

# Beyond GDP: Discovering new political dimensions with well-being

Latin American Conference  
on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering  
the Progress of Societies  
11<sup>th</sup> May 2011, Mexico City

Saamah Abdallah  
*Centre for Well-being*  
**nef** (the new economics foundation)



# Outline

- Different measures of well-being
- Different patterns of well-being
- Different policies for well-being

# About nef



An *independent* UK think-and-do-tank since 1986

Inspired by 3 principles

Sustainable development

Social justice

People's well-being

Aim of the centre for well-being:

“Enhance individual and collective well-being in ways that are environmentally sustainable and socially just”

# Outline

- Different measures of well-being
- Different patterns of well-being
- Different policies for well-being

# Measures of well-being

## Preference Satisfaction

Income as proxy for ability to satisfy wants and desires

## Objective lists

e.g. education, freedom, safety

## Functioning accounts

Experiences associated with good life (e.g. meaning, engagement, social relations)

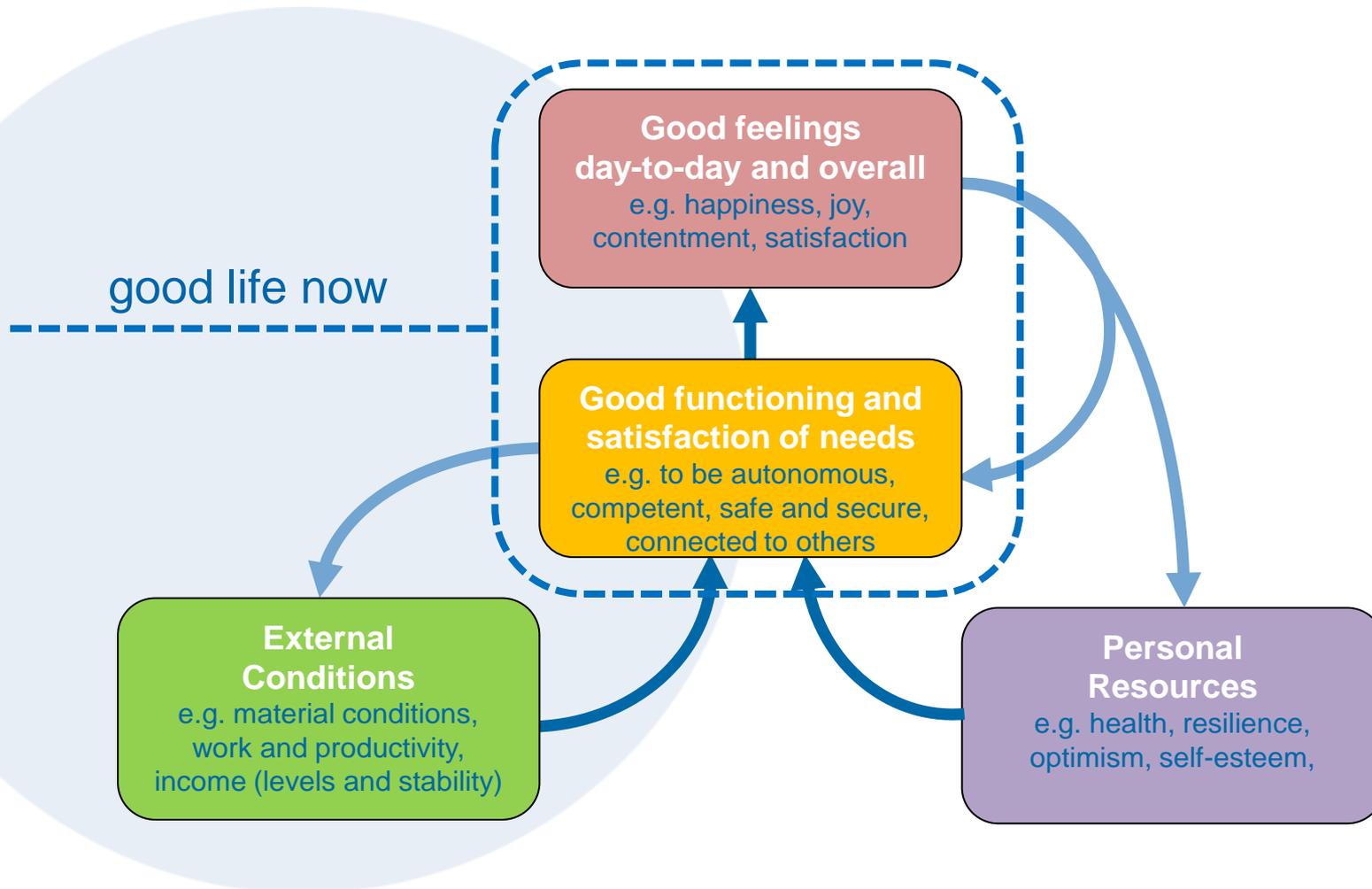
## Hedonic accounts

Positive and negative emotions, over short period

## Evaluative accounts

Assessment of life, judgements *about* feelings

# Dynamic model of well-being

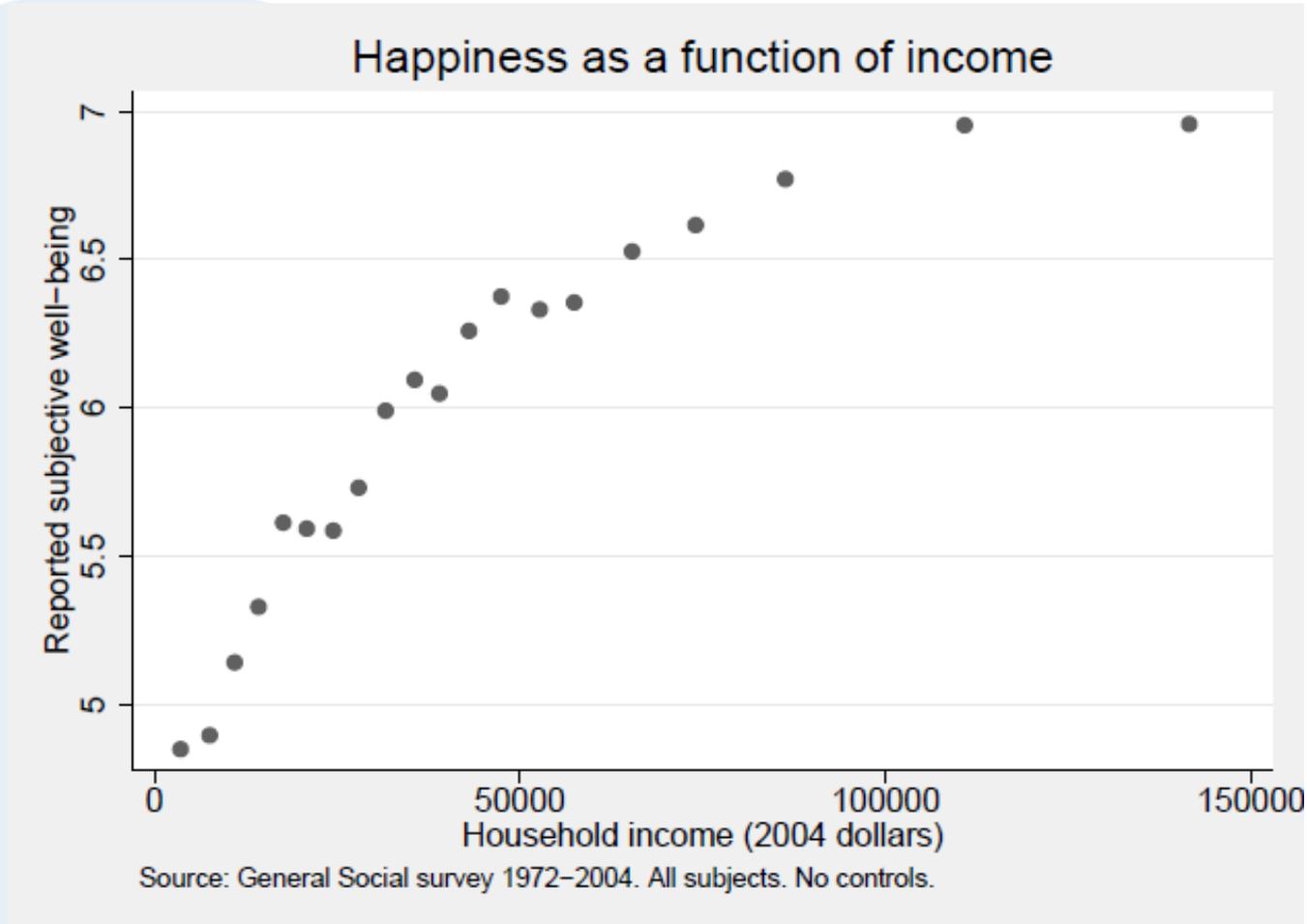


# Why flourishing?

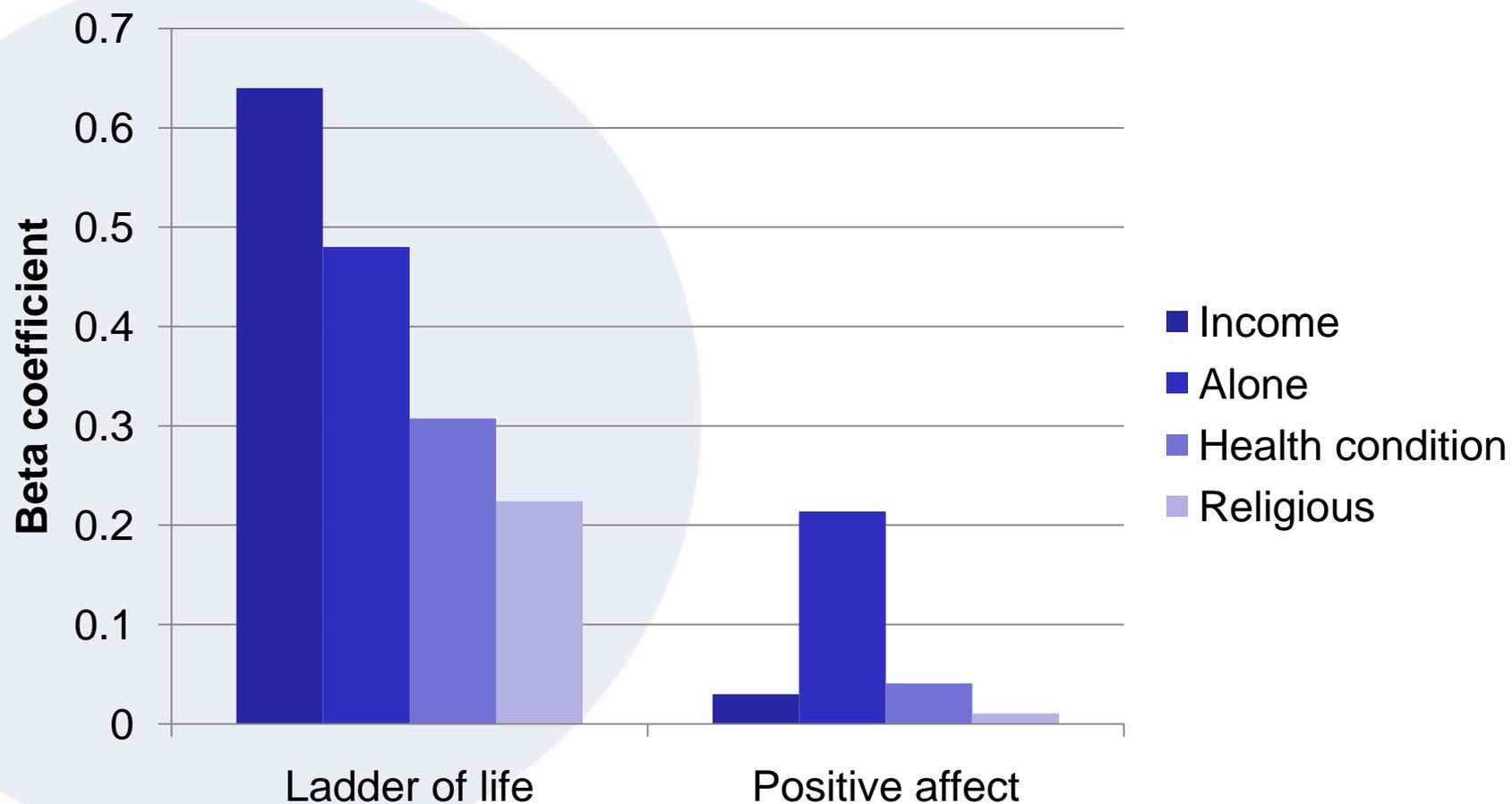
- Helps interpretation of data
- Relevant for long-term and other positive outcomes
- Increases sensitivity
- Recognises well-being is more than good feeling

# Outline

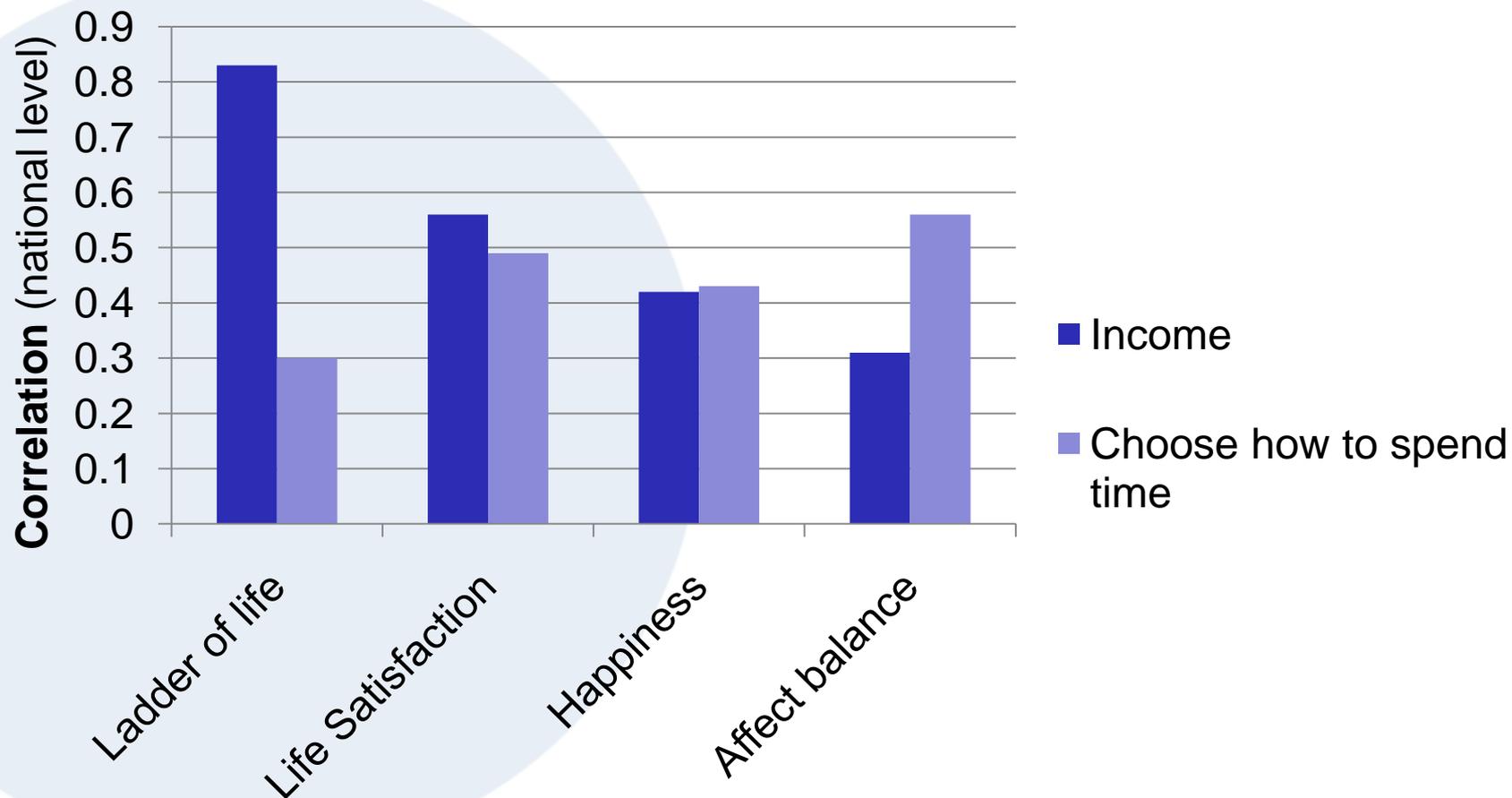
- Different measures of well-being
- **Different patterns of well-being**
- Different policies for well-being



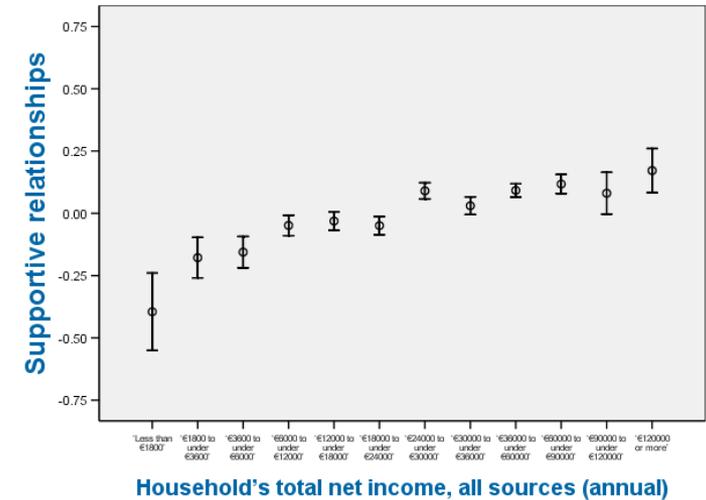
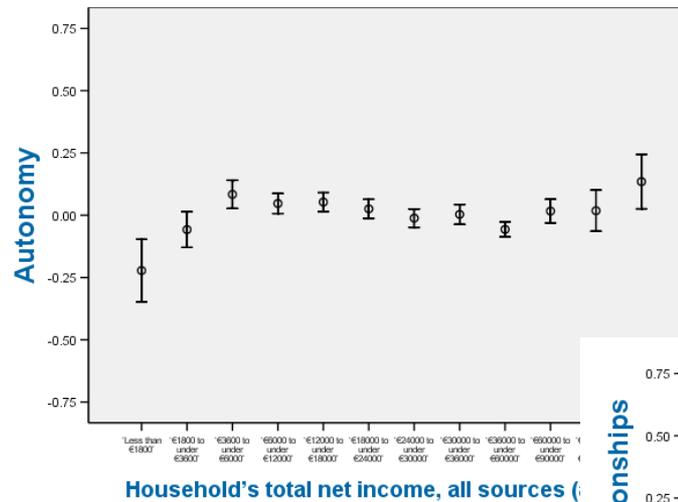
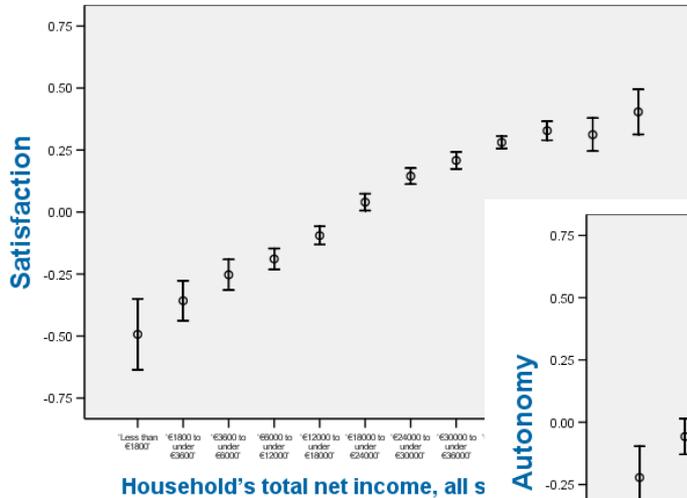
# Depends what you ask...



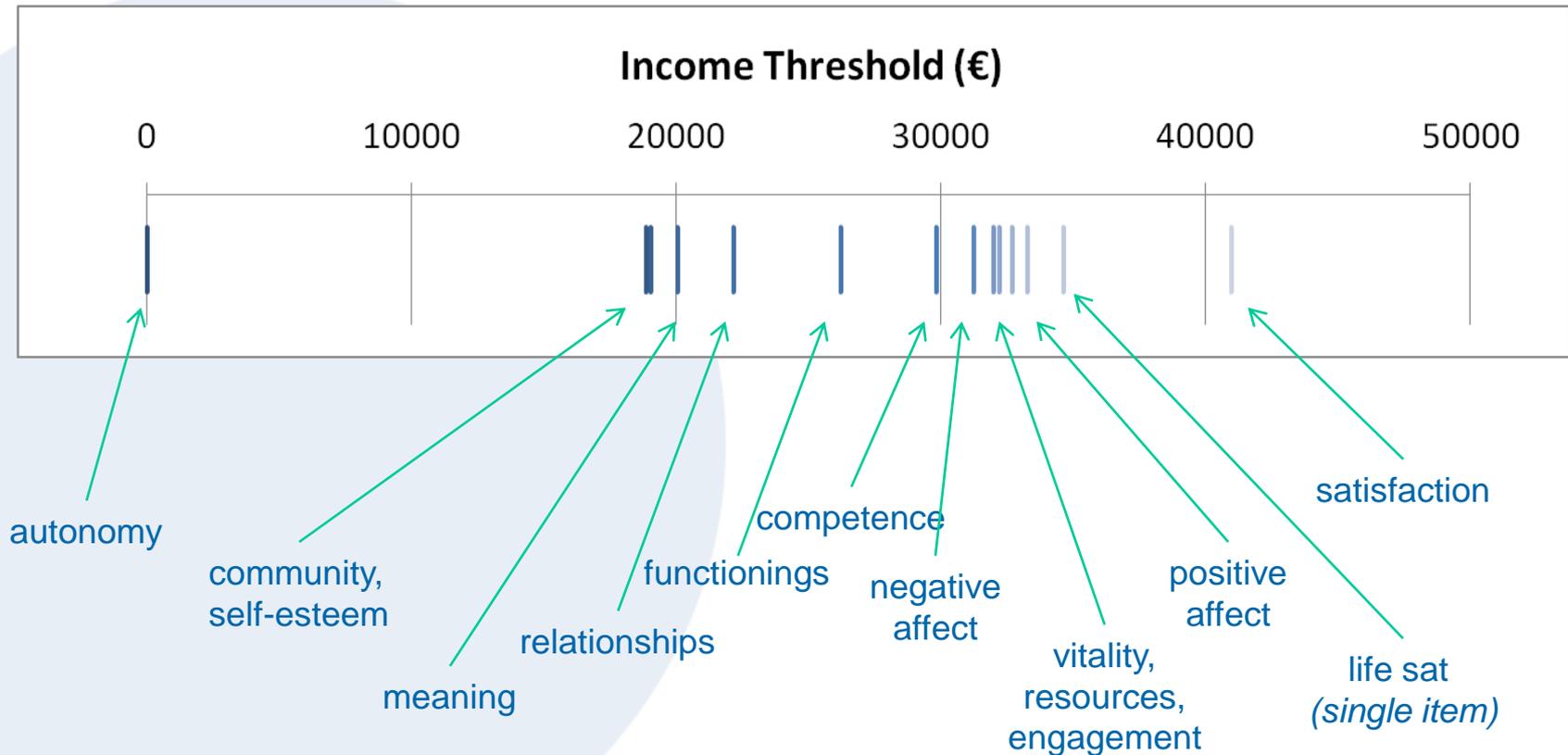
# Depends what you ask...



# Flourishing elements

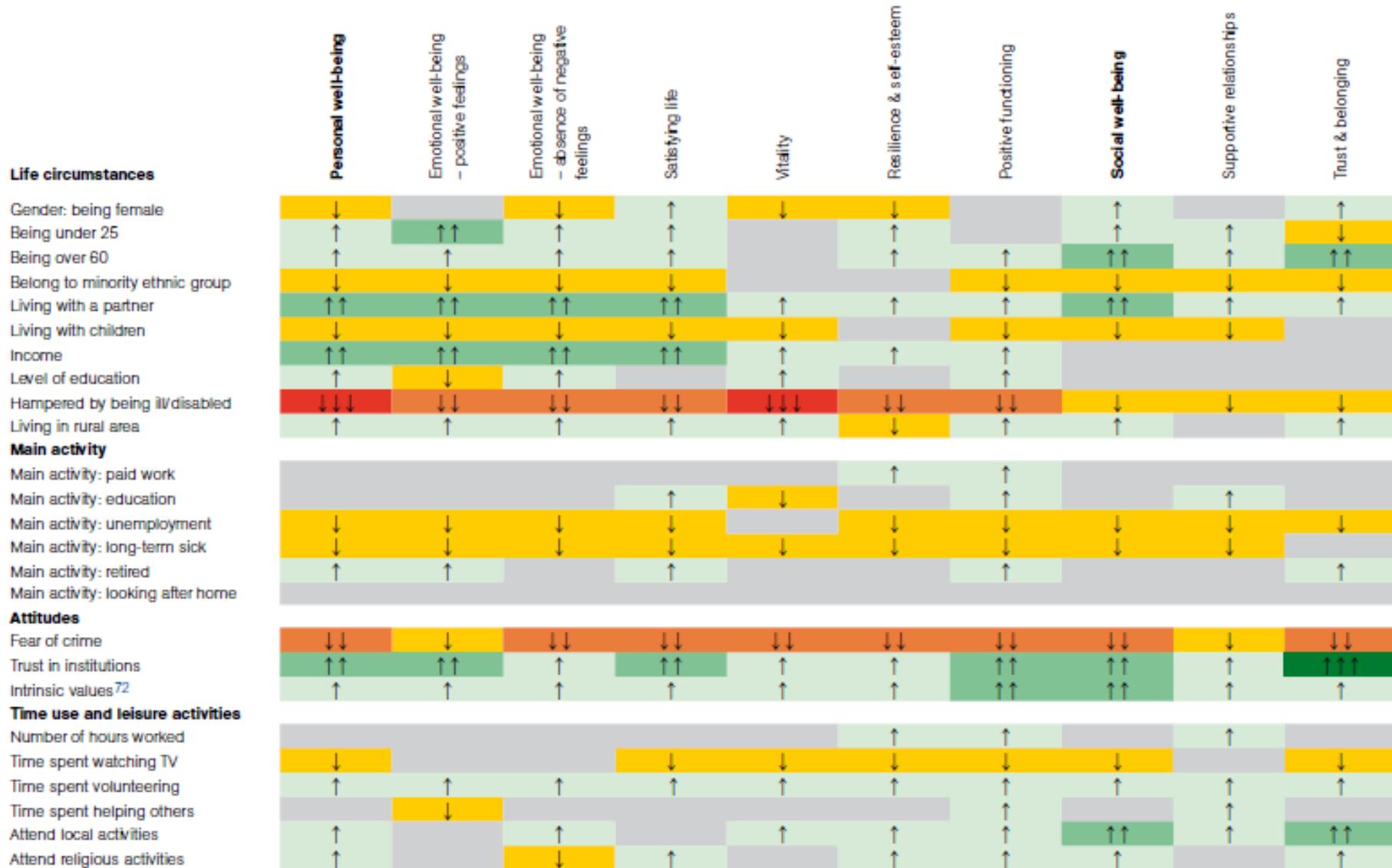


# Flourishing elements



**Income level at which change from additional €10,000 drops below 0.05 standard deviations**

Abdallah & Thompson (2010)



# Outline

- Different measures of well-being
- Different patterns of well-being
- **Different policies for well-being**

# Can well-being shape policy?

*“Next time we have a comprehensive spending review, let’s not just guess what effect various policies will have on people’s well-being. Let’s actually know.”*

UK govt source, Nov 2010



*“I would say that finding out what will really improve lives and acting on it is actually the serious business of government”*

David Cameron, UK Prime Minister, Nov 2010

# Can well-being shape policy?



*Well-being indicators are most valuable  
“when they behave in ways that often match  
our intuition, but also provide novel insights  
about the relative importance of distinct life  
circumstances”*

**Diener et al. (2009) *Well-being for Public Policy***

# Well-being in policy

- Understanding population
  - Identifying more drivers
  - Managing trade-offs
  - Identifying those in need
- Developing/advocating policy
- Design and implementation
- Evaluation
  - Versus WTP and market valuation

# Measuring our Progress

## *The power of well-being*



[www.neweconomics.org/publications/  
measuring-our-progress](http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/measuring-our-progress)

Saamah Abdallah  
00593 953 75216

[saamah.abdallah@neweconomics.org](mailto:saamah.abdallah@neweconomics.org)

