

# Finland, happiness, coconuts and peaches

Cultural and social influences that  
shape and form us

ICATA Finland 2023





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Looking forward





1

# Looking back

# Our **story**



**Leonie**



**Amarenna**



Google

A  
MS  
AL  
SC  
FL  
Cuba  
Puerto Ric  
Venezuel  
Gu  
S

Isle of Ma

ia  
Kazakhstan  
Nepal  
PB  
India  
GJ  
Iran  
Iraq  
Oman  
Saudi Arabia  
Yemen  
Ethiopia  
WALE  
nya

# Castletownbere, Co Cork Ireland





Bolivia

La Páz

Goiânia

Belo Horizonte

Paraguay

Asunción

São Paulo

Chile

Córdoba

Uruguay

Santiago

Buenos Aires

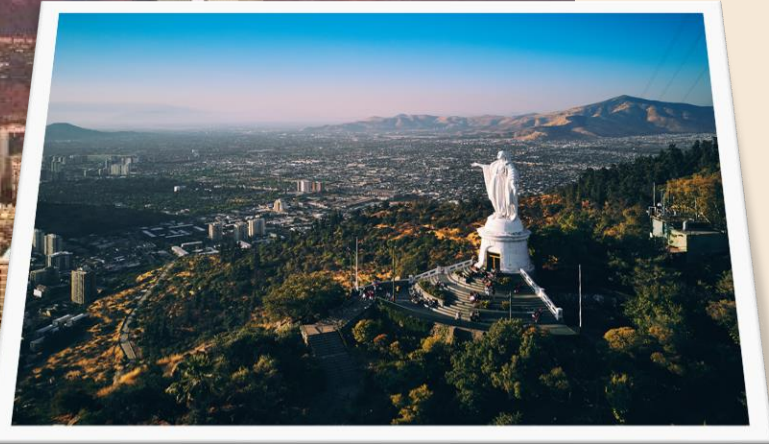
Montevideo

Argentina

Guinea

Google

# Santiago, Chile

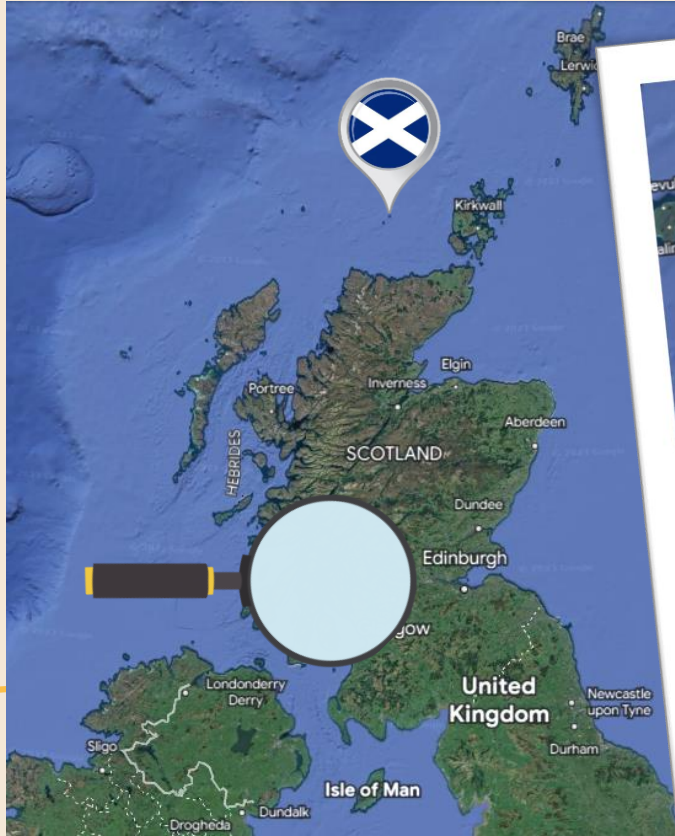




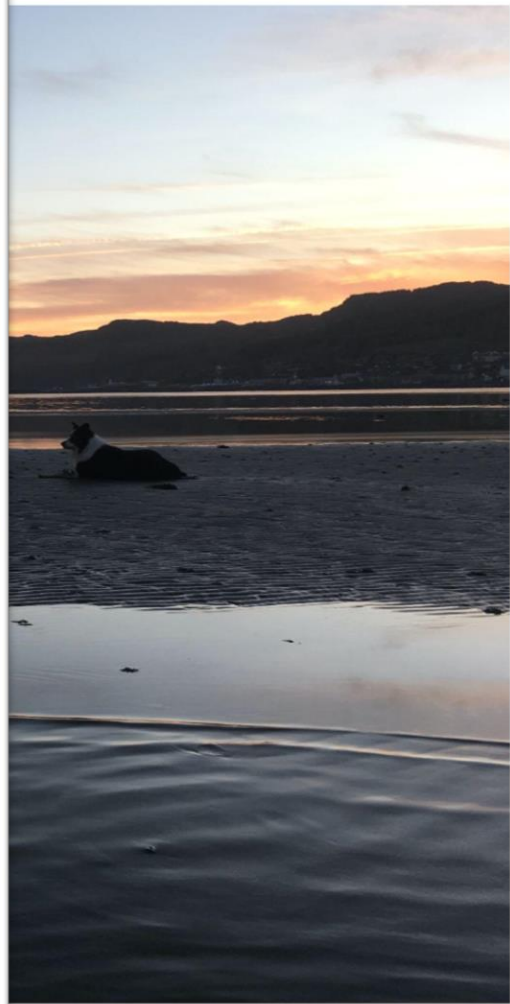
# The world

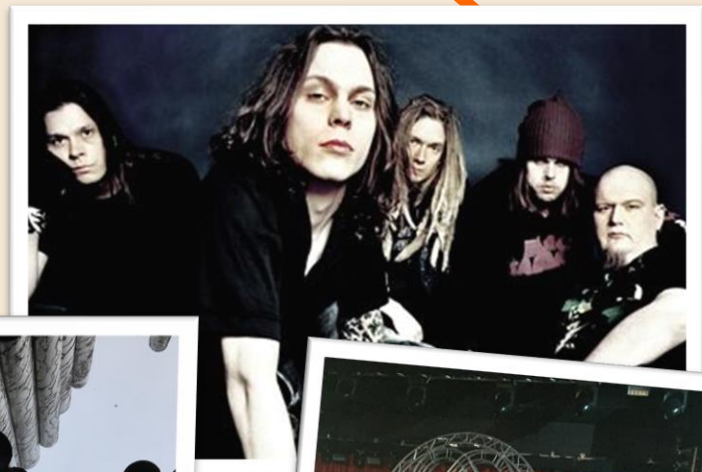


# Scotland

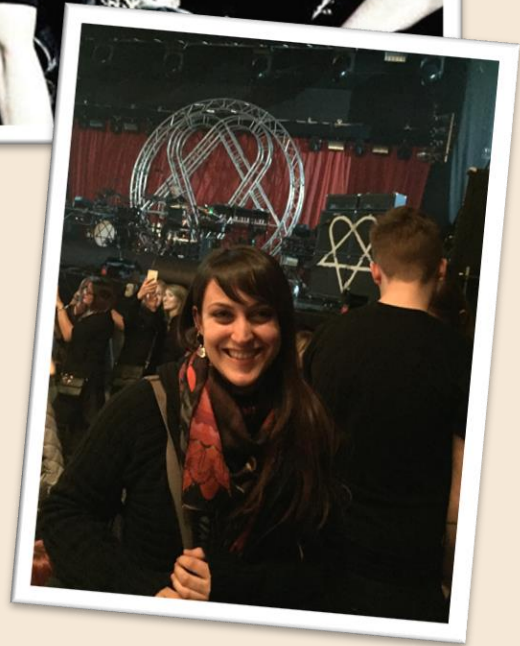








Ymmärrän  
vähän  
suomea





Finnish facial e

EXPLAIN



Happy



Sad



Delighted



In love



Sorrowful



Romantic



UN: Finland's the world's happiest country for the ~~third~~ <sup>6th</sup> year running!

Finns:



memegenerator.net

# A timeline

2019

Balint







# A timeline

2019


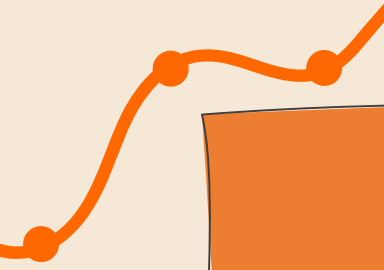
Balint



2020

Psychiatry teaching





# Sociocultural Perspectives on Mental Health: very interesting or very important?


Joint presentation

Dr Amarena Guevara Celsi CT1 Psychiatry

&

Dr Leonie Sweeney Consultant Psychiatrist

Argyll and Bute Hospital Teaching 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020





# A timeline

**2019**

Balint



**2020**

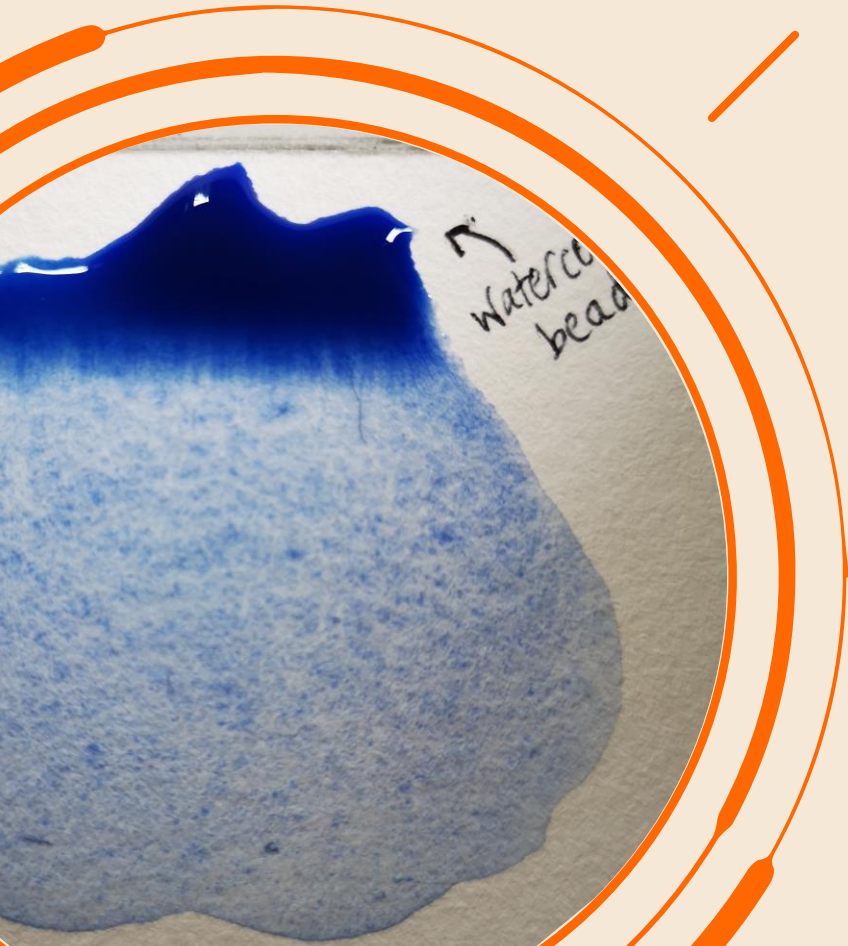
Psychiatry teaching



**2022**

CATch Up





**2**

**CAT**

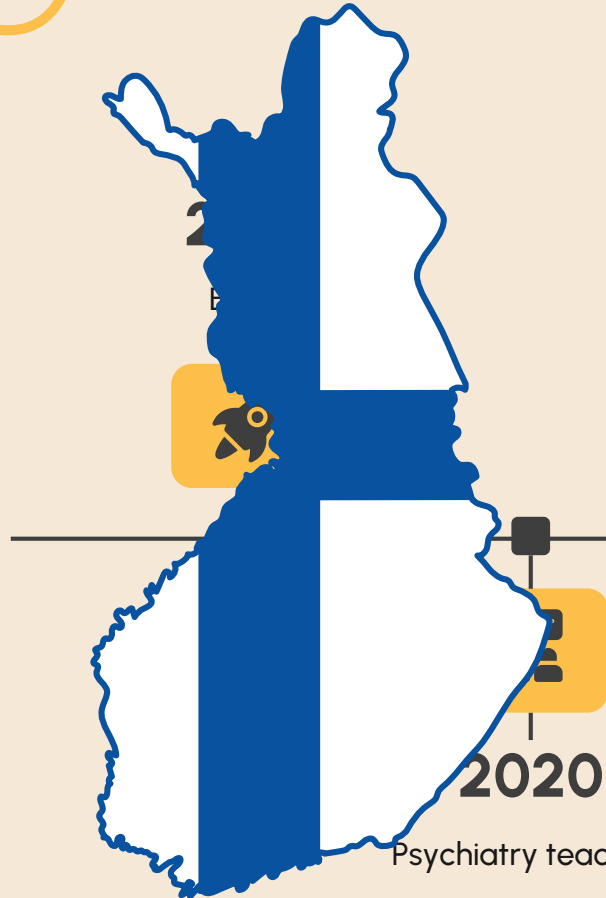
**Scotland**

# CAT Scotland

- Member of ICATA since 2021
- First conference as members (!)
- CATchUps
  - Informal reflective space: every 6-8 weeks online
- Most recent themes:
  - Death of a patient
  - The place of love in our work
  - Culture and happiness (!)
  - Resilience
  - Sustaining hope in hard times



# A timeline



Psychiatry teaching



CATch Up

2023

Helsinki

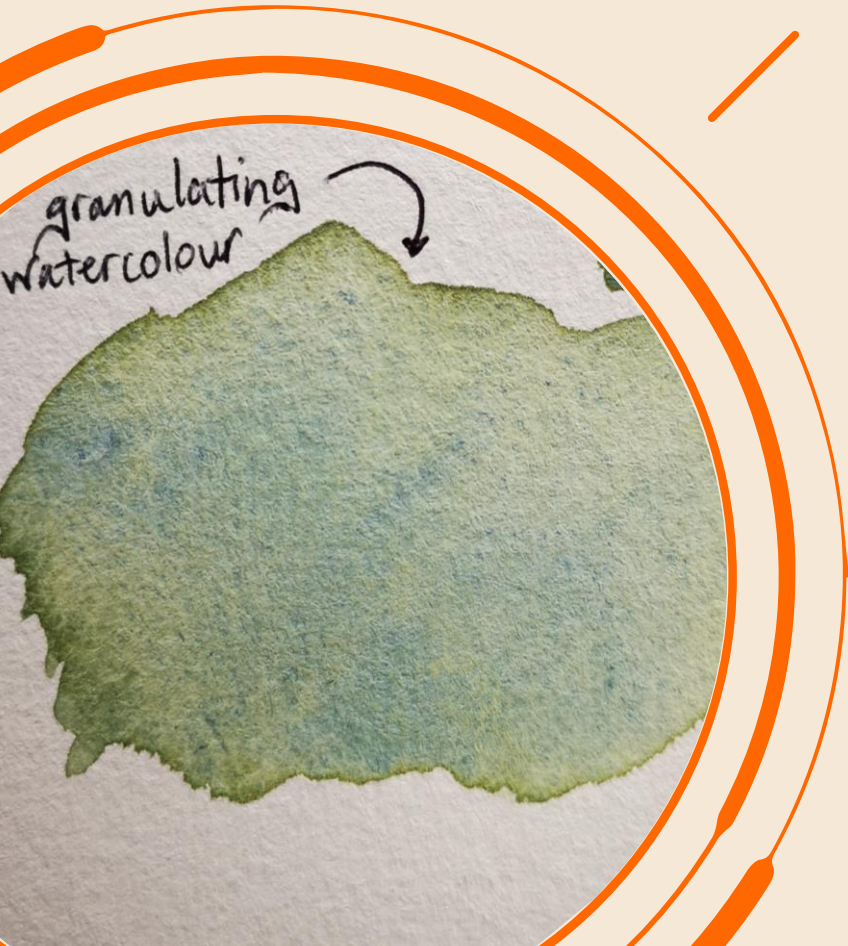






What do you need to be  
**happy?**






**3**

# World Happiness Report





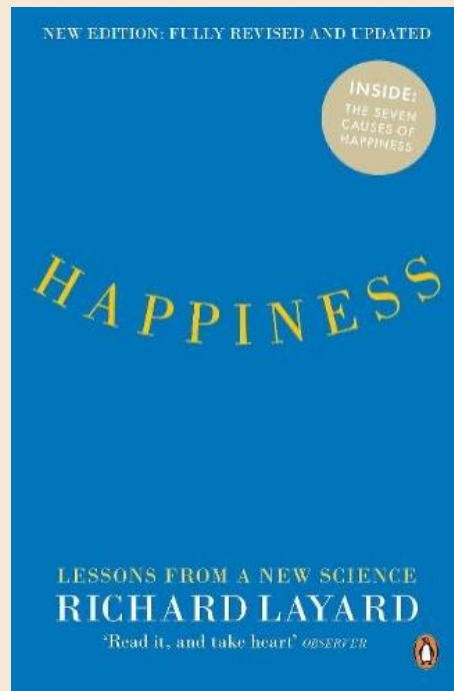
# World Happiness Report 2023: Editorial Team

- *John F. Helliwell*: Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia
  - **Richard Layard: Wellbeing Programme, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science**
  - *Jeffrey D. Sachs*: University Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University
  - *Jan-Emmanuel De Neve*: Director, Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Oxford
  - *Lara B. Aknin*: Professor, Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University
  - *Shun Wang*: Professor, International Business School Suzhou, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University
  - *Sharon Pacolor*: Production Editor, Senior Manager at the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University
- 

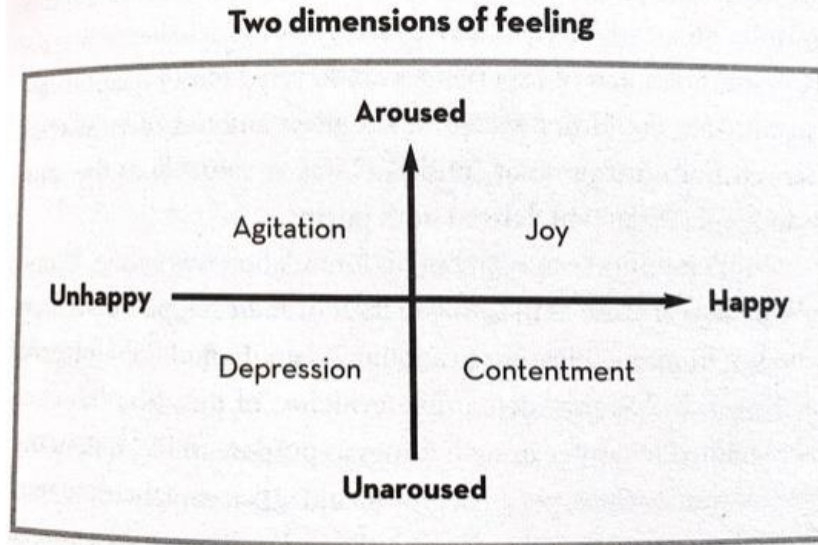
# Happiness: lessons from a new science

## Supporting an objective definition of happiness

- '...single dimension of experience running from extreme misery to extreme joy..'
- Long term average rather than fluctuations
- Can be reliably measured across cultures
- An 'overarching principle' – *ethical behaviour, relationships with others, altruism, etc*



# Happiness

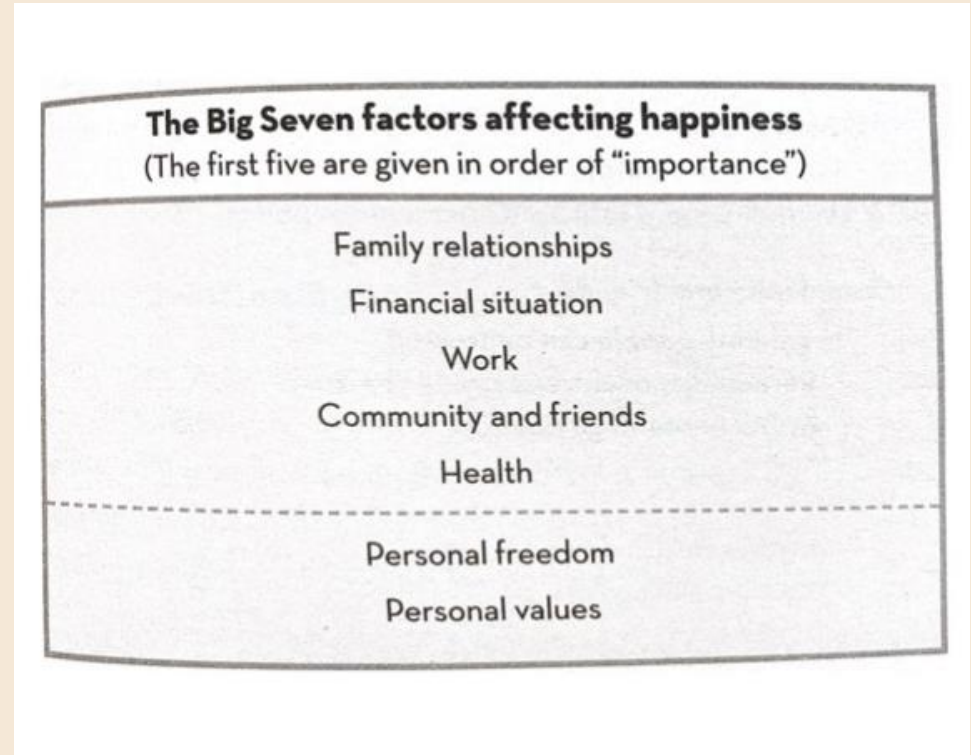


- 'Happiness can be tranquil or excited'  
(shaped by culture?)

# Happiness

## The 'Big Seven' sources of happiness

(Layard, 2011)



# World Happiness Report

2020



2023





# Happiness predictors

1. GDP per capita
2. Social support
3. Healthy life expectancy
4. Freedom to make life choices
5. Generosity
6. Perception of corruption



**Figure 2.1: Ranking of Happiness 2017–2019 (Part 1)**

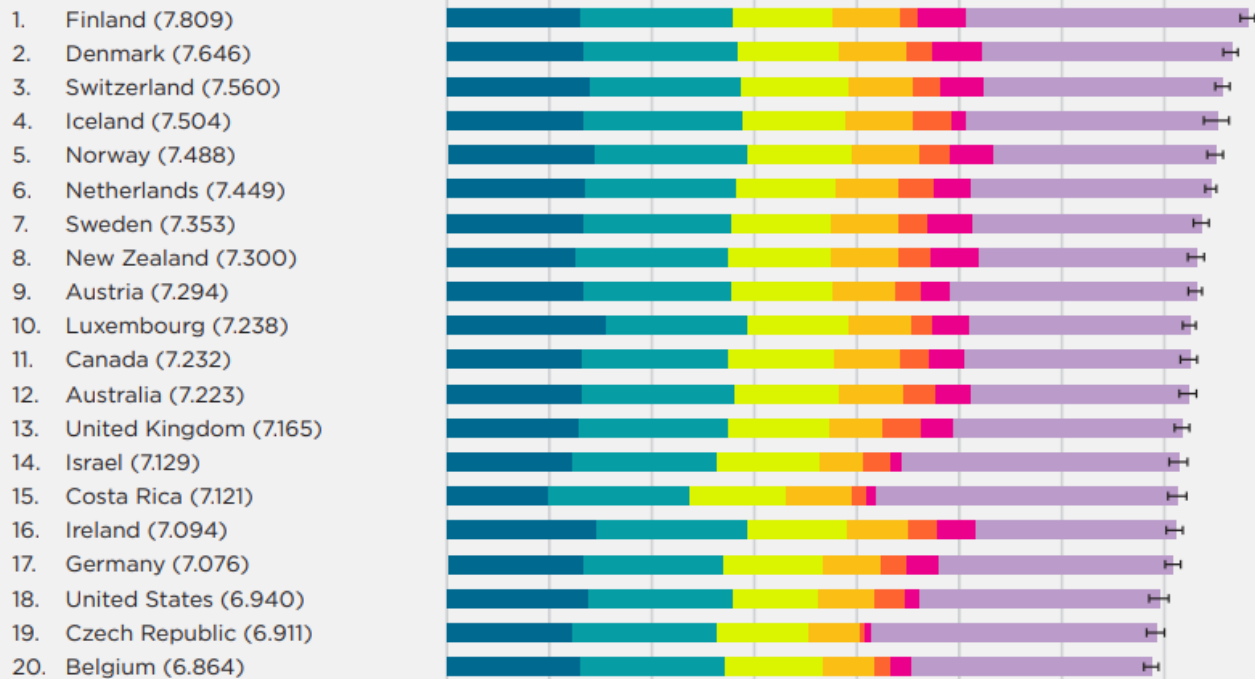
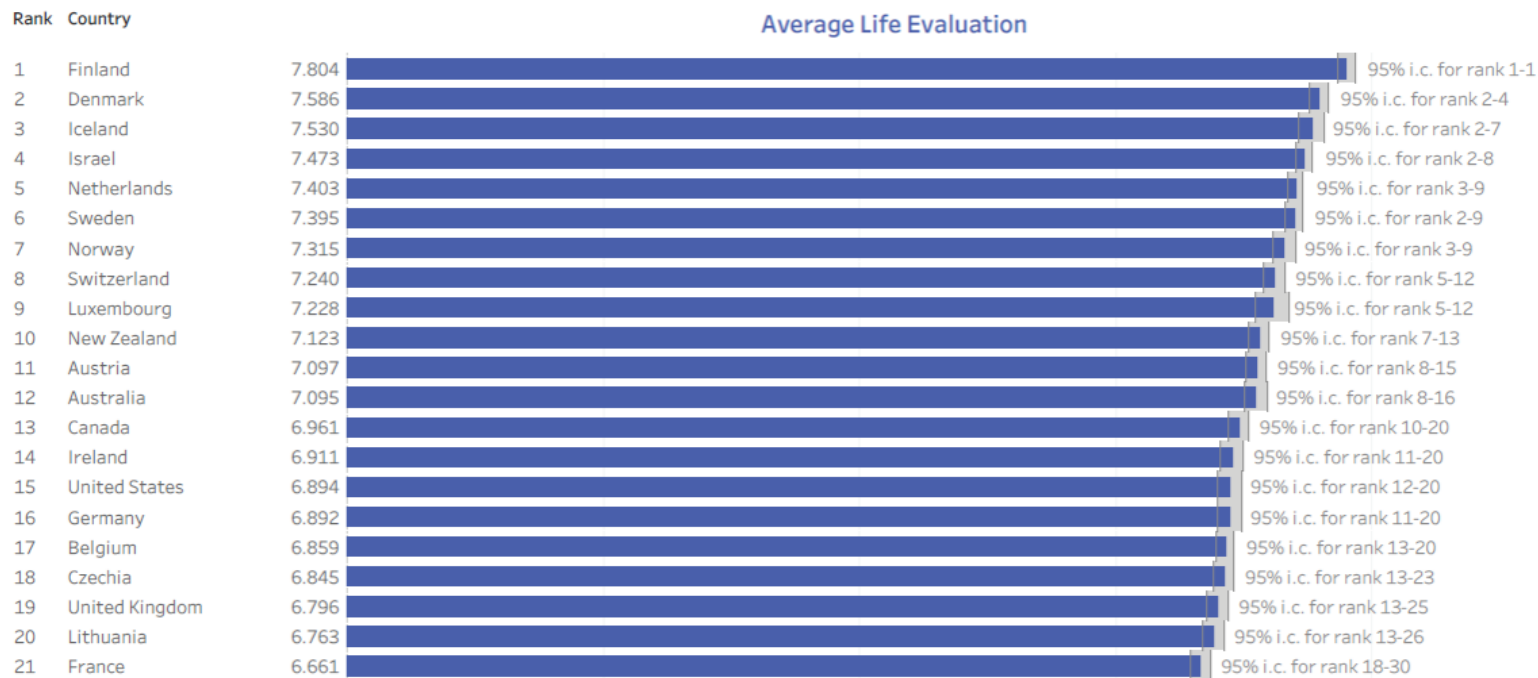


Figure 2.1: Ranking of Happiness based on a three-year-average 2020–2022 (Part 1)



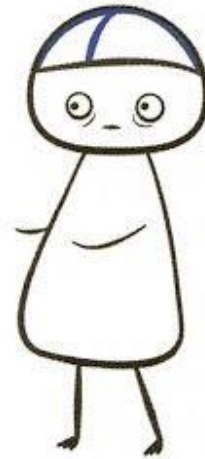
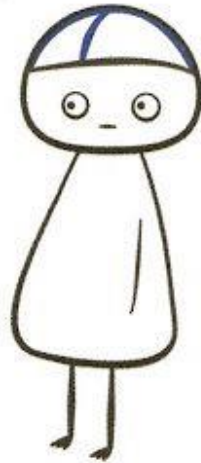


# What about **Finland**

- Finland continues to occupy the top spot for the **sixth year** in a row
- Quality of life
- High equality
- Average happiness for the locally born is higher than for the foreign-born



# FINNISH NIGHTMARES



WHEN A STRANGER LOOKS  
YOU IN THE EYES

AND SMILES



# The Finns

Videos (!)





News Tonight | HBO

Indescribable  
or quiet and  
situations  
of extreme



Mucho Gusto

¡LAS MEJORES CAIDAS DEL 2017!

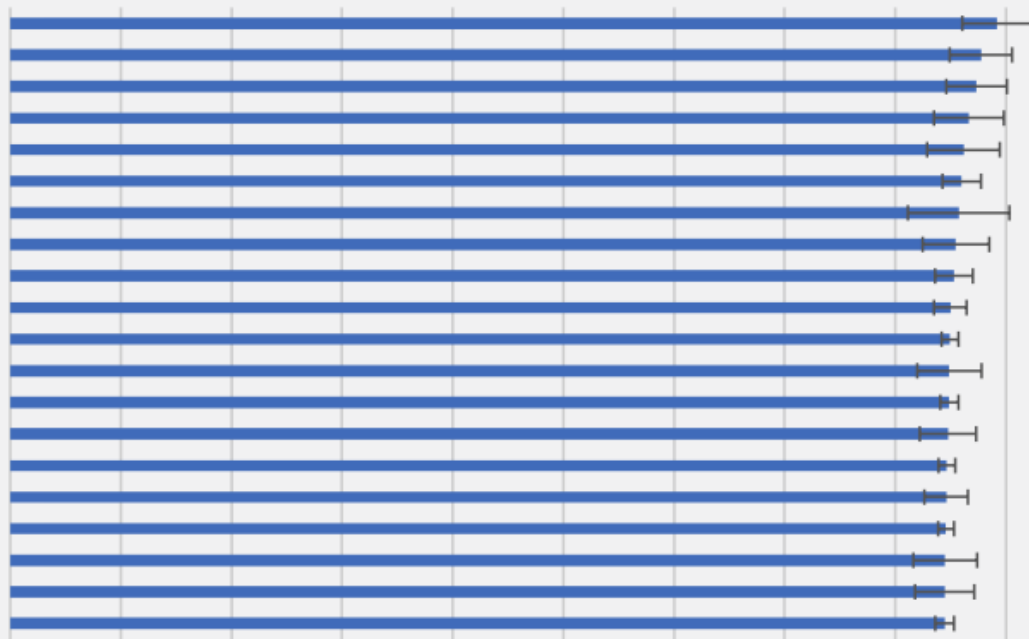


**Global**  
**NEWS**

## Figure A2: Global Ranking of Cities in Terms of Positive Affect (Part 1)

### Positive affect

1. Asuncion Metro — Paraguay (0.892)
2. Mogadishu — Somalia (0.877)
3. Vientiane/Vianchan — Laos (0.873)
4. San Pedro Sula — Honduras (0.867)
5. Quito — Ecuador (0.862)
6. San Jose — Costa Rica (0.860)
7. Cork — Ireland (0.857)
8. Reykjavik — Iceland (0.855)
9. Santiago — Chile (0.853)
10. Montevideo — Uruguay (0.850)
11. Dallas — USA (0.849)
12. San Miguelito — Panama (0.849)
13. Houston — USA (0.849)
14. Tegucigalpa — Honduras (0.848)
15. Washington — USA (0.847)
16. Auckland — New Zealand (0.846)
17. Chicago — USA (0.846)
18. Taipei — Taiwan (0.845)
19. Guayaquil — Ecuador (0.845)
20. Atlanta — USA (0.845)



One approach examines correlations across countries, which determines the impact of different cultures. In one such study,<sup>16</sup> the researchers conducted a global investigation that compiled country-level data regarding seven forms of altruism collected in 152 countries. The forms of altruism included data collected by Gallup (donating money, volunteering, or helping strangers) as well as four altruistic behaviors drawn from other international databases. These included blood donations per capita, bone marrow donations per capita, living kidney donations per capita, and the humane treatment of non-human animals as evaluated by a global non-profit organization. The researchers also collected data on subjective well-being, including both life satisfaction and daily positive or negative affect. The results demonstrated that when subjective well-being at the national level (i.e., average life satisfaction and daily positive affect of respondents in a country) is higher, the prevalence of all seven forms of altruism is higher as well (Figure 4.1). This relationship was independently observed for life satisfaction and daily affect, except when life satisfaction and daily affect were included in the same statistical model, in which case only life satisfaction predicted altruism. Results indicated that improved objective well-being, including high levels of wealth and health, are associated with altruism because they lead to increased life satisfaction. Furthermore, these effects were most robust among countries high in the cultural value of individualism, which reflects highly valuing individuals' autonomy to pursue personal goals. This suggests that when individuals have more material and cultural resources to pursue altruistic goals, they are more likely to do so.

*This suggests that when individuals have more material and cultural resources to pursue altruistic goals, they are more likely to do so.*

positively correlated with engaging in these altruistic behaviors.<sup>17</sup> Although the magnitude of this positive association varied across countries, it was observed in the overwhelming majority of them, as can be seen from the fact that the correlations between life satisfaction and altruistic behaviors are almost without exception positive, as can be observed in **Figure 4.2**, (positive correlations are shown in blue) whereas the correlations between negative affect and altruism are mixed (negative relationships are shown in red, and no relationship is shown in white.



Overall, the model explains average life evaluation levels quite well within regions, among regions, and for the world as a whole.<sup>18</sup> On average, the countries of **Latin America** still have mean life evaluations that are significantly higher (by about 0.5 on the 0 to 10 scale) than predicted by the model. This difference has been attributed to a variety of factors, including some unique features of family and social life in Latin American countries.<sup>19</sup> In partial contrast, the countries of East Asia have average life evaluations below predictions, although only slightly and insignificantly so in our latest results.<sup>20</sup> This has been thought to reflect, at least in part, cultural differences in the way people think about and report on the quality of their lives.<sup>21</sup> It is reassuring that our findings about the relative importance of the six factors are generally unaffected by whether or not we make explicit allowance for these regional differences.<sup>22</sup>

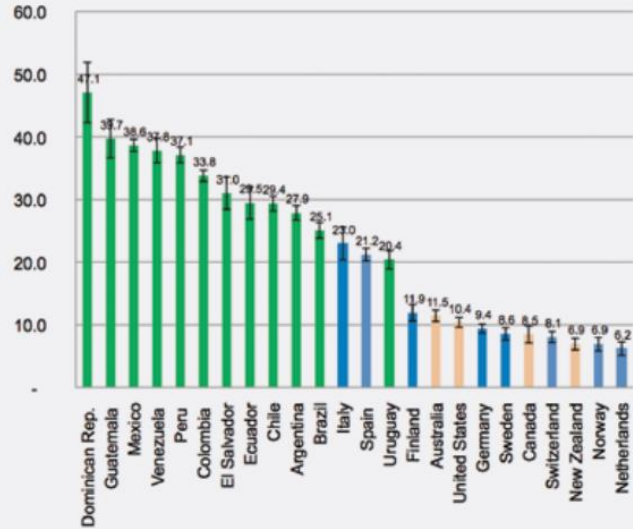


# What about **Latin America**

- Not expected as high inequality
- WHR 2018: Positive affect scores are substantially high as well as their evaluation of life is above what income levels would predict
- Unique features and importance of social life
- Family is a central institution



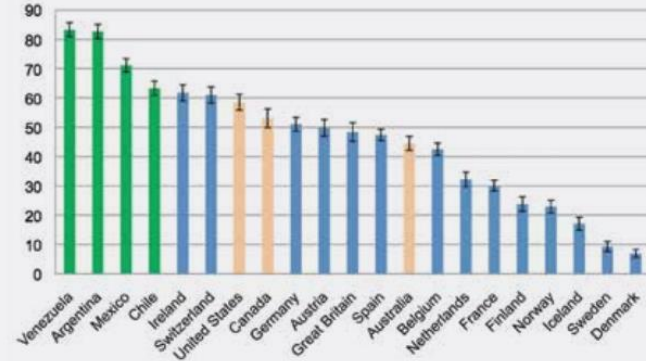
Figure 6.10: Percentage of People Who Report Living with Parents. Adult People in the World Value Survey



95% confidence interval

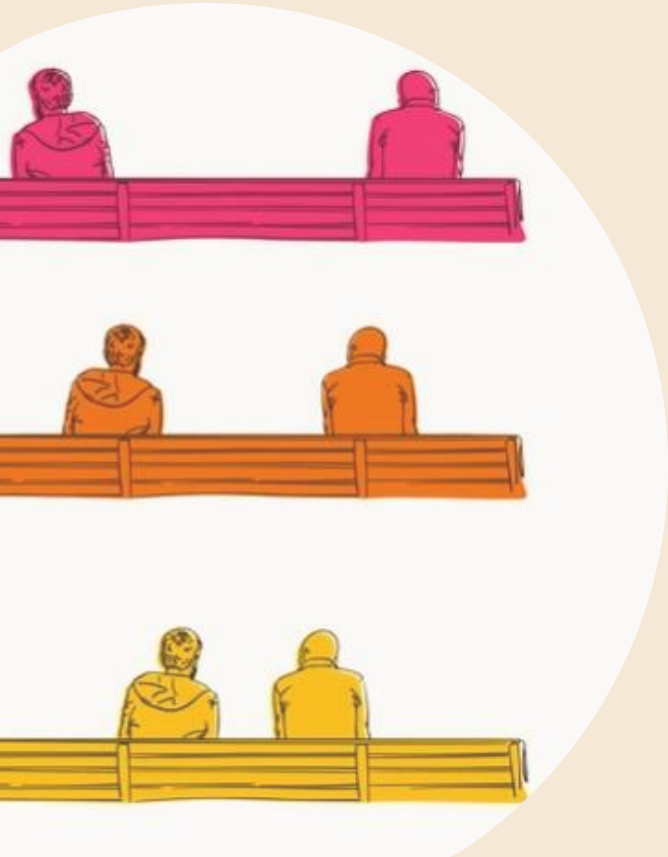
Source: World Value Survey, all waves.

Figure 6.12: Provider of Domestic Help to Elderly People. Percentage Who Say it is for Family Members to Take Care of Domestic Help for Elderly People



Note: Other response options are: government agencies, non-profit organizations, private childcare providers, and employers.

Source: International Social Survey Program's module on Family and Changing Gender Roles IV (2012)



How often do you **talk** to your family? friends?

Do you often make solid relationships with **strangers** you meet briefly?





# CAT

- 'Development of Self in relation to others'
- 'Personal and social meaning embodied in narrative'
- 'These patterns of relationship and "voices" (RRs) when established, **convey the values** of the **immediate family and the wider culture**'

'If individuals come to experience and know themselves through early reciprocal relationships with others and their cultures, with which role or voice is the "I" identified? [...] "I" is more a federation than a single nation, the internalized voices of others can dominate the dialog'



Figure 3.1b Their subsequent internalisation as formative RRs within the growing child (by permission Bevan Fidler).

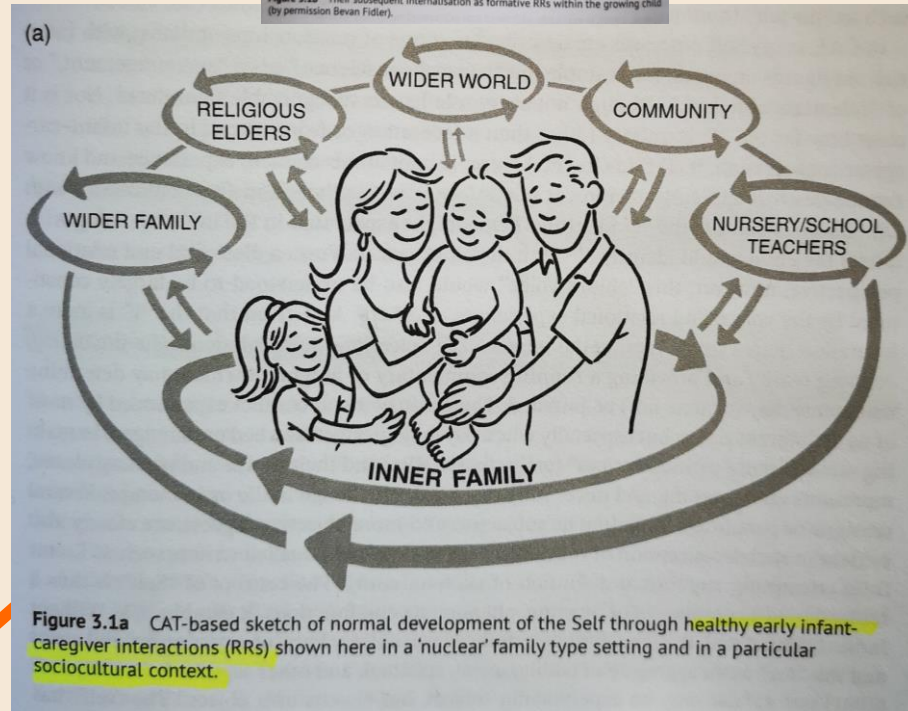
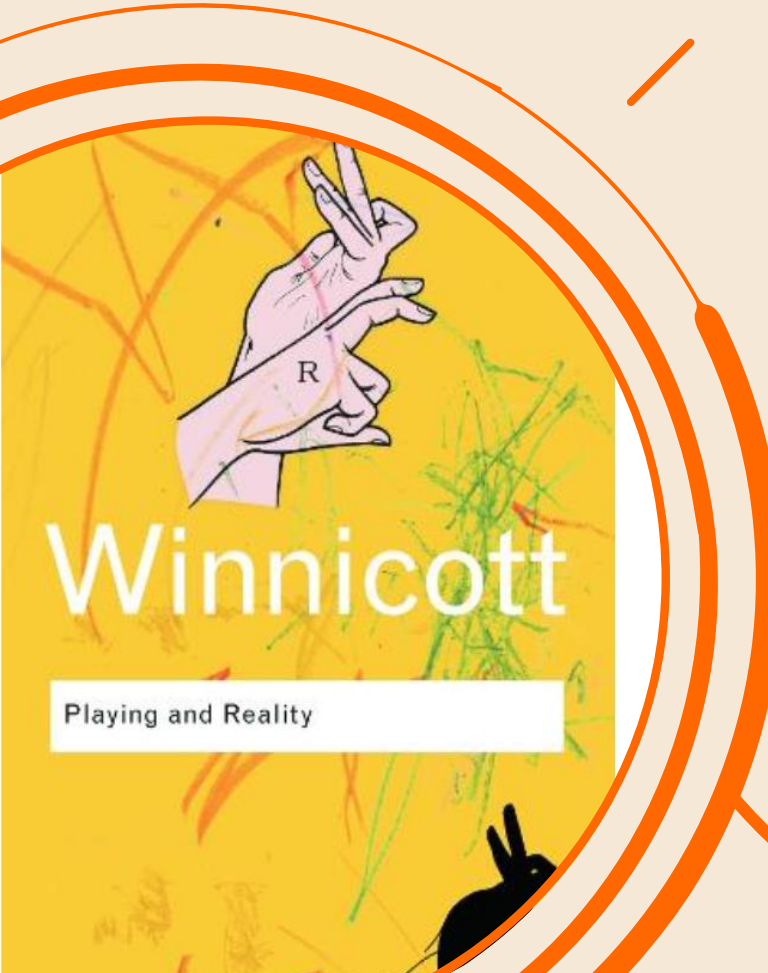


Figure 3.1a CAT-based sketch of normal development of the Self through healthy early infant-caregiver interactions (RRs) shown here in a 'nuclear' family type setting and in a particular sociocultural context.



“...there is for many a poverty of play and **cultural life** because, although the person had a place for erudition, there was a relative failure on the part of those who constitute the child's world of persons to **introduce cultural elements** at the appropriate phases of the person's personality development.”

— D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*

# L. Vygotsky's sociocultural **theory**

Emphasis on social contributions to the development process (vs Piaget)

- How we learn (social process) and internalise
- Zone of Proximal Development

'The particulars **of human social existence** are reflected in human cognition: an individual has the capacity to externalize and share with other members of her social group her understanding of **their shared experience.**'

## MIND IN SOCIETY

*The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*

L. S. Vygotsky

edited by Michael Cole  
Vera John-Steiner  
Sylvia Scribner  
Ellen Souberman



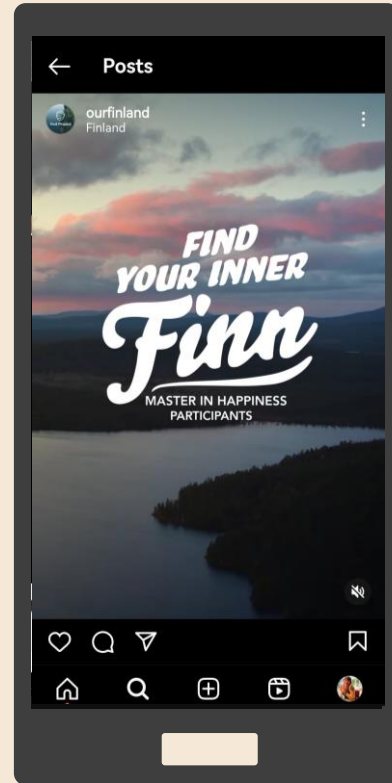
**4**

**What  
about our  
culture?**



# Social media

Aleksi Himself  
Dave Cad  
Her Finland  
Visit Finland  
Etc



# Cross-cultural **communication**



## **Peach cultures**

Easy to get to know, friendly to everyone but there is limited entrance beyond a point  
Rules apply to everyone



## **Coconut cultures**

One does not get through the outer shell easily but then life-long friends after putting effort  
Boundaries bend in relationships

### **The Peach & The Coconut**

Truth or relationships — what is essence of your culture?

# 'All culture is relative'

Why one country is perceived as such by some and not others



The image shows the front cover of the book 'The Culture Map' by Erin Meyer. The cover is bright yellow. At the top, there are several lines of text, including a quote from 'Founders of the Thinkers50'. The title 'THE CULTURE MAP' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below the title is a world map composed of small blue human icons. At the bottom, the subtitle 'DECODING HOW PEOPLE THINK, LEAD, AND GET THINGS DONE ACROSS CULTURES' and the author's name 'ERIN MEYER' are printed in black capital letters. The book cover is partially framed by a large white circle on the right side of the slide.

## THE CULTURE MAP

DECODING HOW PEOPLE THINK,  
LEAD, AND GET THINGS DONE  
ACROSS CULTURES

ERIN MEYER

# International partners



**Communicating**

Explicit or implicit



**Evaluating**

Direct or indirect  
feedback




**Persuading**

Deductive or inductive



**Leading**

Egalitarian or hierarchical



**Deciding**

Consensual or top down



**Trusting**

Relationship or task

**Disagreeing**

Debate as positive or  
inappropriate

**Scheduling**

Structured or flexible





# Business scales

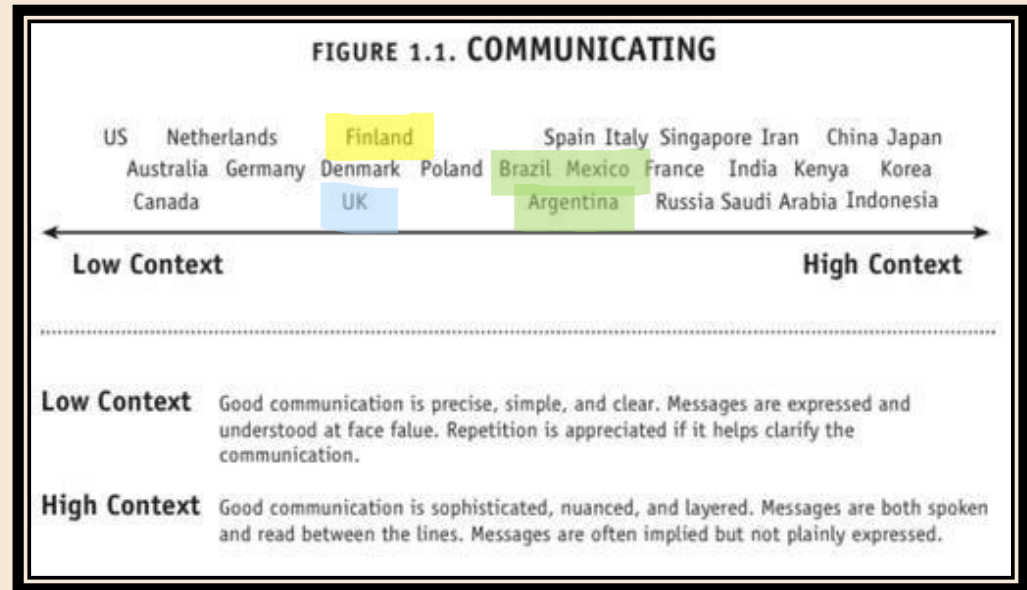


## Communicating

'A Japanese executive raised his hand [...] In Japan if you can't read the air, you are not a good listener.

At this point one of the Americans broke in, "What do you mean read the air?"

[...] Takaki offered no comment'



# Business scales



## Persuading

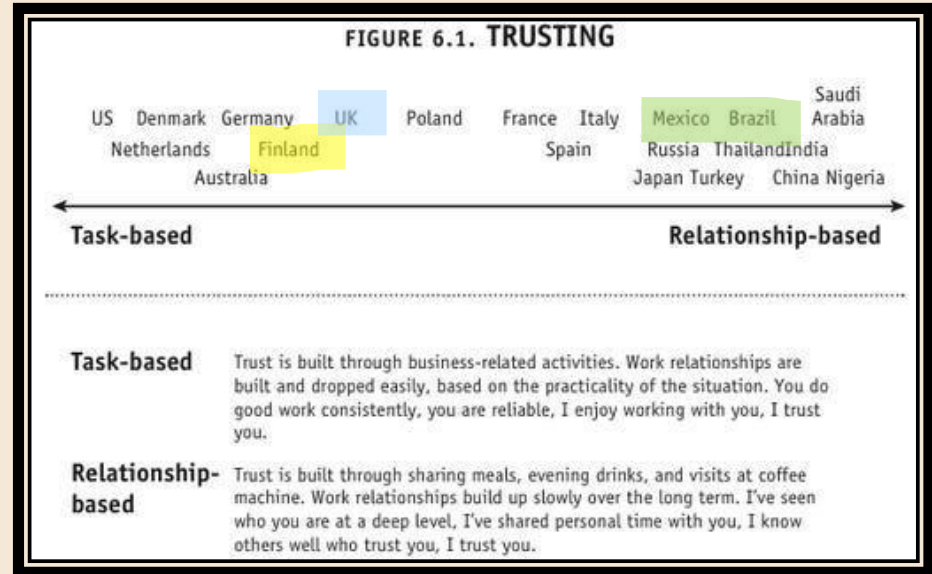
'An American engineer newly working as a research manager for a German firm [...] Before she had finished with the first slide, one of the directors raised his hand and protested, "How did you get to these conclusions? How many people did you interview? What question did you ask? [...] The more they questioned me the more I got the feeling they were attacking my credibility'

# Business scales



## Trusting

'At the end of the two days, the American team felt great about all they had accomplished. [...] The Brazilians on the other hand, were less upbeat and felt the meetings had not gone as well as they hoped [...] didn't have a sense as to who they were beyond that'

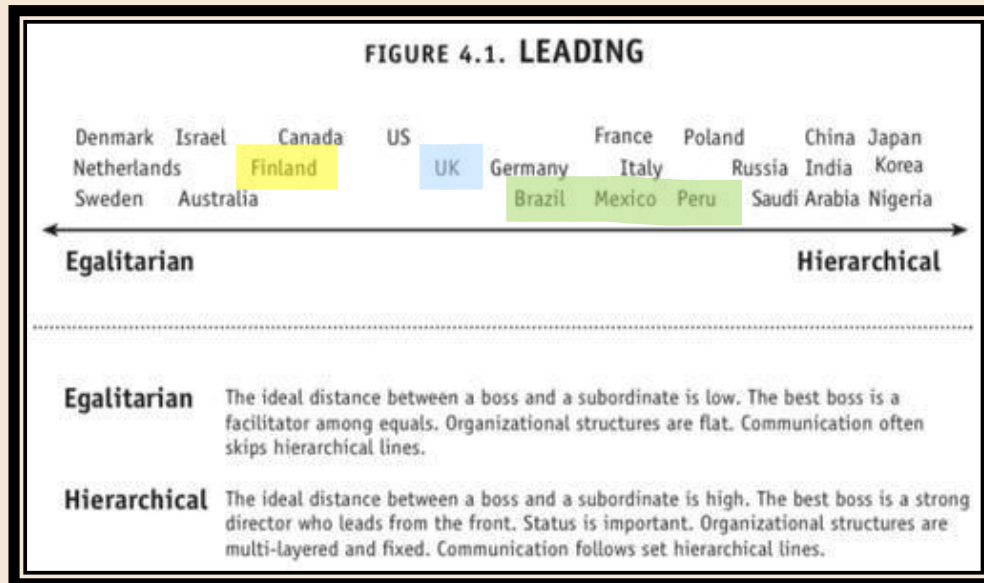


# Business scales



## Leading

'The Mexican manager [...] it is absolutely incredible to manage Dutch people and nothing like my experience because the Dutch do not care at all who is the boss in the room. The Dutch laughed, "Don't laugh! It is not funny" [...] I don't know how to lead a team if my team does not treat me as their boss'



# Emphasis and social impact

## Relating

Extroverted with strangers  
Private/Public interwoven  
Affective body language  
Hierarchical (-i)



## Reacting

Interruptions as interest  
Big emotions communicate  
Perceived as "dramatic", "fake"

## Repercussion

Conflict becomes personal  
High crime rates, violence, corruption  
Less depression and PTSD

## Community Vs Individual



## Relating

Reserved, time to warm up  
Private/Public separated  
Social distance  
Egalitarian (+i)

## Reacting

Silence as interest  
Lack of expression  
Perceived as "rude", "cold"

## Repercussion

Deflect conflict  
Inflexible, lack of authority,  
poor resilience with isolation  
More depression and PTSD

# 'Different problems, common roots'

But... what is not equally distributed between countries?



# Happiness

- Happiness is **not equally** distributed between countries
- Relationship with **economic growth** - early gains which flatten off
- Similar pattern **within** countries over time as they get richer

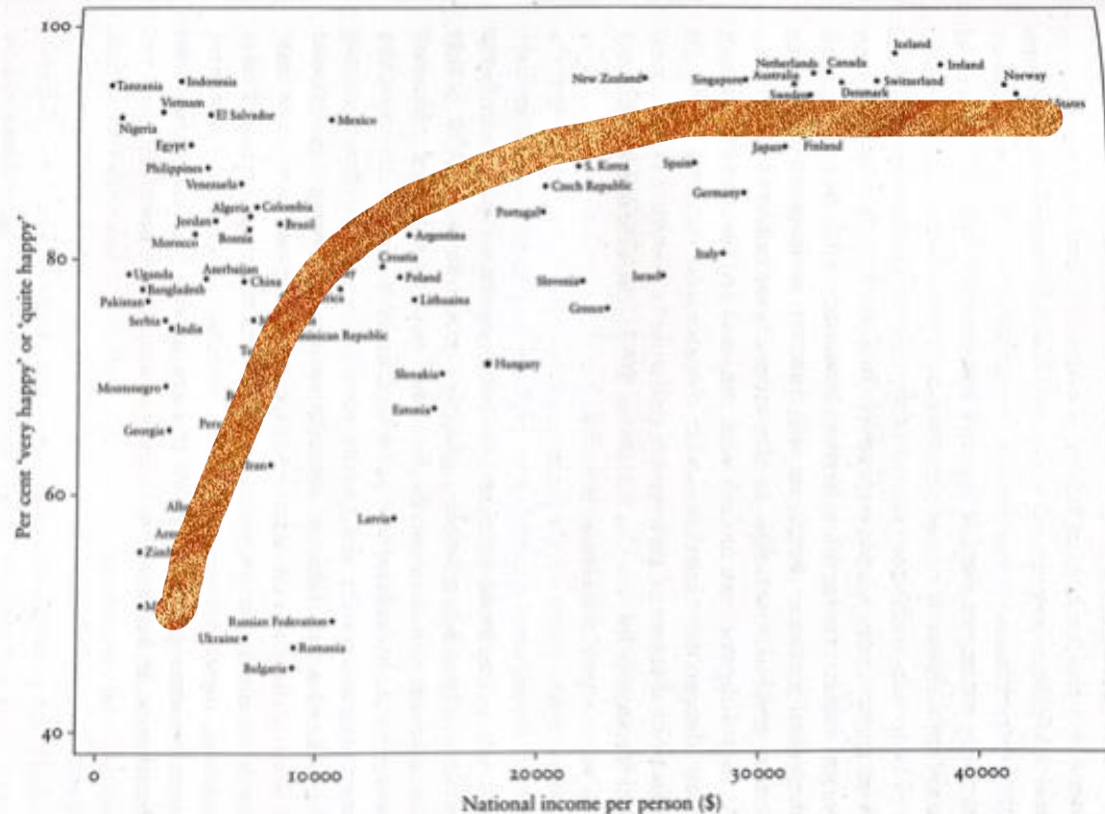


Figure 1.2. Happiness and average incomes (data for UK unavailable).<sup>5</sup>

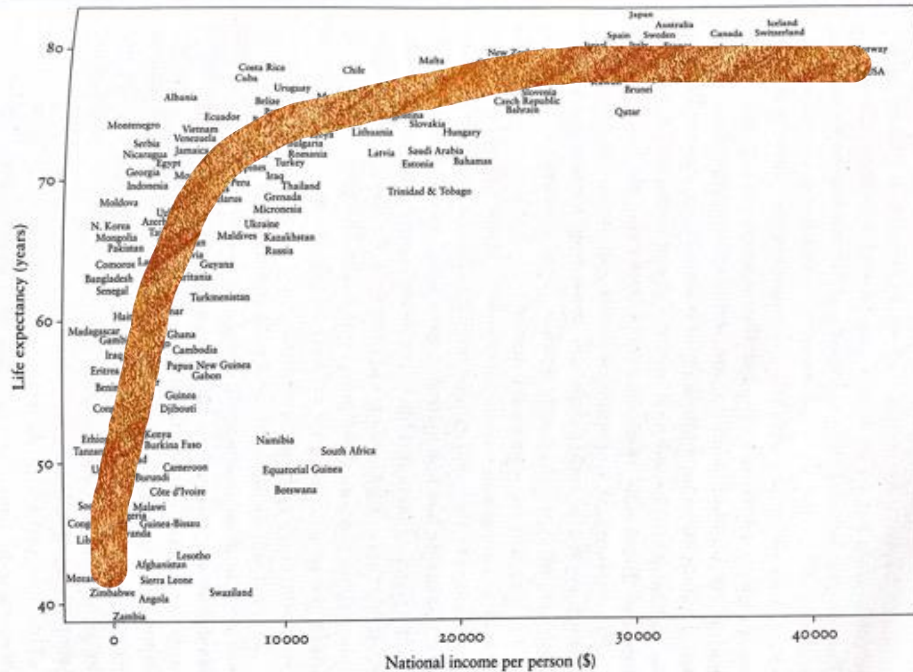


Figure 1.1 *Only in its early stages does economic development boost life expectancy.*<sup>2</sup>

## Similarly....

- 'Only in its earliest stages does economic development boost **life expectancy**'



## The Inner Level

How More Equal Societies  
Reduce Stress, Restore  
Sanity and Improve  
Everyone's Well-being

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

From the international bestselling  
authors of *The Spirit Level*

## 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*

'The evidence is hard to dispute'  
*Economist*




# Equality

Is better for **everyone**

More equal societies reduce stress and improve  
well-being for **everyone**

The Equality Trust



# Inequality within (‘developed’) countries

(Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010)

---

Level of trust

---

Mental illness (including drug and alcohol addiction)

---

Life expectancy and infant mortality

---

Obesity

---

Children's educational performance

---

Teenage births

---

Homicides

---

Imprisonment rates

---

Social mobility

---



# Inequality: health and social problems are more common in more unequal countries

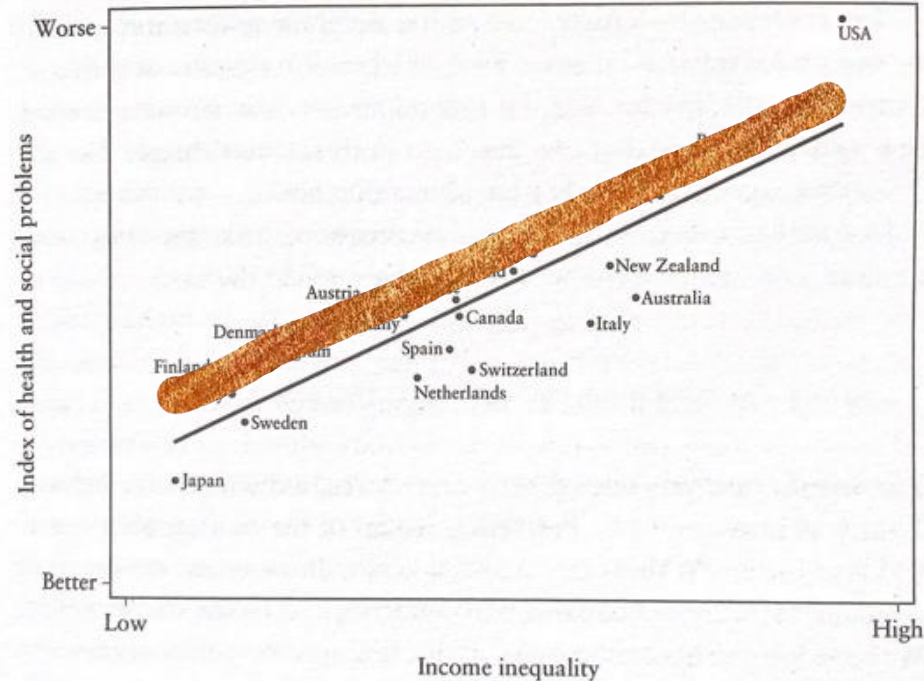


Figure 1: Health and social problems are more common in more unequal countries.\*1

# Inequality

- A surprising finding: 'inequality affects the vast majority of the population not just the poor minority'





# Inequality

- **These problems are driven by the stress of the social status differences themselves**
- Bigger income differences make status differences more potent
- 'Income and social position are seen as ever-more prominent indicators – measures almost – of a **person's worth**'

# Inequality

It affects:

- our values
- our **sense of self-worth**
- the way **people feel towards each other**
- our MH
- Shame ..... arises from the fear of others' negative evaluations





## Inequality: 'The Human Condition' aka 'Economics meet CAT'

- **'Material life is inextricably bound up with the structure of social relations'**
- We are socially formed
- 'Companion' with whom one eats bread
- 'Gifts make friends and friends make gifts'\*
- 'Depth of our social nature – capacity to support each other and share the essentials of life'



Wilkinson & Pickett, 2018

\*Sahlins in Wilkinson and Pickett 2018 \*Sahlins in Wilkinson & Pickett 2018





# Inequality: how it gets ‘under the skin’

- Pride, shame and status
- Inequality increases evaluation anxieties
- Erodes trust
- Destroys community life
- **Applies to everyone in a society not only the most disadvantaged**


**‘The evidence is now such that these correlations between income inequality and both health and social problems must be regarded as **causal**, reflecting the ways greater inequality damages societies, harming human health and well-being.’**





# 'Inequality penetrates family life'

'The age at which children become consciously aware of class and status differences varies, but research has found that by the time they leave primary school, children are able to rank occupations hierarchically and place people into social classes by indicators such as clothing, houses and cars.'



# Problems with a social gradient

---

Level of trust

---

Mental illness (including drug and alcohol addiction)

---

Life expectancy and infant mortality

---

Obesity

---

Children's educational performance

---

**Teenage births**

---

**Homicides**

---

Imprisonment rates

---

**Social mobility**

---



# Teenage Births

- There is a gradient in teenage birth rates by household income
- Teenage birth rates are **higher** in more unequal countries

'Motherhood is a way in which young women in deprived circumstances join adult social networks....' who 'prioritize their relationship with their babies' as 'a more certain source of intimacy than the heterosexual relationships they had...experienced'.



# Violence

- Violent acts overwhelmingly perpetrated by men... and most of those men are in their teens and early twenties....acts of violence are:

'Attempts to ward off or eliminate the feeling of **shame and humiliation** – a feeling that is painful, and can even be intolerable and overwhelming – and replace it with its opposite, the feeling of **pride**'\*



# Social Mobility

- Social mobility is **lower** in more unequal countries
- Intergenerational inequality of opportunity
- Modern market democracies seen as 'meritocratic' so low social status regarded as a mark of personal inadequacy and failure

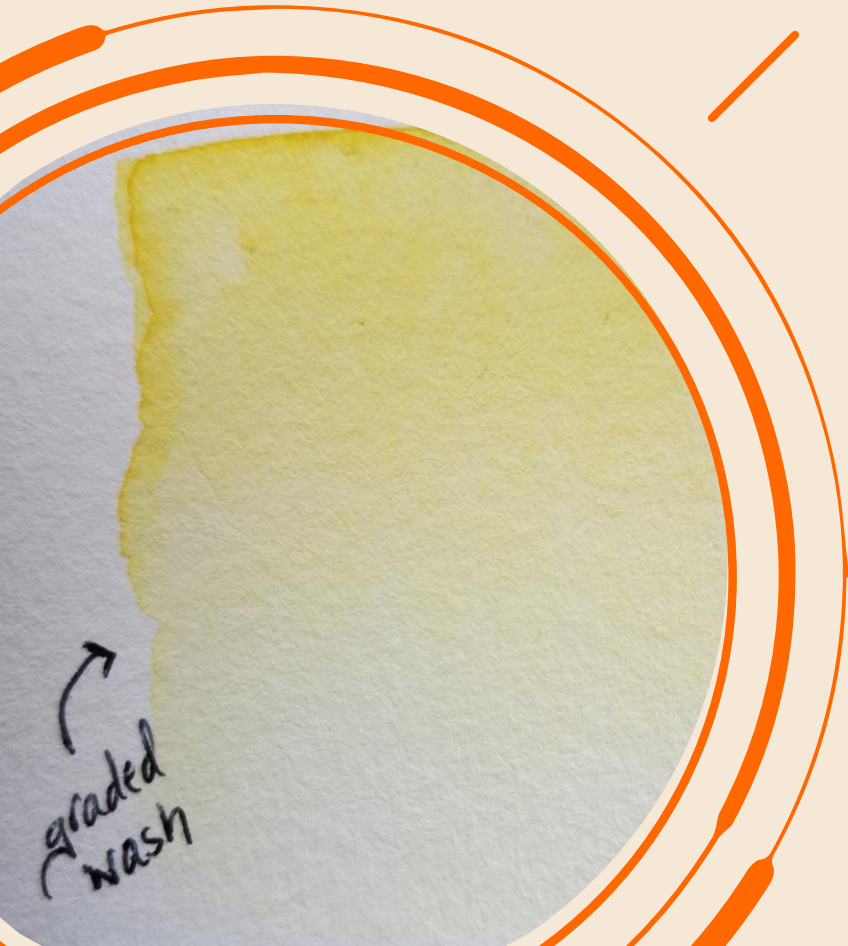
Judging  $\leftrightarrow$  Judged, others/self....



# Inequality and Sustainability

- 'Evidence ..... in rich countries, economic growth no longer drives measures of either health or happiness, adult or child wellbeing.'
- There are also environmental limits to growth
- Status anxieties feed into consumerism
- **A better outcome for everyone: a convenient not an inconvenient truth**





**5**

# Social exercise

Think about a common  
**social interaction**  
from your country

One positive and one negative  
5-10 min








Tell each other a **story**



**6**

**Looking  
forward**



# Problems with a social gradient

What can we learn from  
Finland?

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## Level of trust

---

Mental illness (including drug and alcohol addiction)

---

Life expectancy and infant mortality

---

Obesity

---

## Children's educational performance

---

Teenage births

---

Homicides


---

Imprisonment rates

---

Social mobility

---



# Finland: a more equal society

- Low gradients in health and social problems
- UK and US at the other end of the spectrum

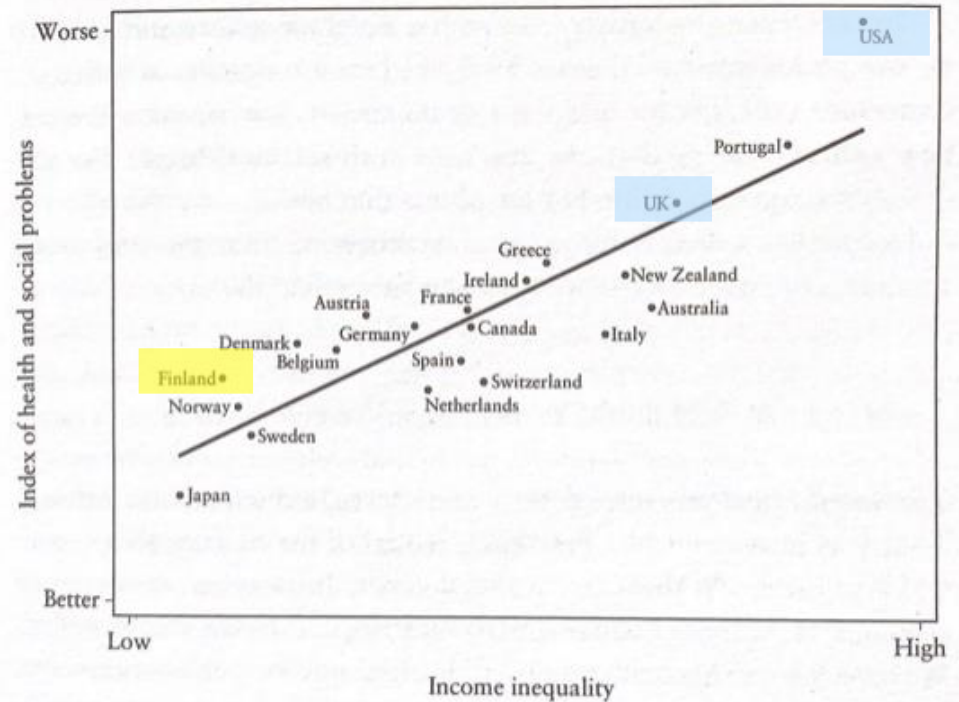


Figure 1: Health and social problems are more common in more unequal countries.\*<sup>1</sup>

# Finland: Trust

'Most people can be trusted'

Differences between countries large enough to say not due to chance

- Finland, Scandinavia, Netherlands 66%
- Portugal 10%

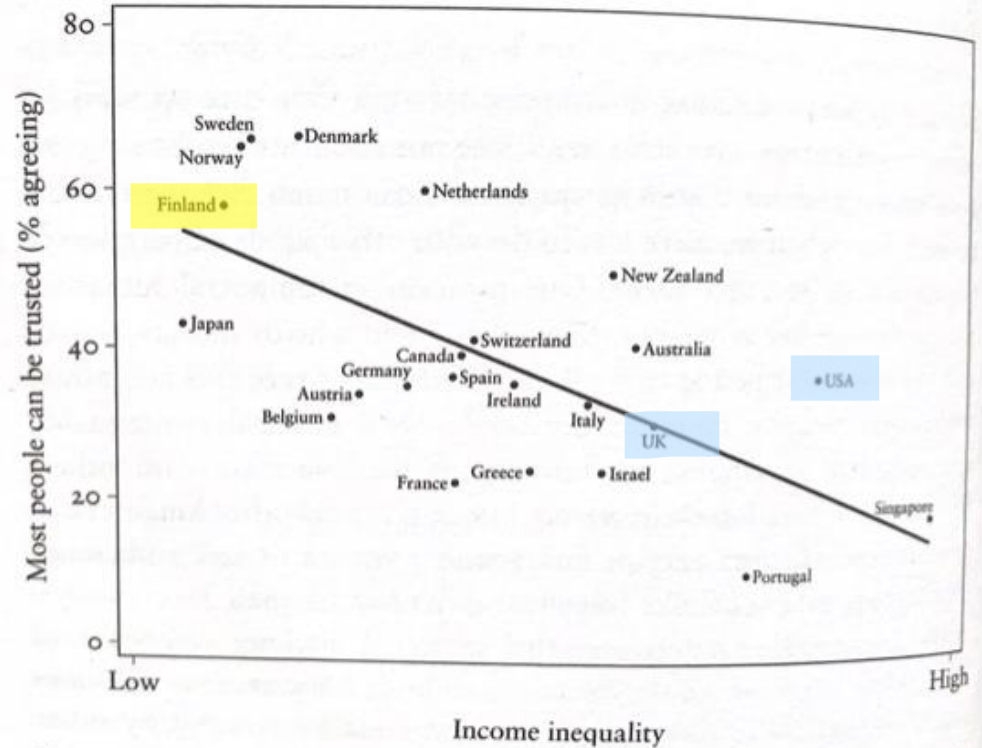


Figure 4.1 The percentage of people agreeing that 'most people can be trusted' is higher in more equal countries.

# Finland: Child Wellbeing

- UNICEF Index of Child Wellbeing
- Combines 40 different indicators covering many different aspects of child wellbeing
- **Child wellbeing is strongly related to inequality**
- (Not at all related to average income in each country)

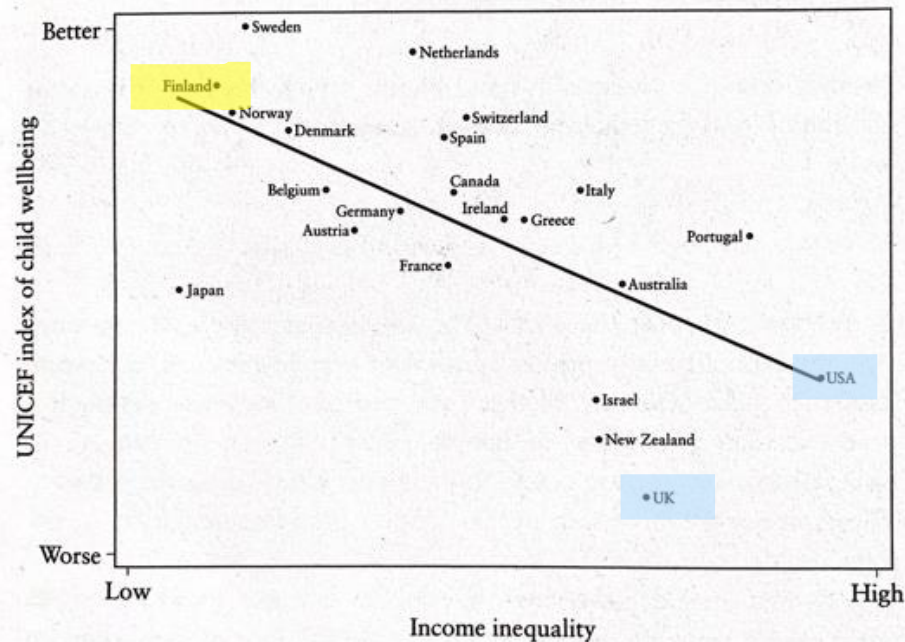


Figure 2.6 *The UNICEF index of child wellbeing in rich countries is related to inequality.*

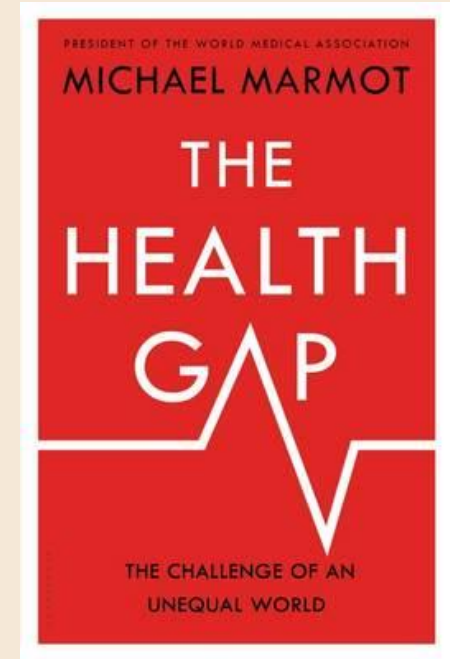
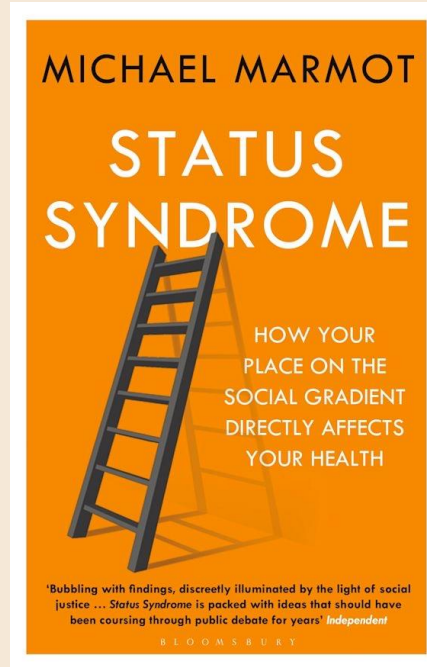
# The way ahead

'The best way to respond to the harms done by inequality would be to reduce inequality itself'



# Michael Marmot

- Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health UCL
- Chaired WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2005-8)
- Appointed by British government to conduct a **review of social determinants and health inequalities**





# England



## History, politics and vulnerability: explaining excess mortality in Scotland and Glasgow

David Walsh, Gerry McCartney, Chik Collins,  
Martin Taulbut, G David Batty

May 2016

A report by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, NHS Health Scotland, the  
University of the West of Scotland and University College London



## Leave no one behind

The state of health and health inequalities in Scotland

David Finch  
Heather Wilson  
Jo Bibby

January 2023



Health inequalities in Scotland:  
An independent review

# Scotland

**Glasgow: a tale of two cities**  
(Marmot, 2015)

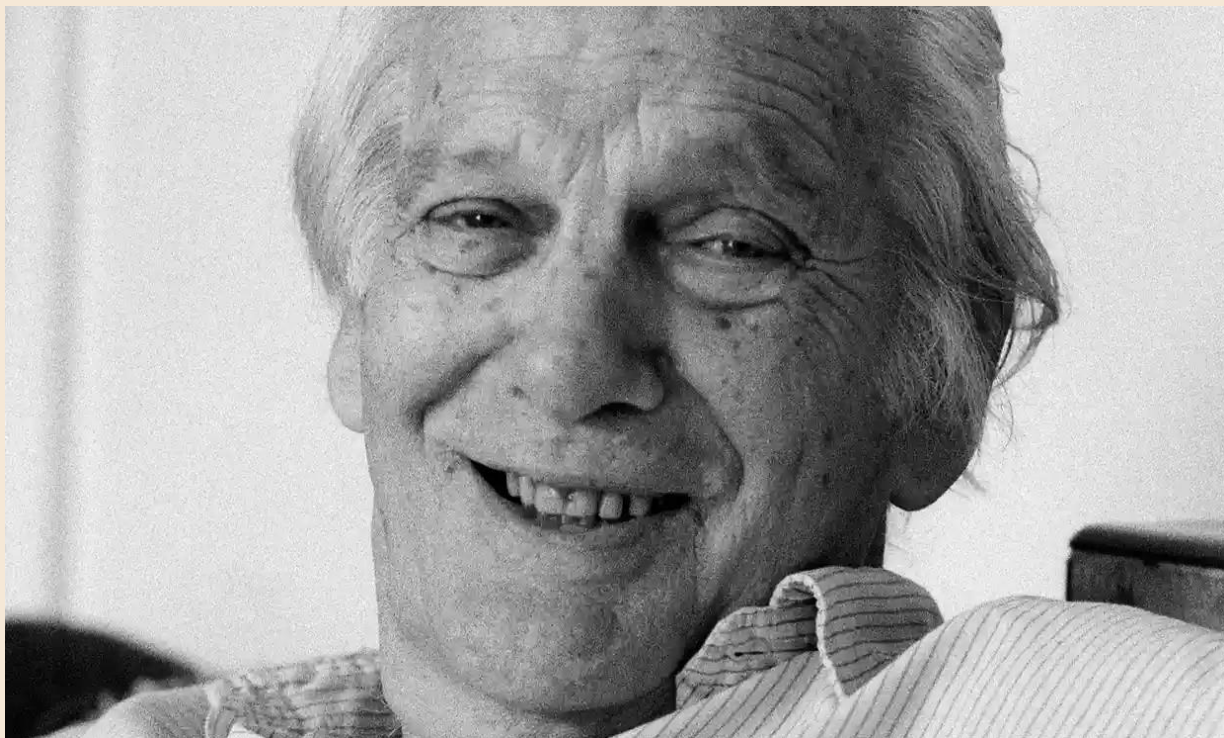
History, politics and vulnerability:  
explaining excess mortality in  
Scotland and Glasgow (2016)

Leave no one behind: and  
independent review of health and  
health inequalities in Scotland  
(2023)

# Looking forward

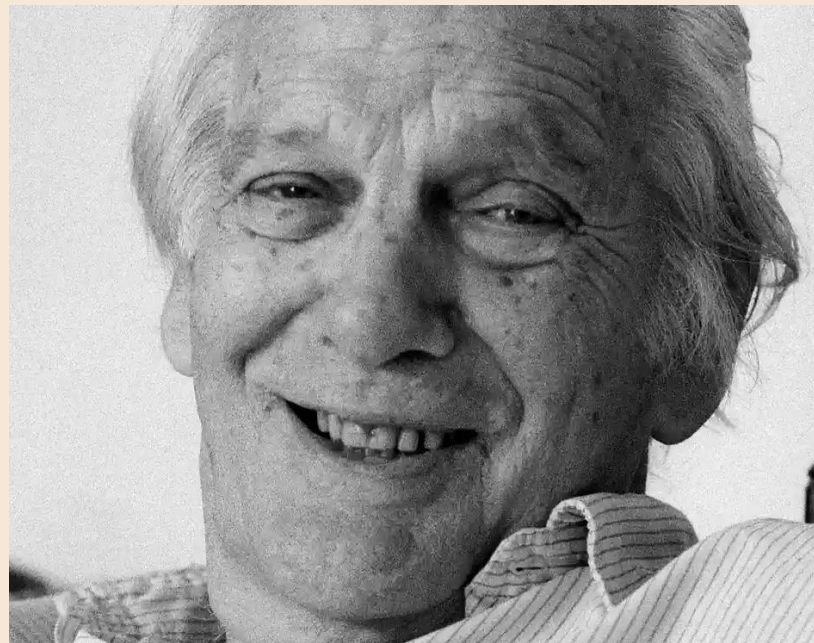
- What role for CAT?





# Looking back - looking forward

- ...based CAT around a concept of a predominantly relationally and socially formed self...
- ..became interested in mental health while a GP in inner London
- ...maintained that privilege should also bring a duty of humanity
- ...political concerns and nonconformism contributed to a sense of social responsibility that still pervades the model and the CAT community
- ...belonged to a generation that grew up during the second world war.....regretted that he .... had not been able to do more to address the injustices, conflict and suffering ... widespread in the world
- He would like to have done more to address the social basis of mental health



*Anthony Ryle obituary, the Guardian Newspaper, Ian B Kerr, 16th Nov 2016*

# Ourselves today



## Self

Experienced differently in different cultures



## Culture

Relationally shaped and formed by our culture



## Finland

Solid foundations of social equality, trust and child wellbeing



## Others

The strength of relationships brings happiness




## CAT community

Foster curiosity about other cultures  
Ethos of CAT is relationships



## Happiness

Connection to equality  
Different expressions



"A human being is a piece of art – it's such a complex creature, an endless source of inspiration."

—Ville **Valo**



# Thanks!

Let's go get together!  
And meet us at the bar later 😊

@CATScotland1  
committee@catscotland.org



CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, and includes icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**

Special thanks to my friends -Ari, Will and Paz – and to my coach Eicca as they inadvertently made this happen



University of Glasgow, River Kelvin  
Scotland



# Resources

## Books

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- Kerr, I.B. (2016). 'Anthony Ryle Obituary', *The Guardian Newspaper*. 15th November.
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