

Understanding Happiness

Counting so it counts

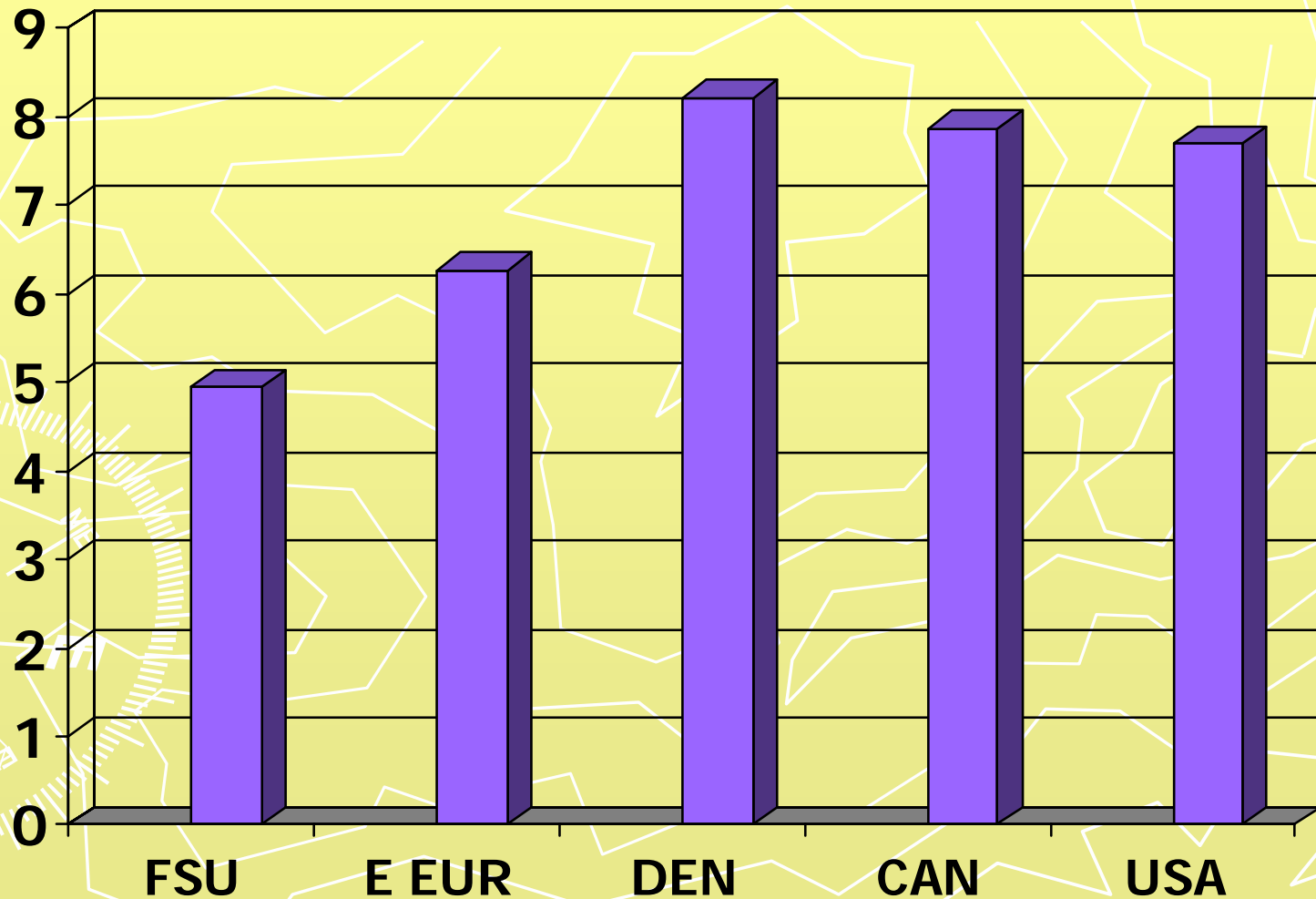
ReThinking Development: Local
Pathways to Global Well-Being

Plenary Session

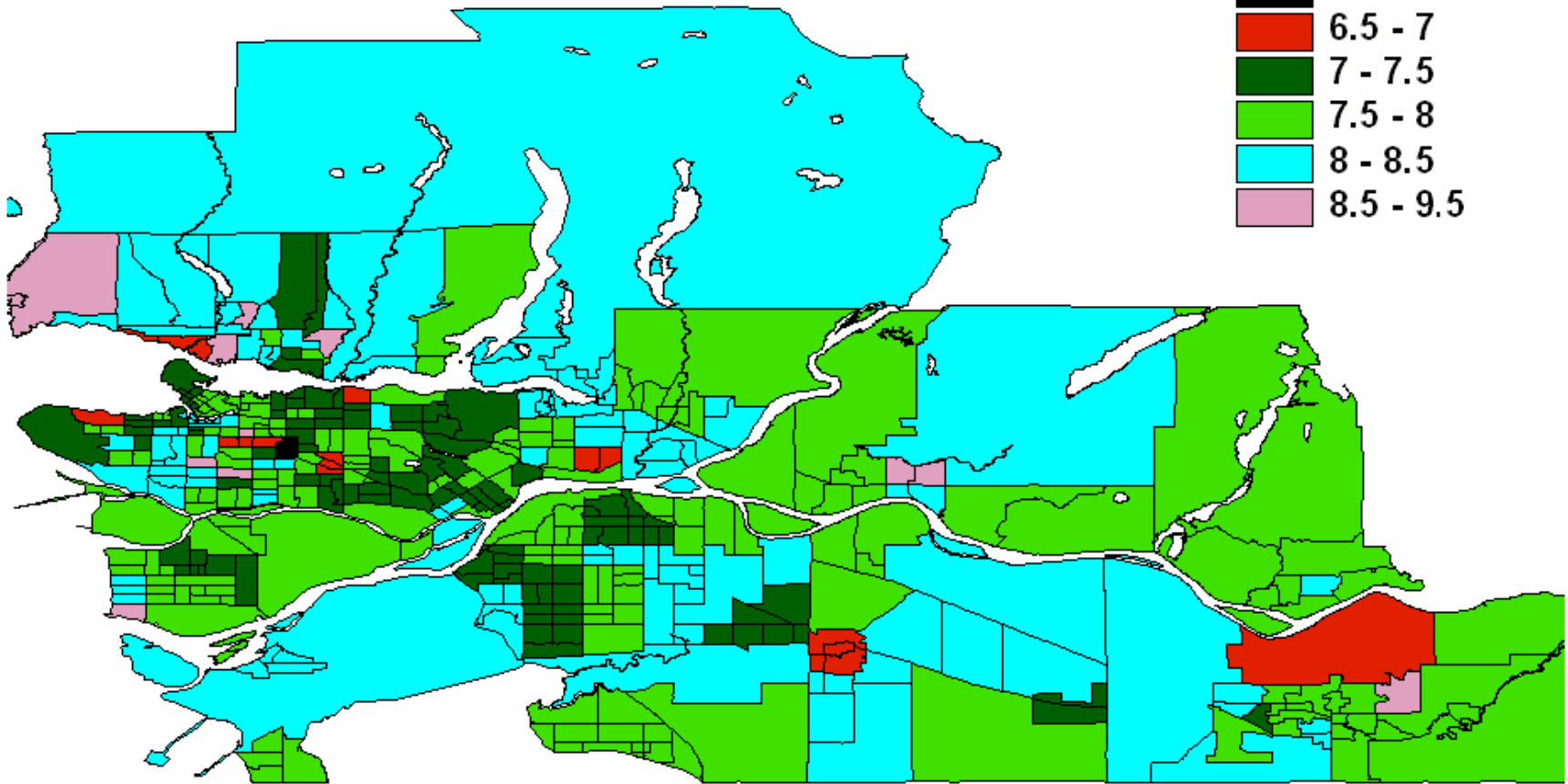
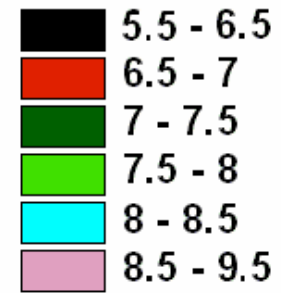
Wednesday, July 22 or 23 or so

John F. Helliwell

National averages of Life Satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 10



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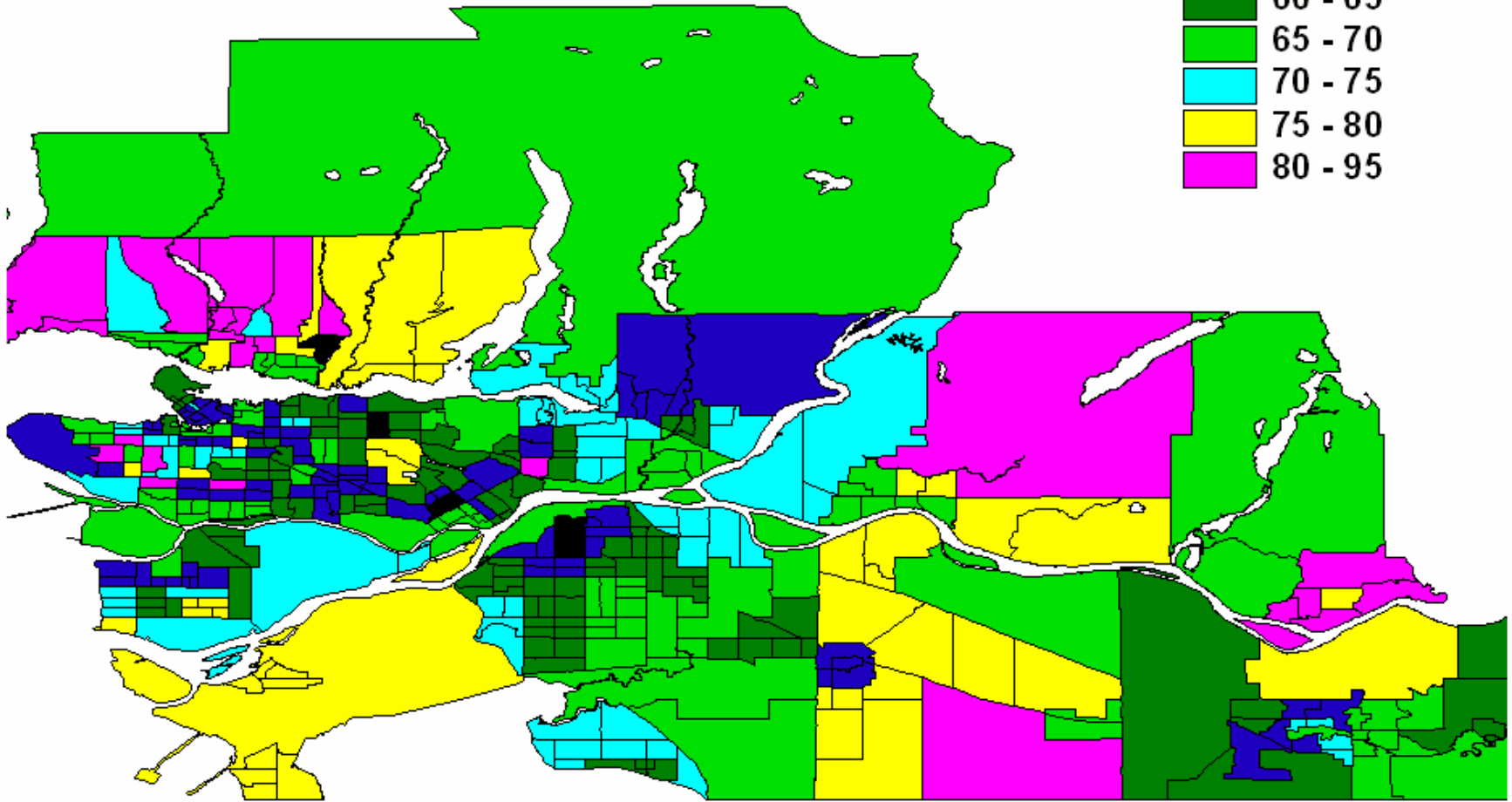
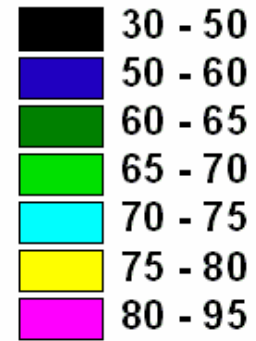
Index of Life Satisfaction, BC, Lower Mainland



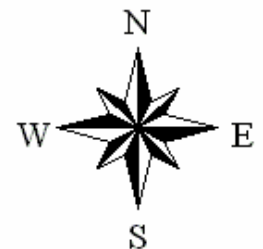
What Supports Well-Being?

- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Engagement- the more we get together...
- ▶ Employment (paid or not, in a good job)
- ▶ Family, friends and neighbours
- ▶ Good health
- ▶ High-quality of government, at all levels
- ▶ Adequate income, relative to expectations
- ▶ No TV? (ref Tannis MacBeth)

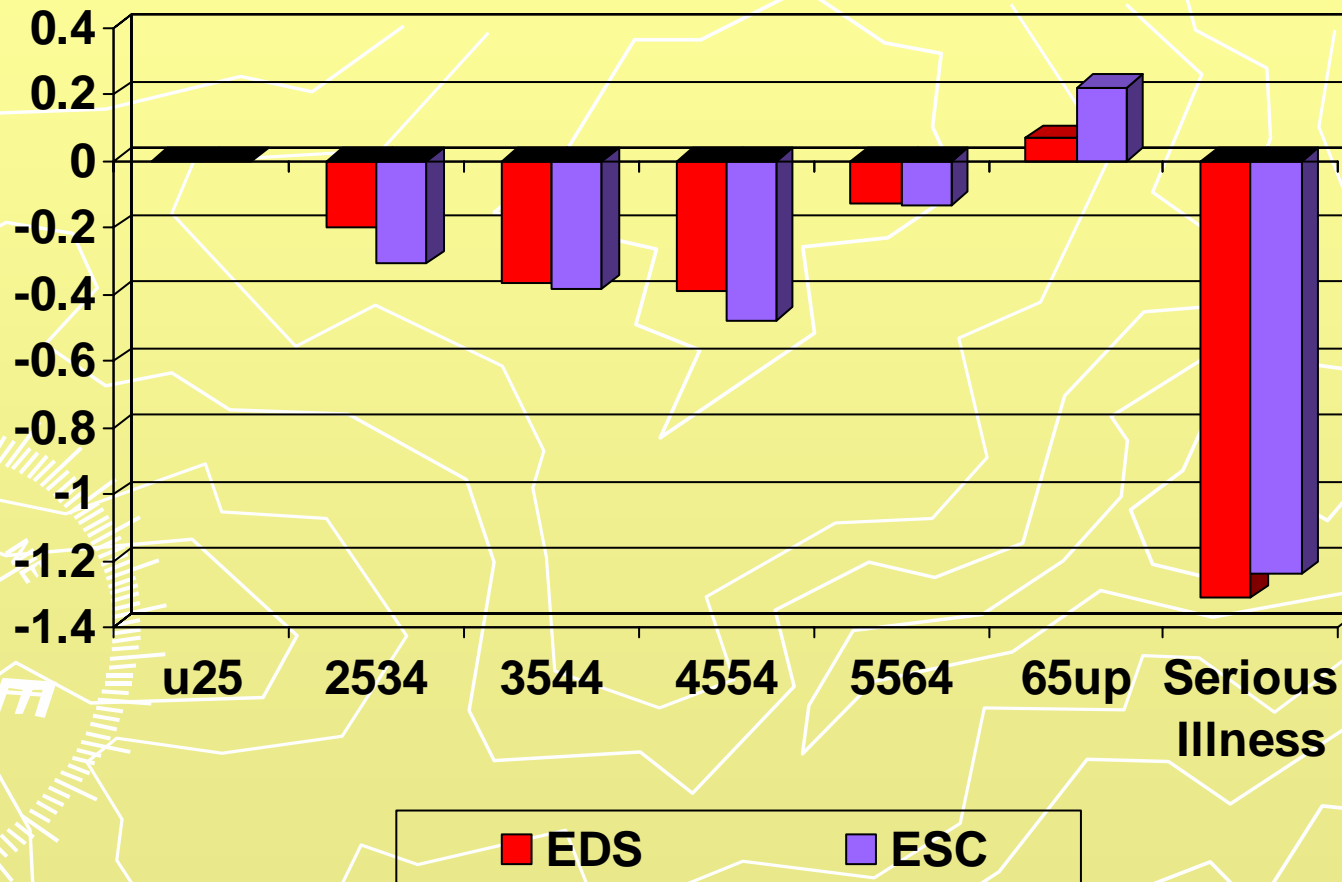
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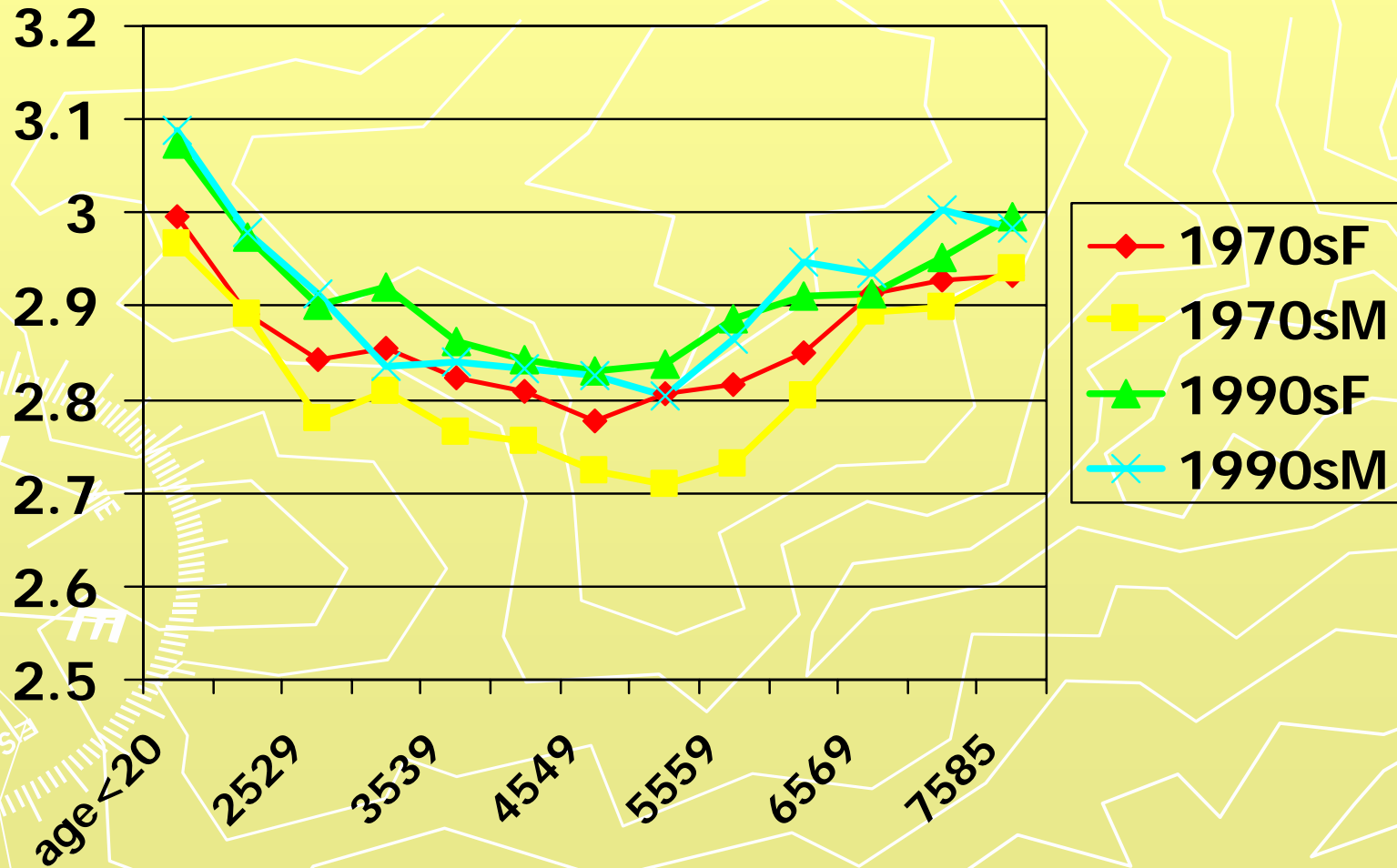
Trust in Neighbours, BC, Lower Mainland



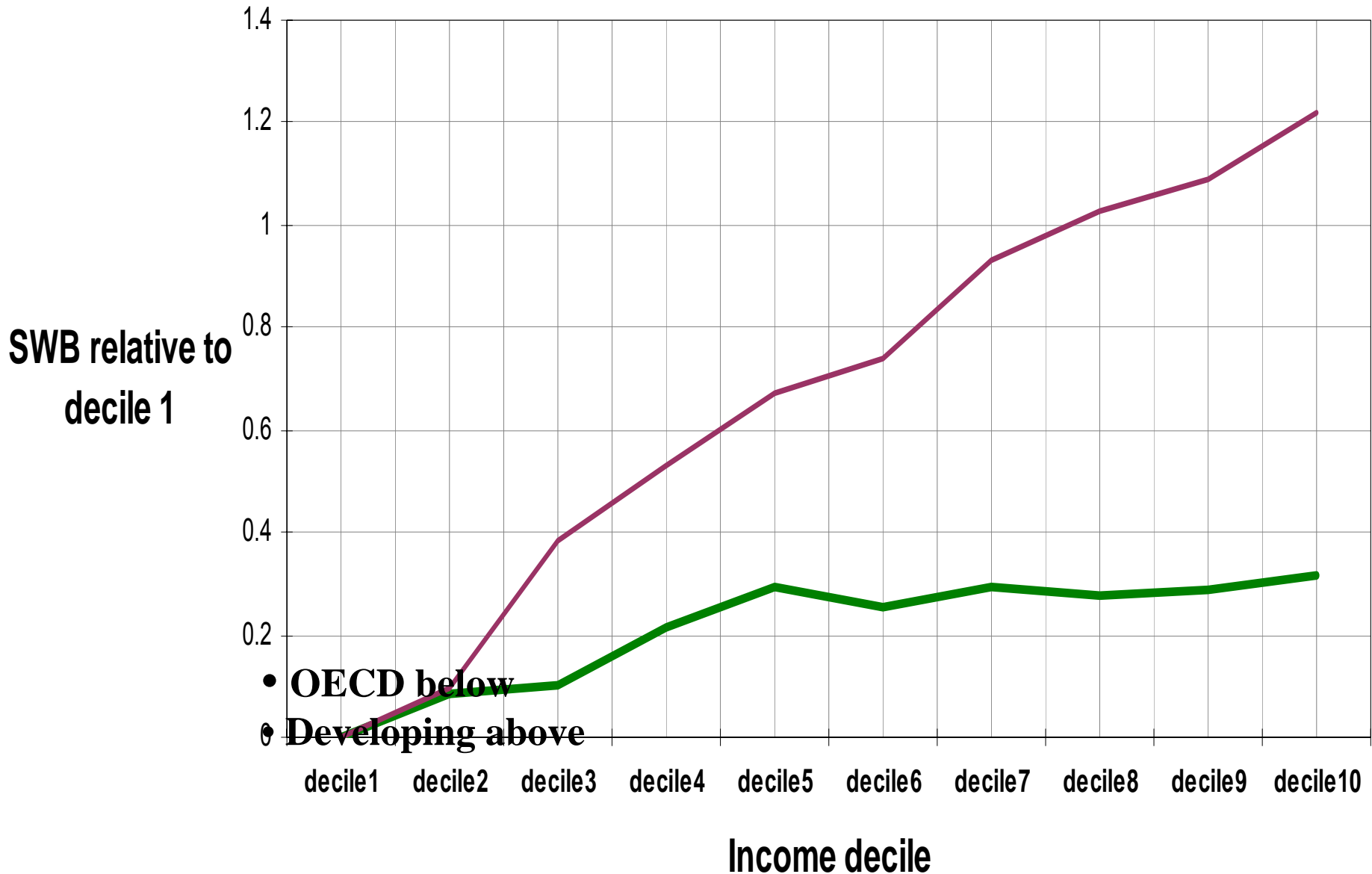
SWB effects of age and serious illness in two Canadian surveys



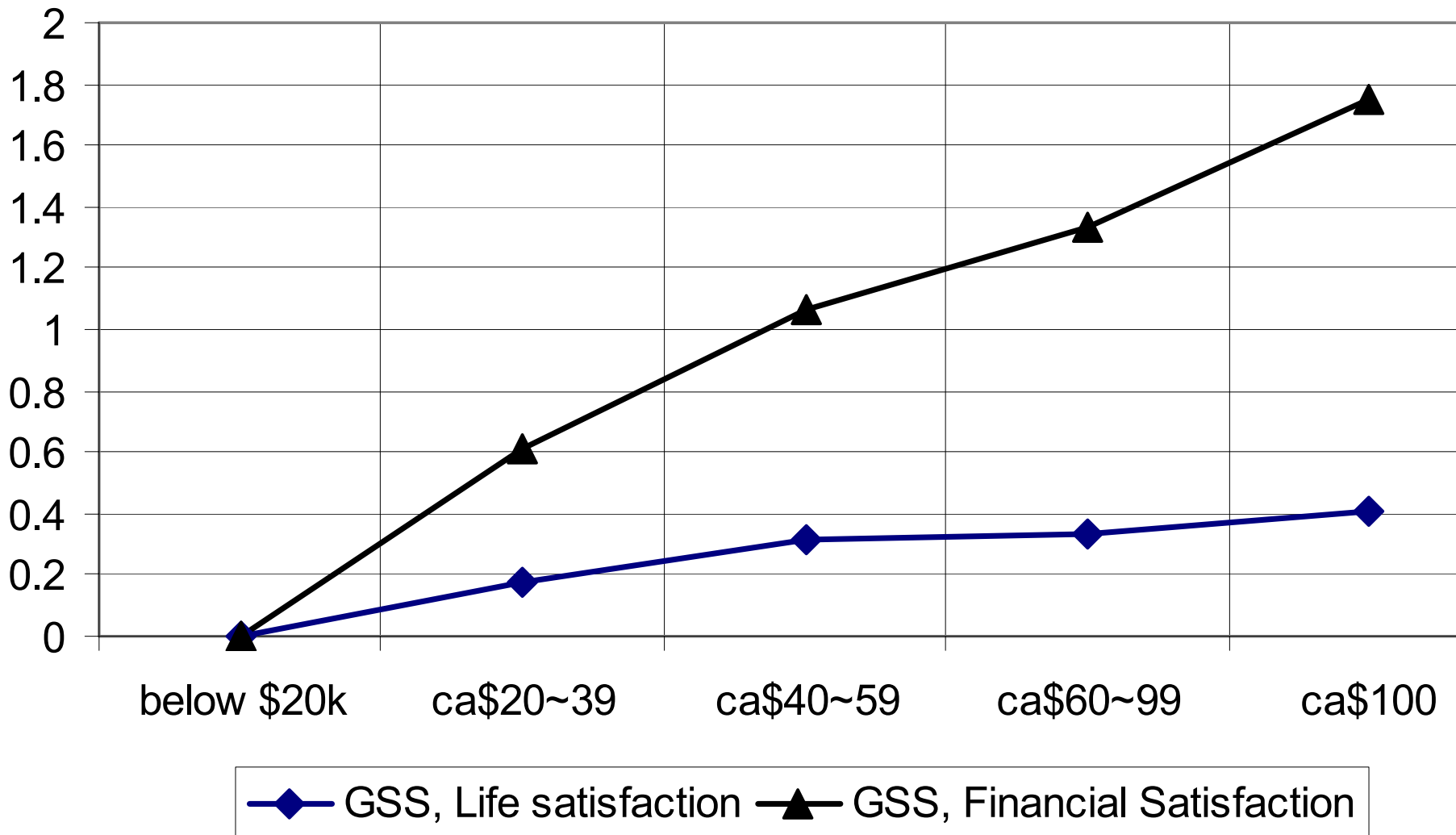
Happiness by age group in Europe, by decade on a 4-point scale



Relative Income and Happiness

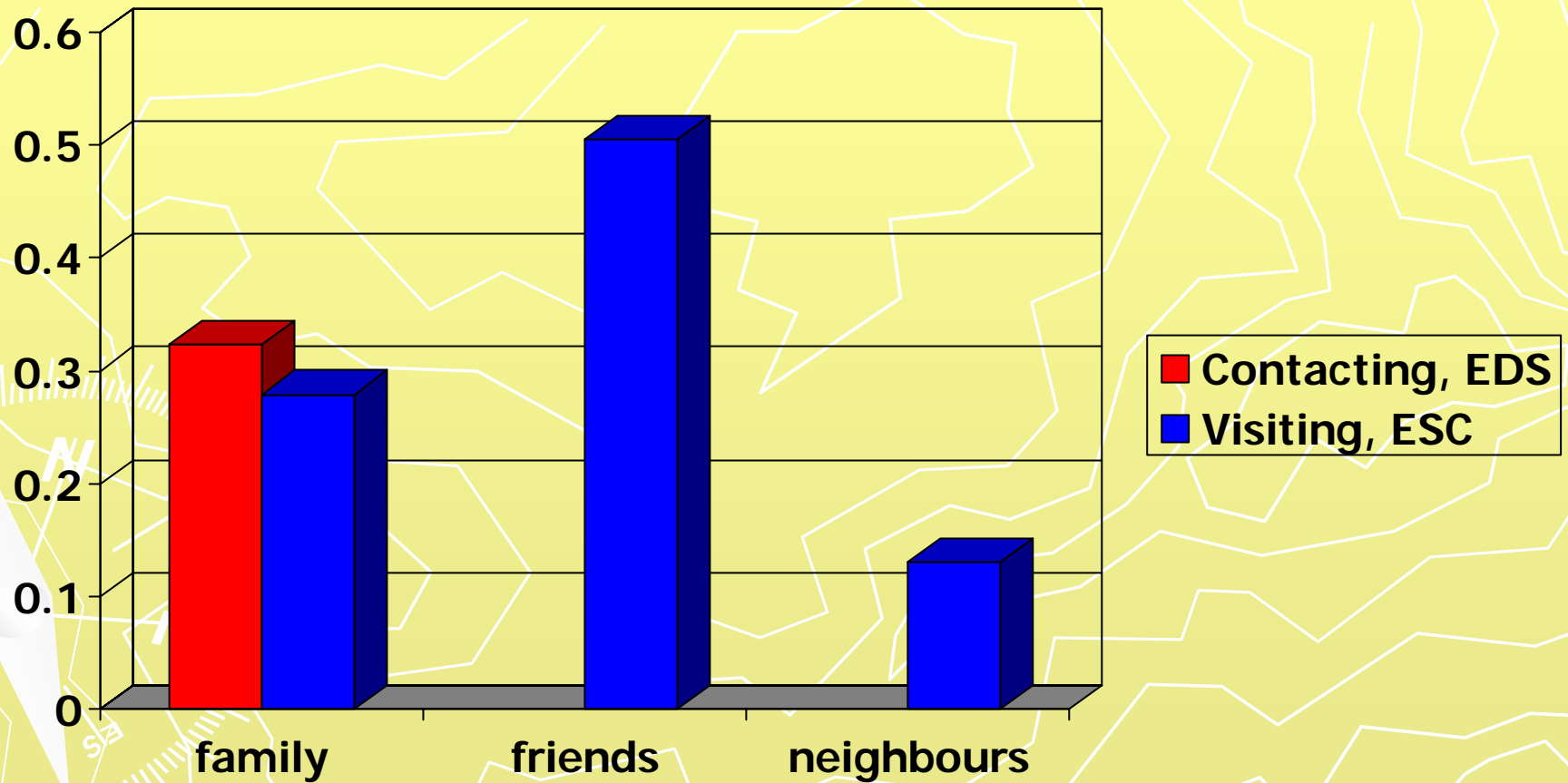


Effects of income on financial and life satisfaction in Canada

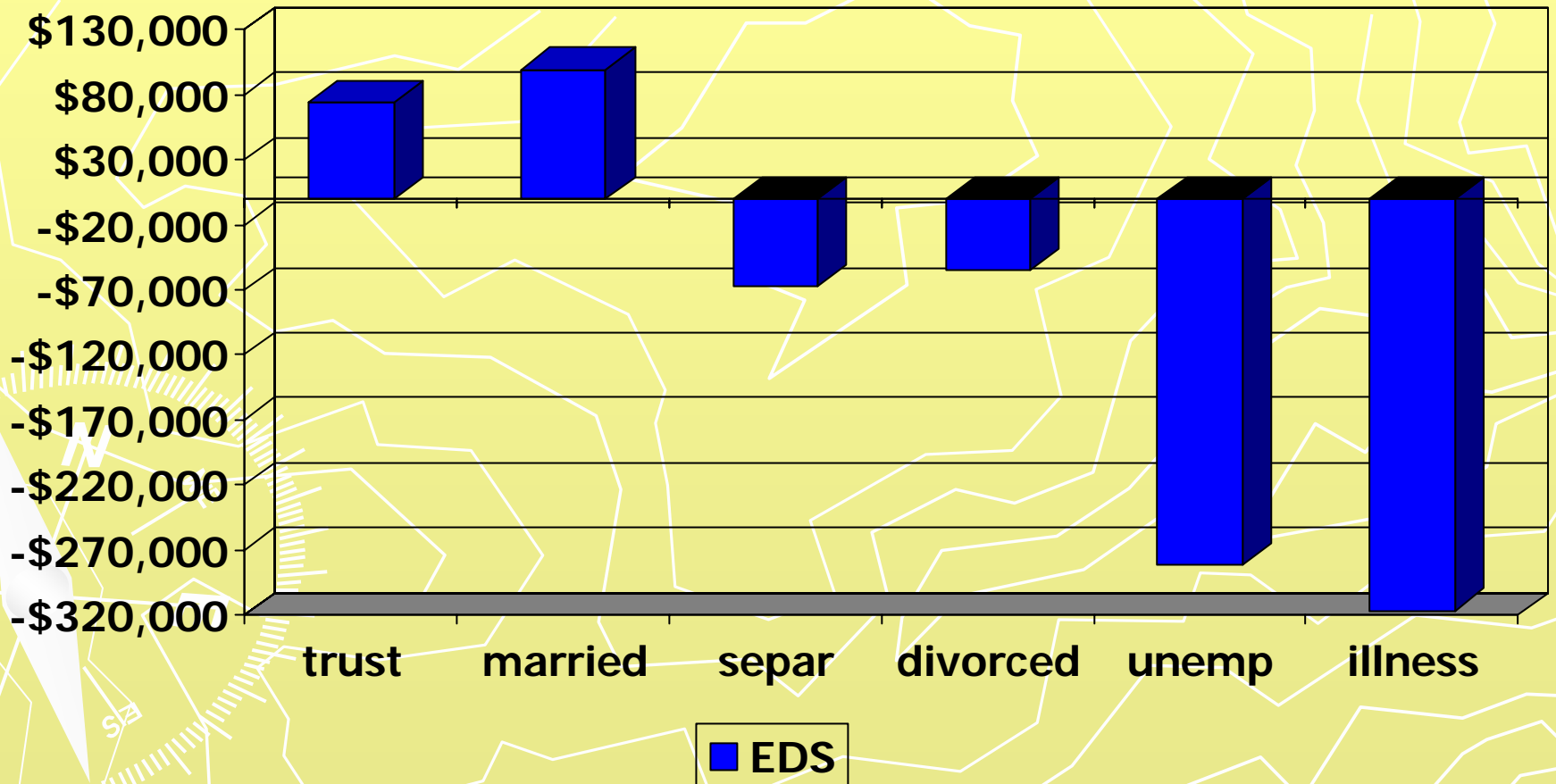


SWB effects of frequent visits/contacts with family, friends and neighbors

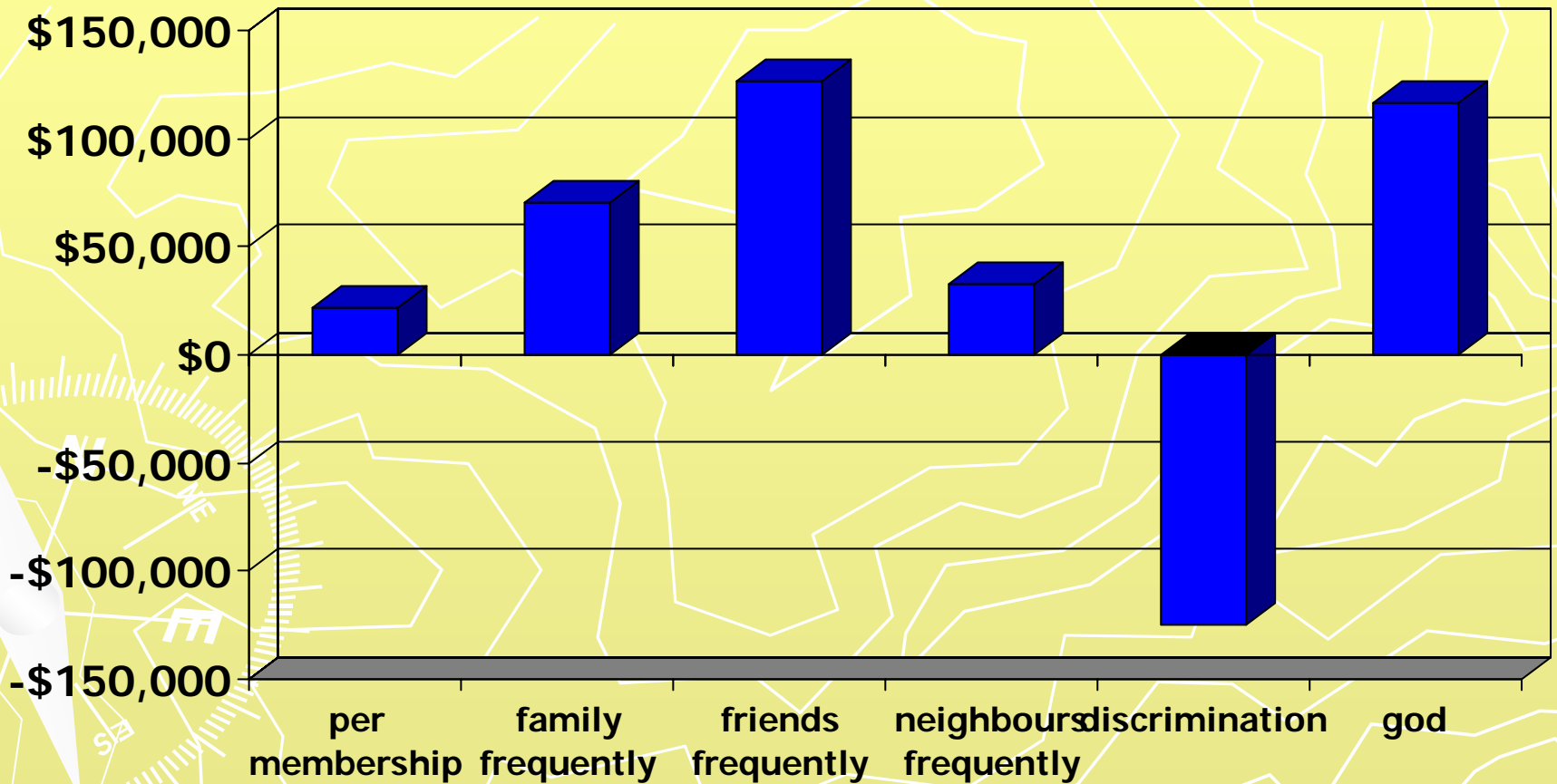
EDS & ESC



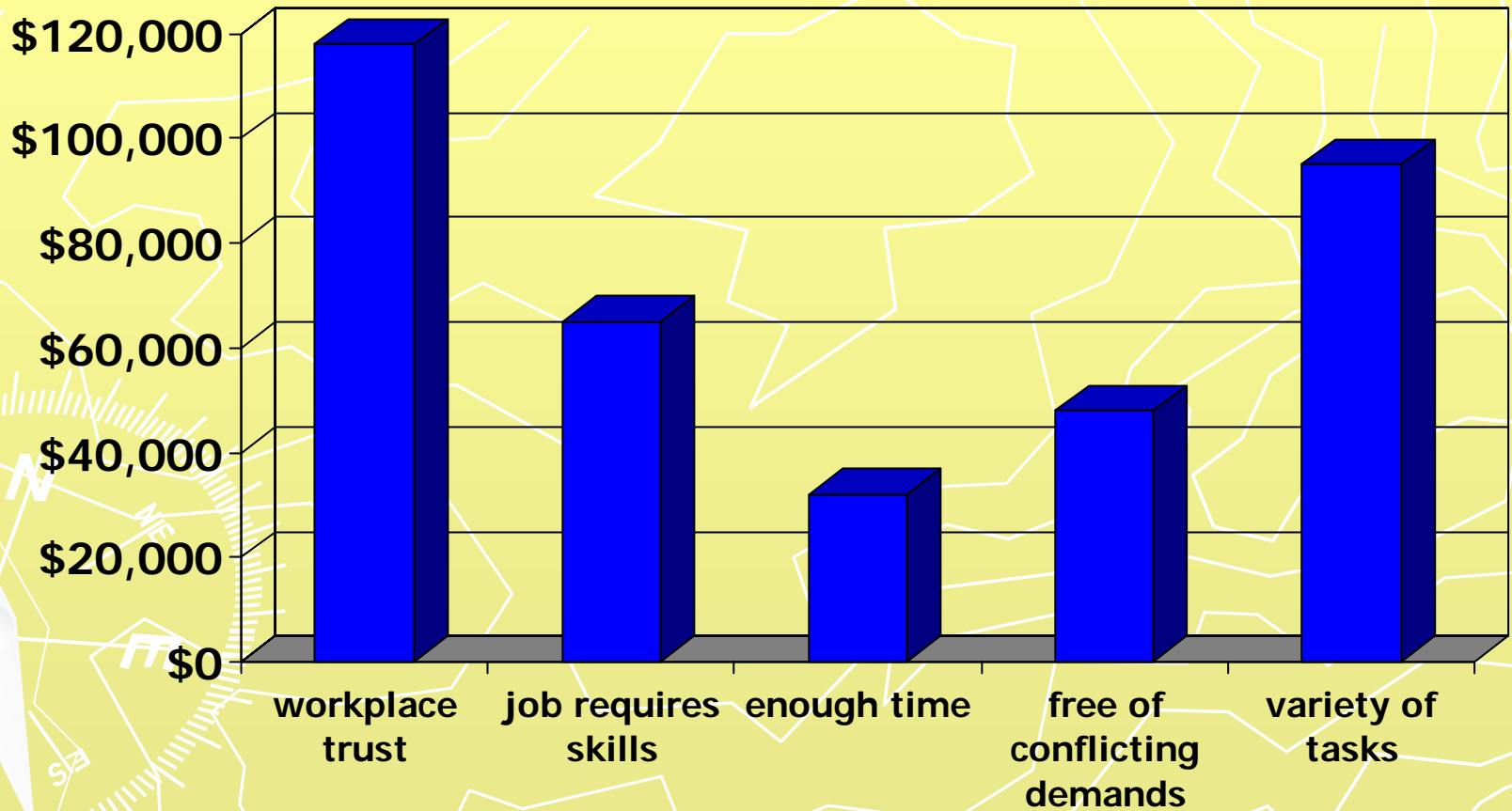
Income equivalents of factors affecting life satisfaction



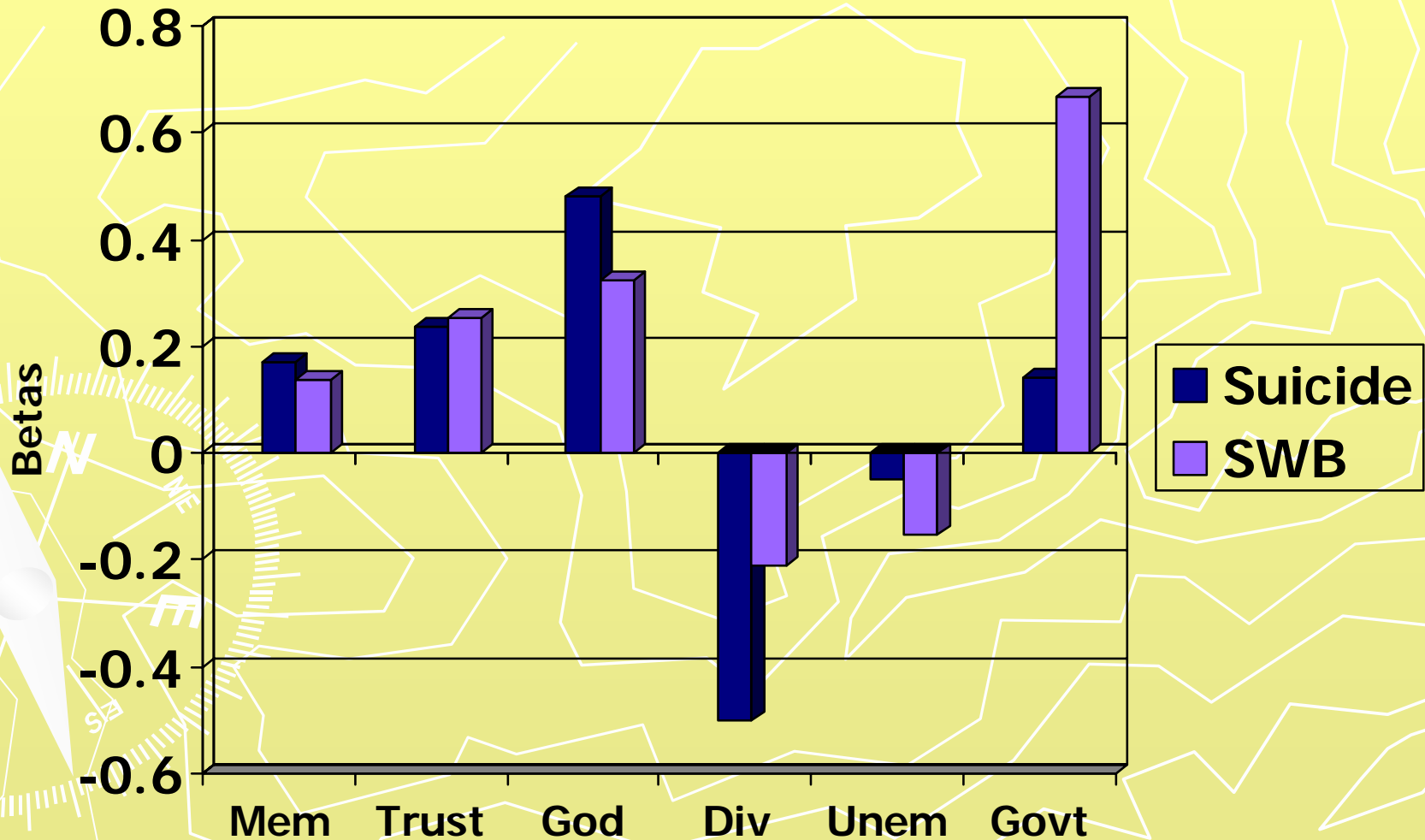
More Income equivalents of factors affecting SWB



How's the Job?



Explaining international differences in well-being and suicide



More global evidence on good government and well-being

- ▶ The Swiss results (Frey and Stutzer): people are more satisfied with their lives in cantons with more responsive local government
- ▶ Suicide rates much lower (Chandler and Lalonde) in BC aboriginal communities with stronger cultures and local governance
- ▶ Latest average measures of the quality of govt (Kaufmann-Kraay) US 1.58, Canada 1.71, Mexico .048. [Range -0.98 (Belarus) to +1.95 (Finland) in WVS countries.]

Linking Happiness and Sustainability

- ▶ Doing the right things create happiness
- ▶ But people still want to keep up with the Joneses. (consuming creates unhappiness)
- ▶ So why not change the Joneses, and emulate families with small footprints?
- ▶ This will take personal and family engagement (TV is a bad parent); but engagement is what makes us happy, so why not?