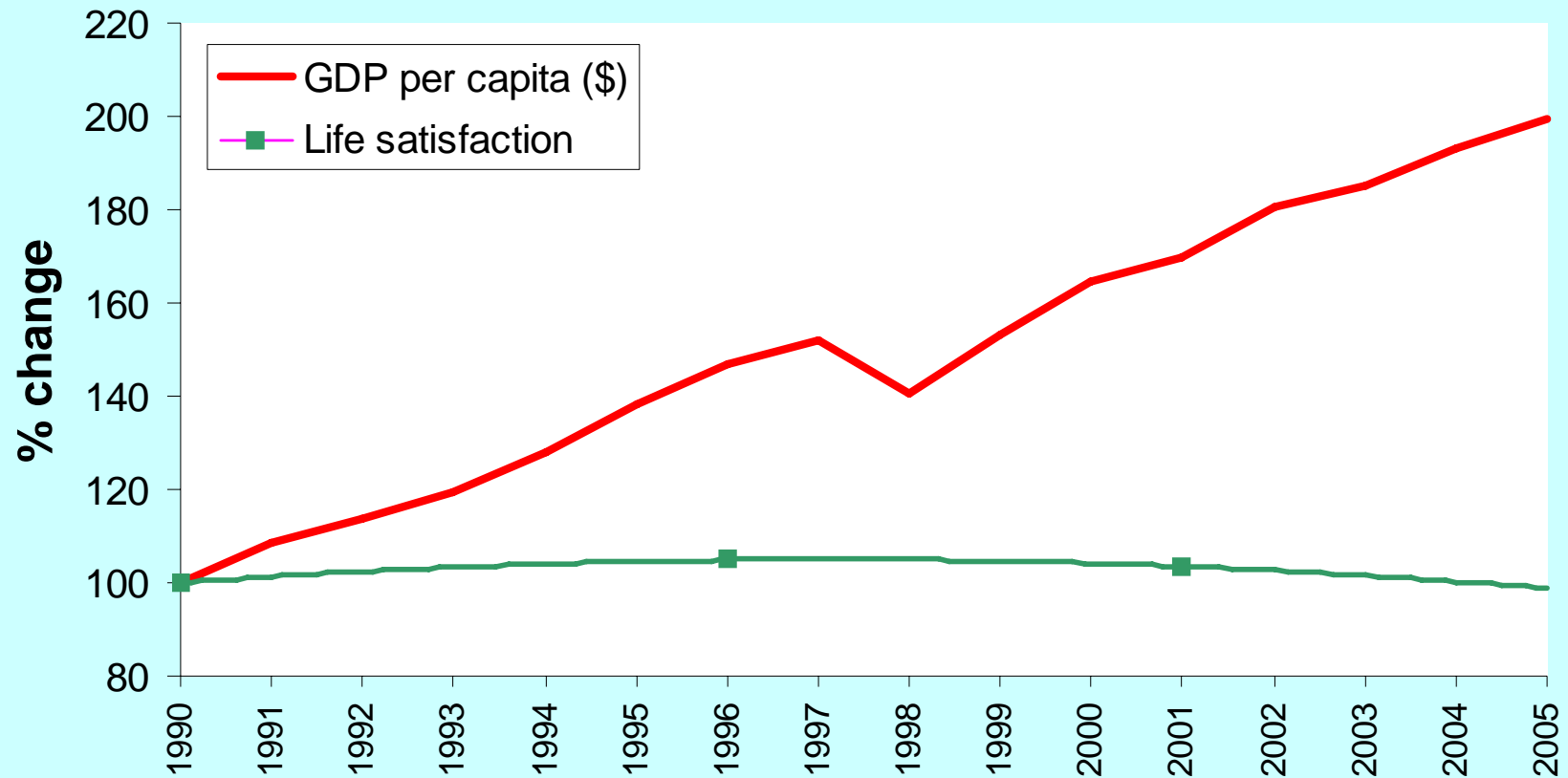
GDP and Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction and GDP in Japan



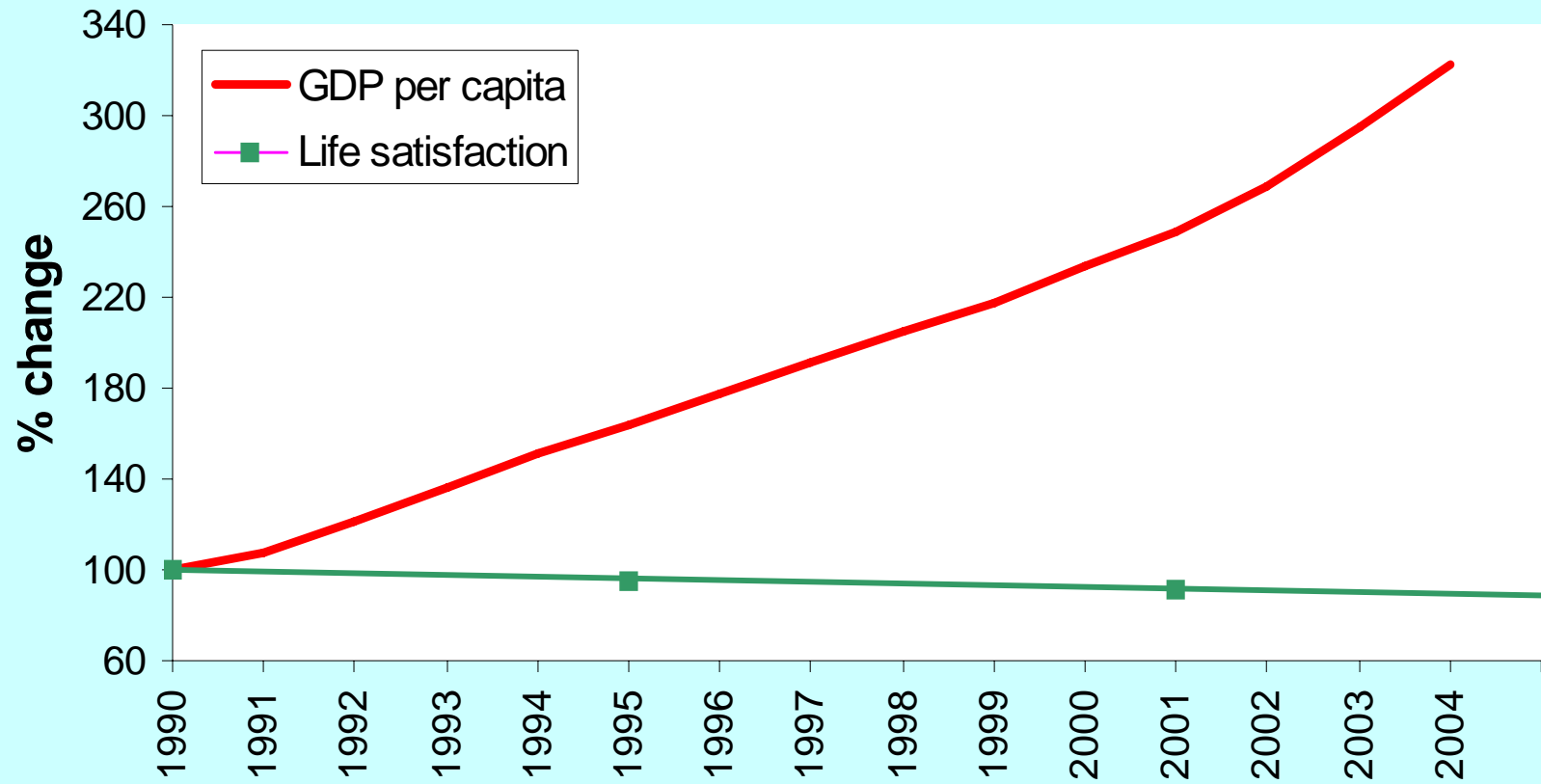
GDP and Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction and GDP in S. Korea



GDP and Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction and GDP in China



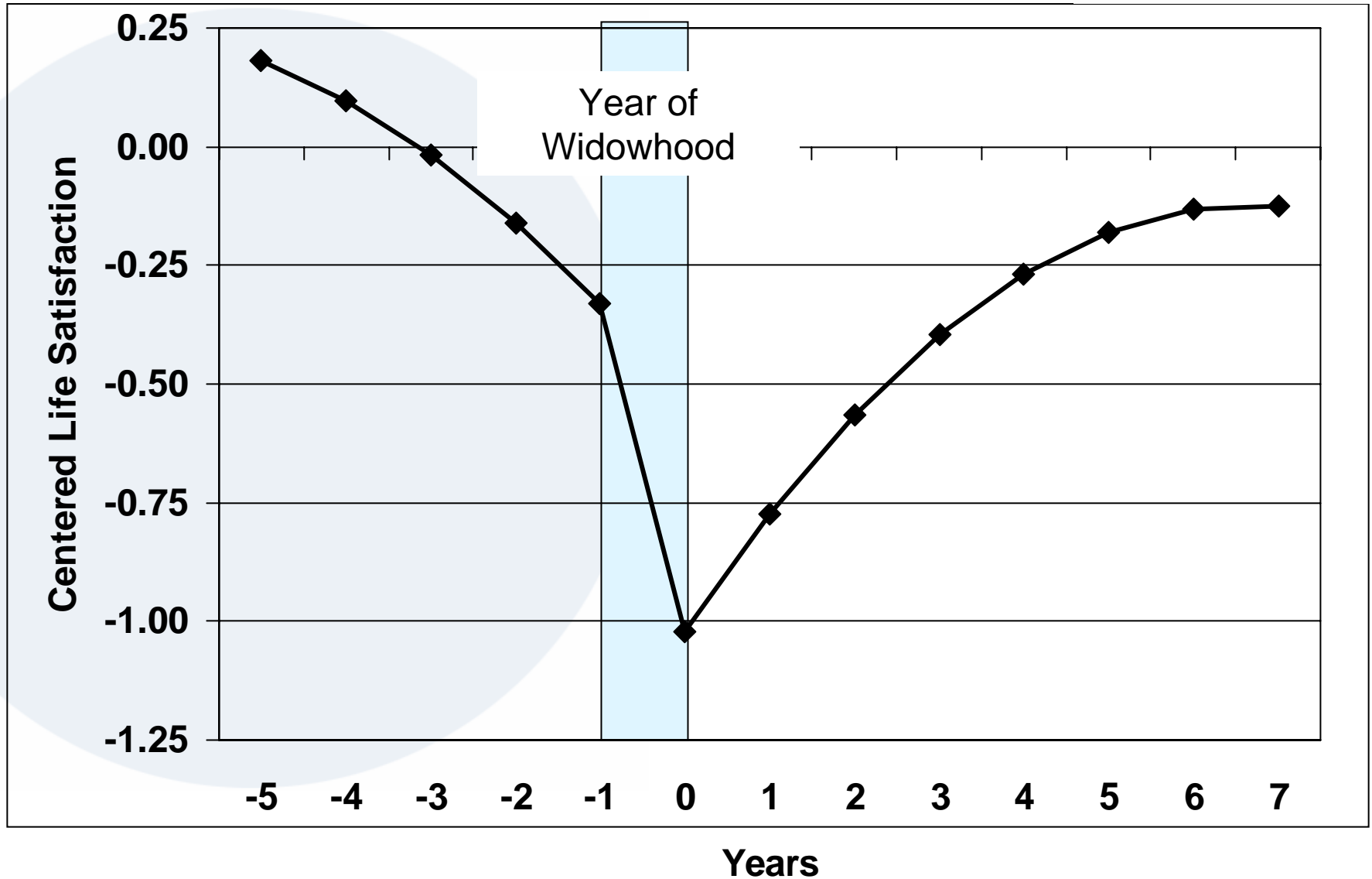
Well-being data

Most data is limited to Life Satisfaction, but it is pretty robust and useful.

- Converges with other measures
- Predicts people's behaviour consistently
- Many predictors are malleable to policy

But note averages 'hide' a lot of variance. Micro-data illuminates this as well as challenging set-point theory & adaptation.

Micro data: Widowhood and Well-being



Micro data: Marriages and Well-being



Happiness and Well-being

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- **Re-thinking progress**
 - A Happy Planet Index
- What can governments do?

A Happy Planet Index

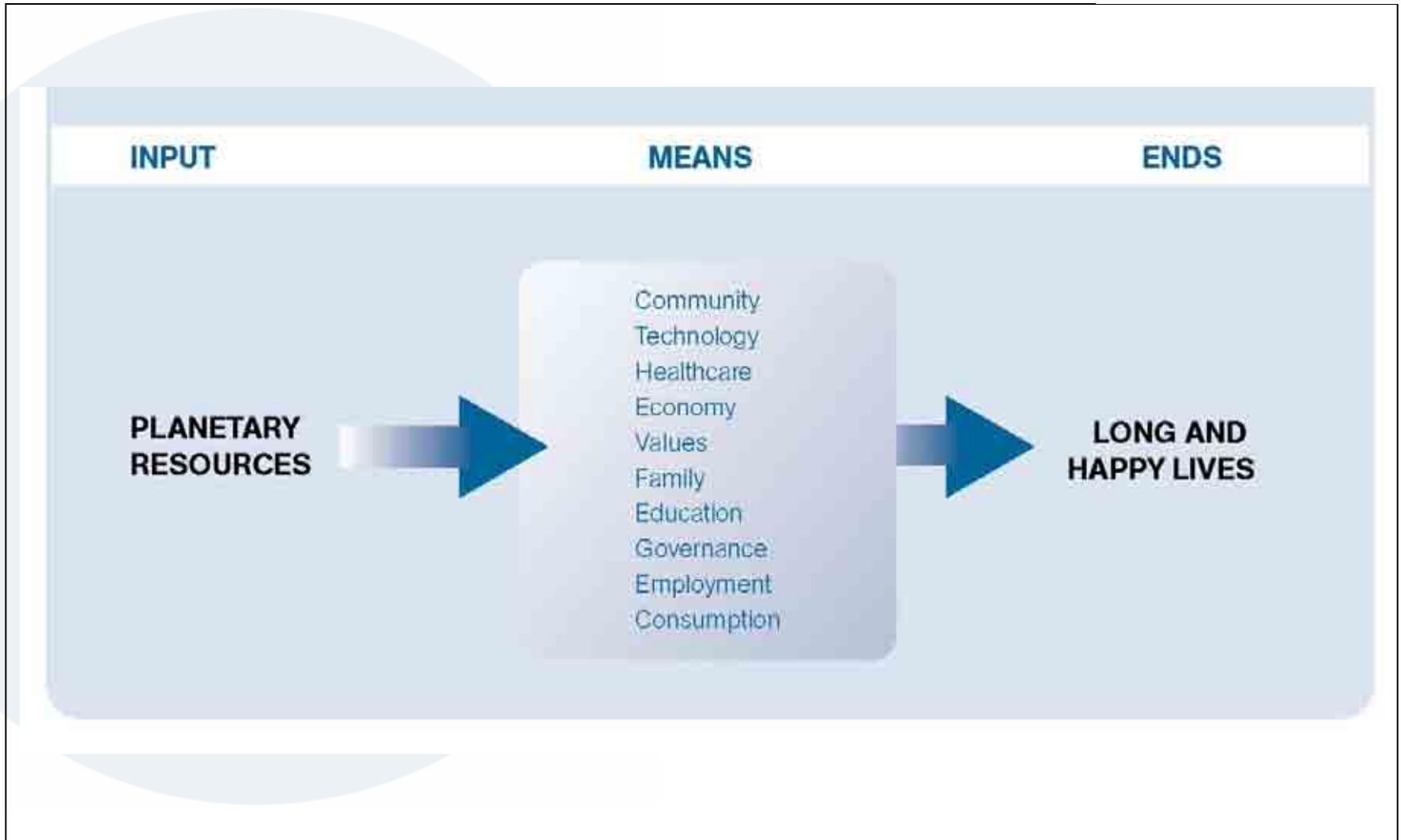


THE HAPPY PLANET INDEX

An index of human well-being and environmental impact

- Launched by **nef** in July 2006
- HDI style rank order of nations
- Measure of the “Ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered”
- Over 700,000 downloads to date

What HPI measures:

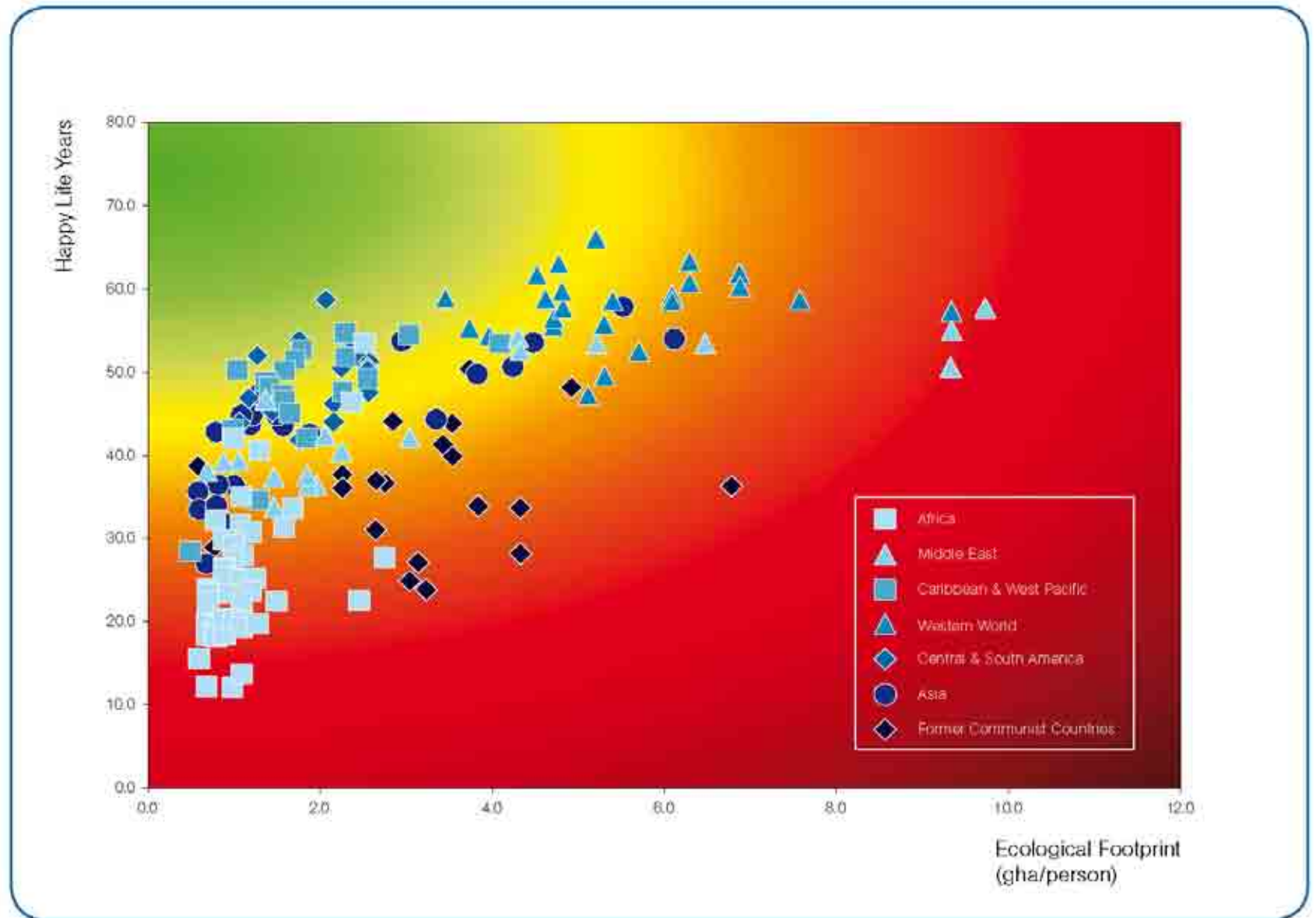


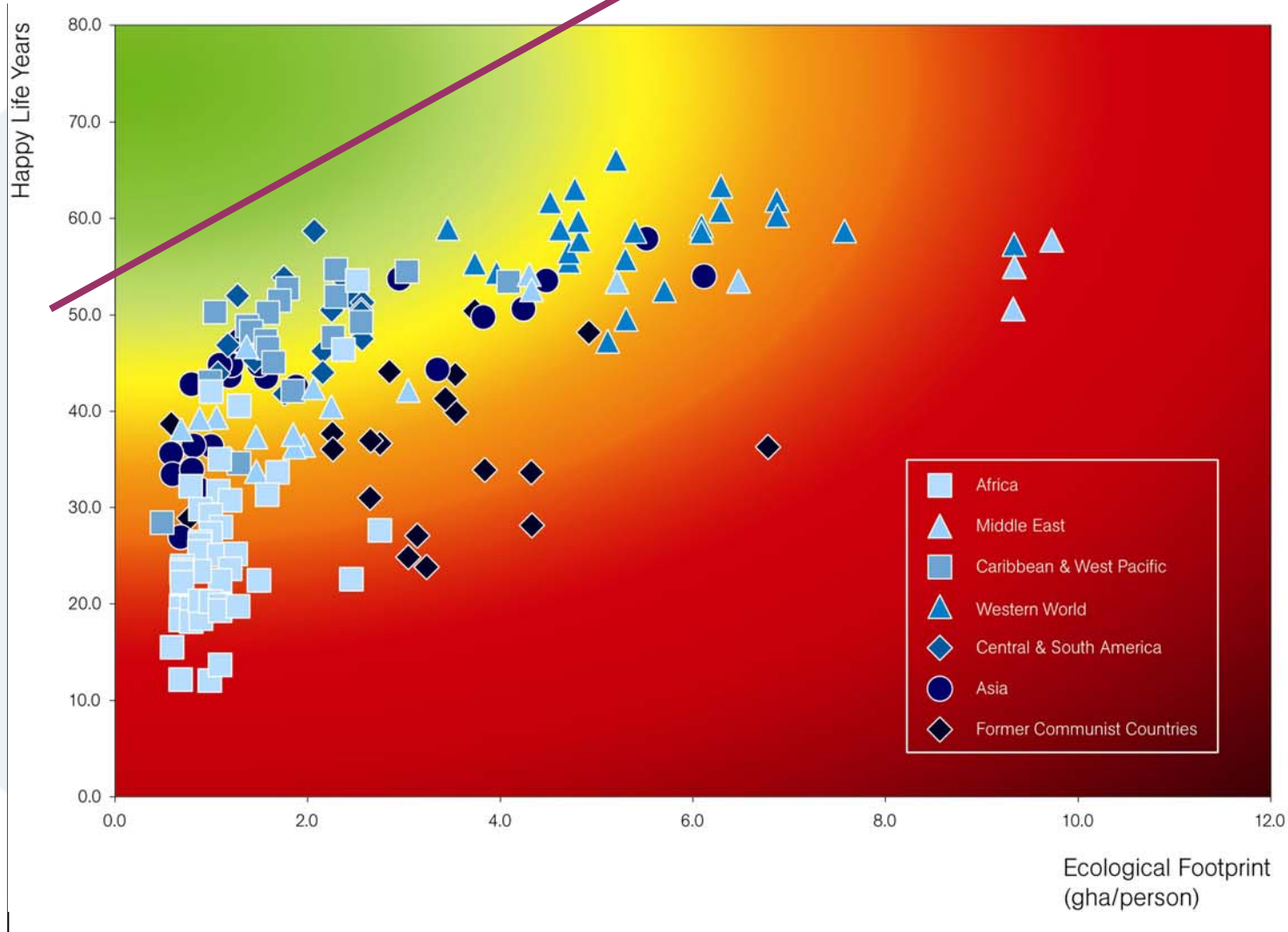
Structure of HPI

$$\text{Happy Planet Index} = \frac{(\text{Human Well-being}) \cdot (\text{Ecological Resource Usage})}{\text{Ecological Footprint}}$$

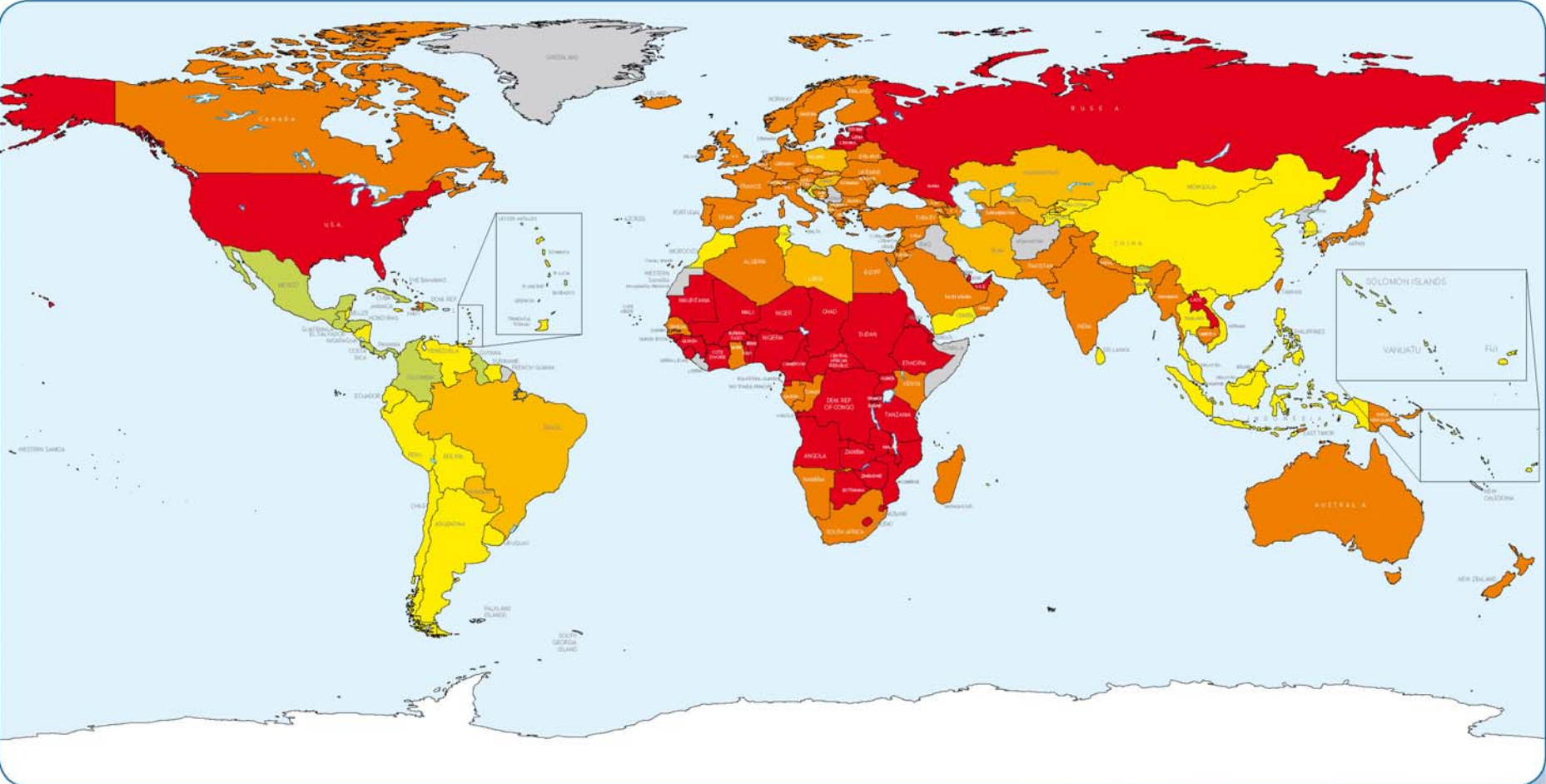
(Life Satisfaction) * (Longevity)

Figure 2: Missing the green target. Happy Life Years against Ecological Footprint for 178 countries





A map of the world colour-coded by HPI



Colour key:

- All 3 good
- 2 good and 1 medium
- 1 good and 2 medium
- 3 medium
- Any with 1 poor
- 2 poor, or any with a 'Blood Red' Footprint



Happiness and Well-being

- What do we mean by well-being?
- Measuring happiness and well-being
- Creativity and well-being
- Findings from well-being research
- Re-thinking progress – Happy Planet Index
- What can governments do?

What Governments do?

A new focus for UK policy:

nef's Well-being manifesto (2004)

UK Government SD Strategy (2005)

GWB: Conservative Party UK (2006)

Measuring what matters:

GNH in Bhutan

National Well-being Index Canada

European National Well-being Accounts:
European Social Survey 2007

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Reports downloadable from
www.neweconomics.org
www.happyplanetindex.org

1. Chasing Progress – MDP
2. Power & Potential of Well-being Indicators
3. Well-being Manifesto
4. Well-being and Environment
5. Spoiled Ballot – democracy and well-being

