



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

'A sweeping theory of everything' *Guardian*



Richard Wilkinson

Emeritus Professor of
Social Epidemiology
University of Nottingham

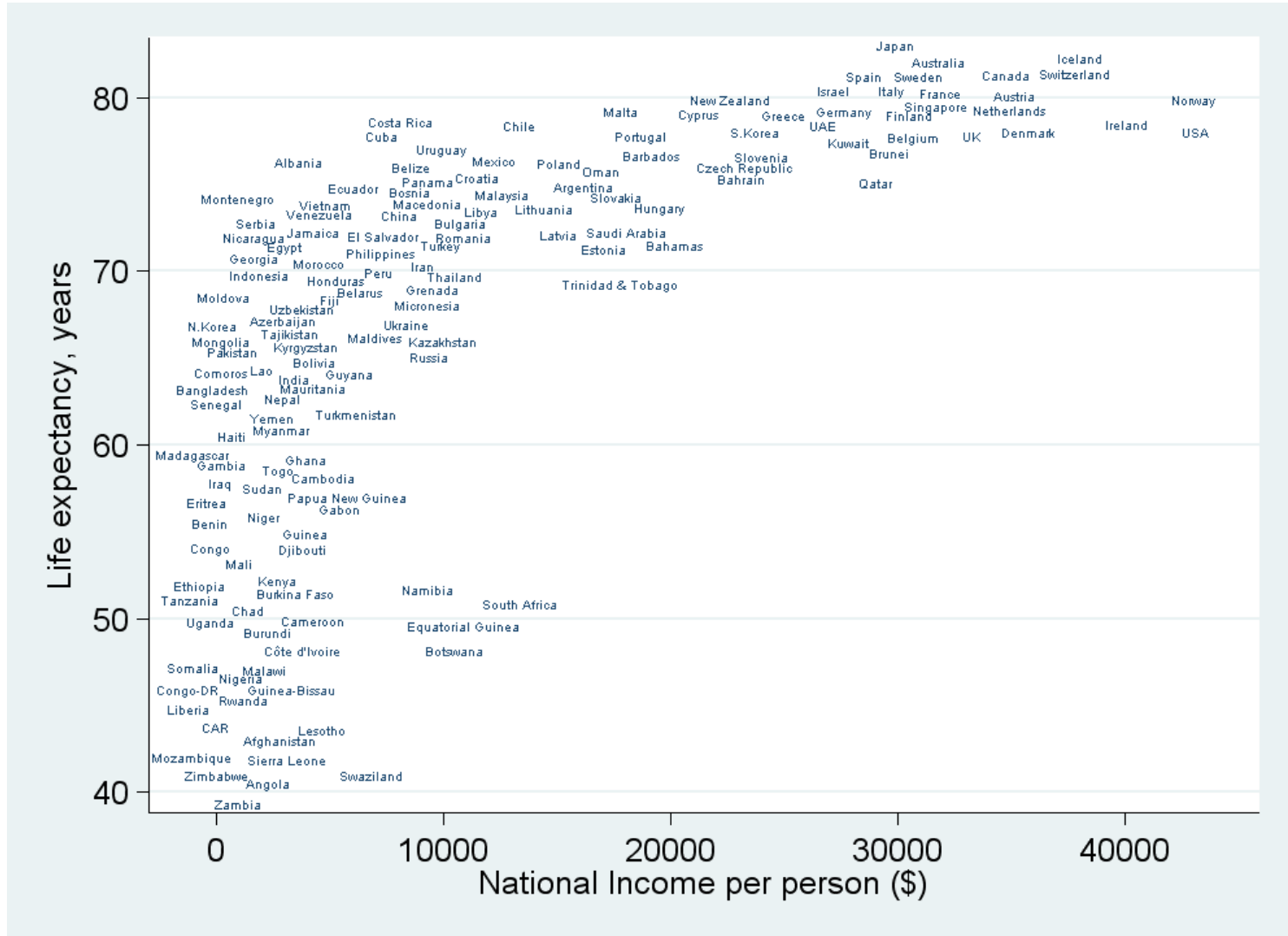
&

Kate Pickett

Professor of Epidemiology
University of York

<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk>

Income per head and life-expectancy: rich & poor countries

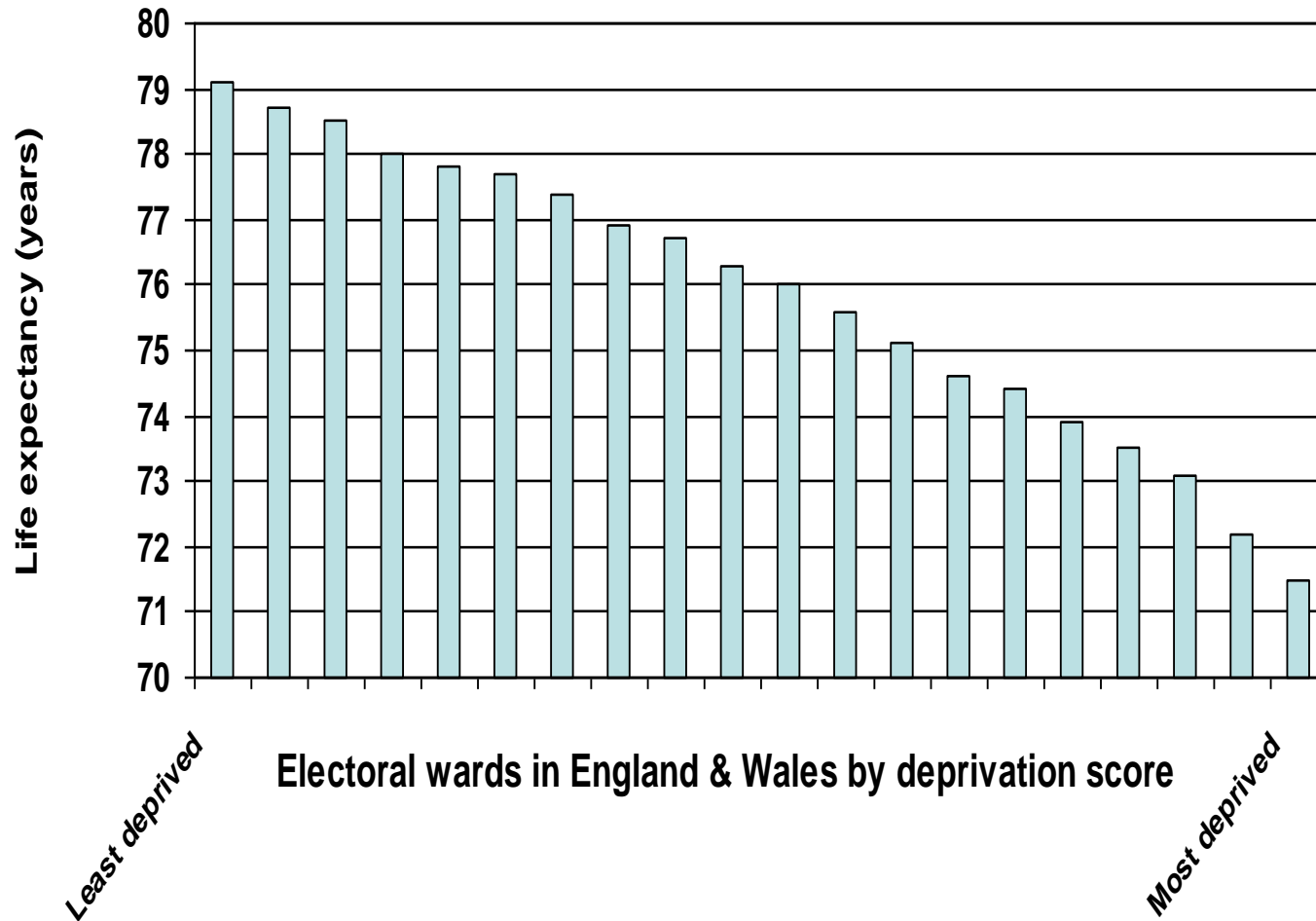


Among the rich countries life expectancy is not related to national differences in average income



Source: Wilkinson & Pickett, *The Spirit Level* (2009)

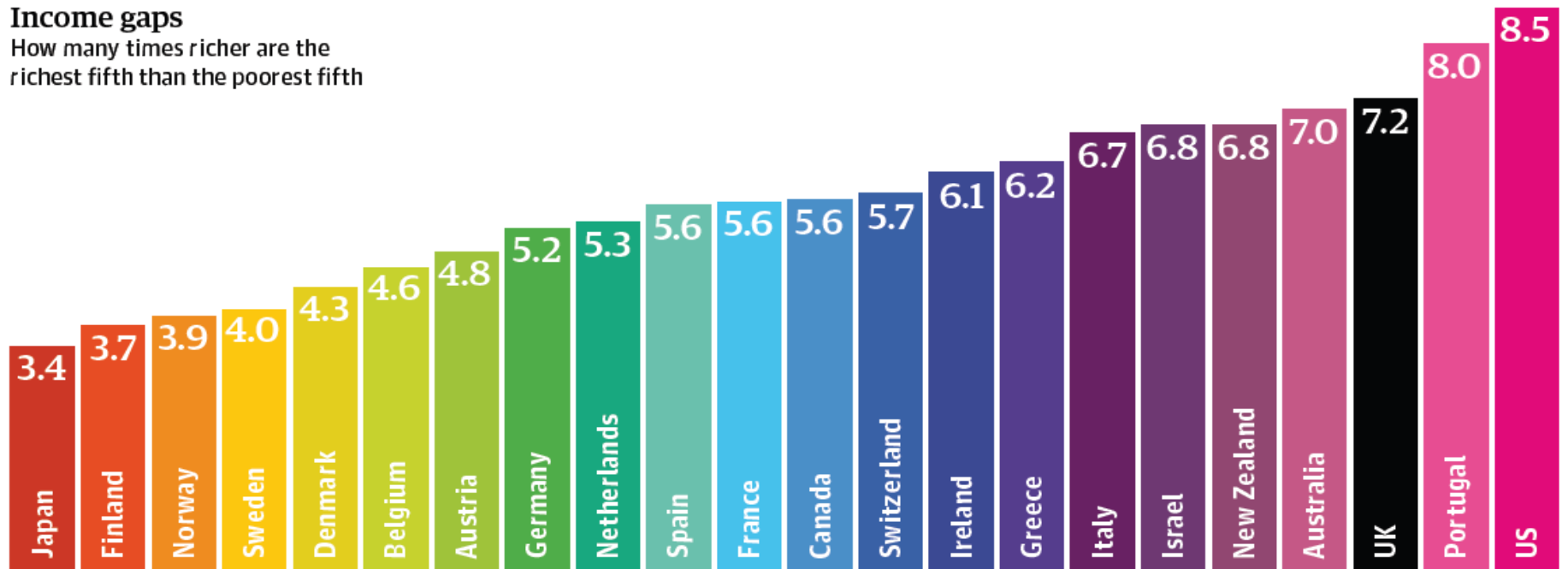
...but life expectancy is related to income *within* rich societies



How much richer are the richest 20% than the poorest 20%?

Income gaps

How many times richer are the richest fifth than the poorest fifth



DECEMBER 9, 1995

\$1.95

TIME

SPIES, SPIES EVERYWHERE
The U.S. Roundup
Accelerates



Children Having Children

Teen Pregnancy In America

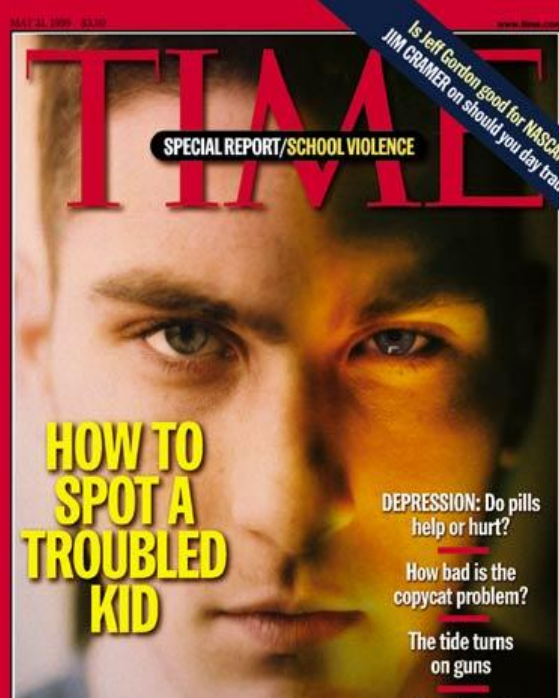


SHATTERED LIVES



Portraits
From
America's
Drug War

by Mikki Norris
Chris Conrad &
Virginia Resner

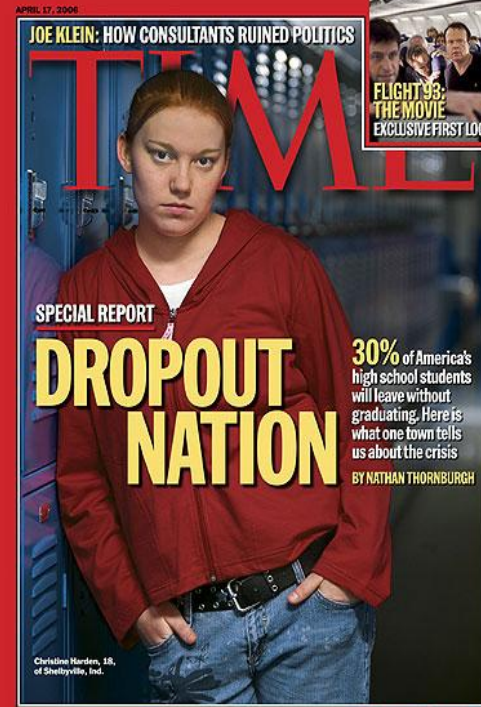


HOW TO SPOT A TROUBLED KID

SPECIAL REPORT/SCHOOL VIOLENCE

- DEPRESSION: Do pills help or hurt?
- How bad is the copycat problem?
- The tide turns on guns

Is Jeff Gordon good for NASCAR?
JIM CRAMER on should you day trade



APRIL 17, 2006

JOE KLEIN: HOW CONSULTANTS RUINED POLITICS

TIME

SPECIAL REPORT

DROPOUT NATION

30% of America's high school students will leave without graduating. Here's what one town tells us about the crisis

BY NATHAN THORNBURGH

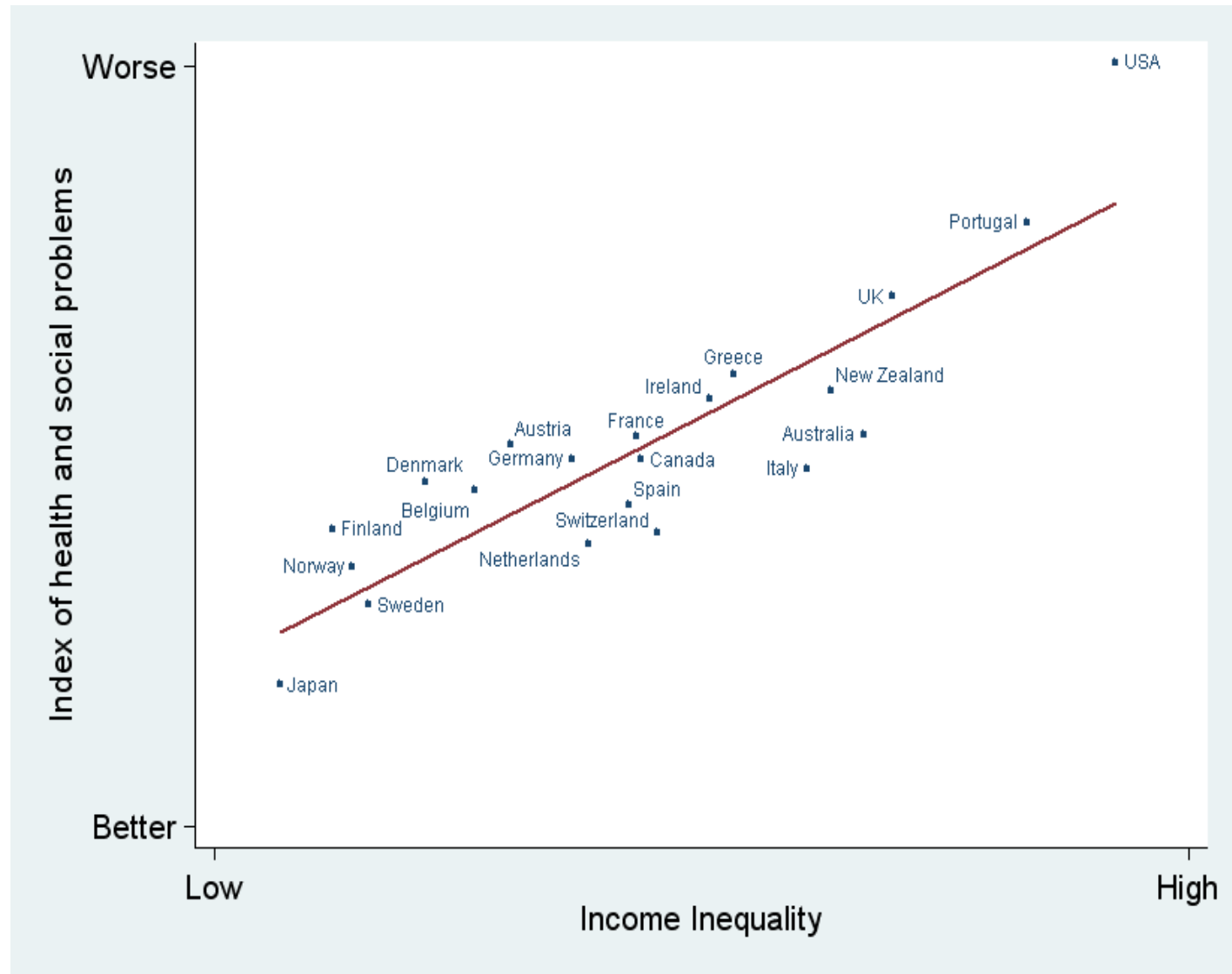
Christine Marden, 18, of Shelbyville, Ind.



Health and Social Problems are Worse in More Unequal Countries

Index of:

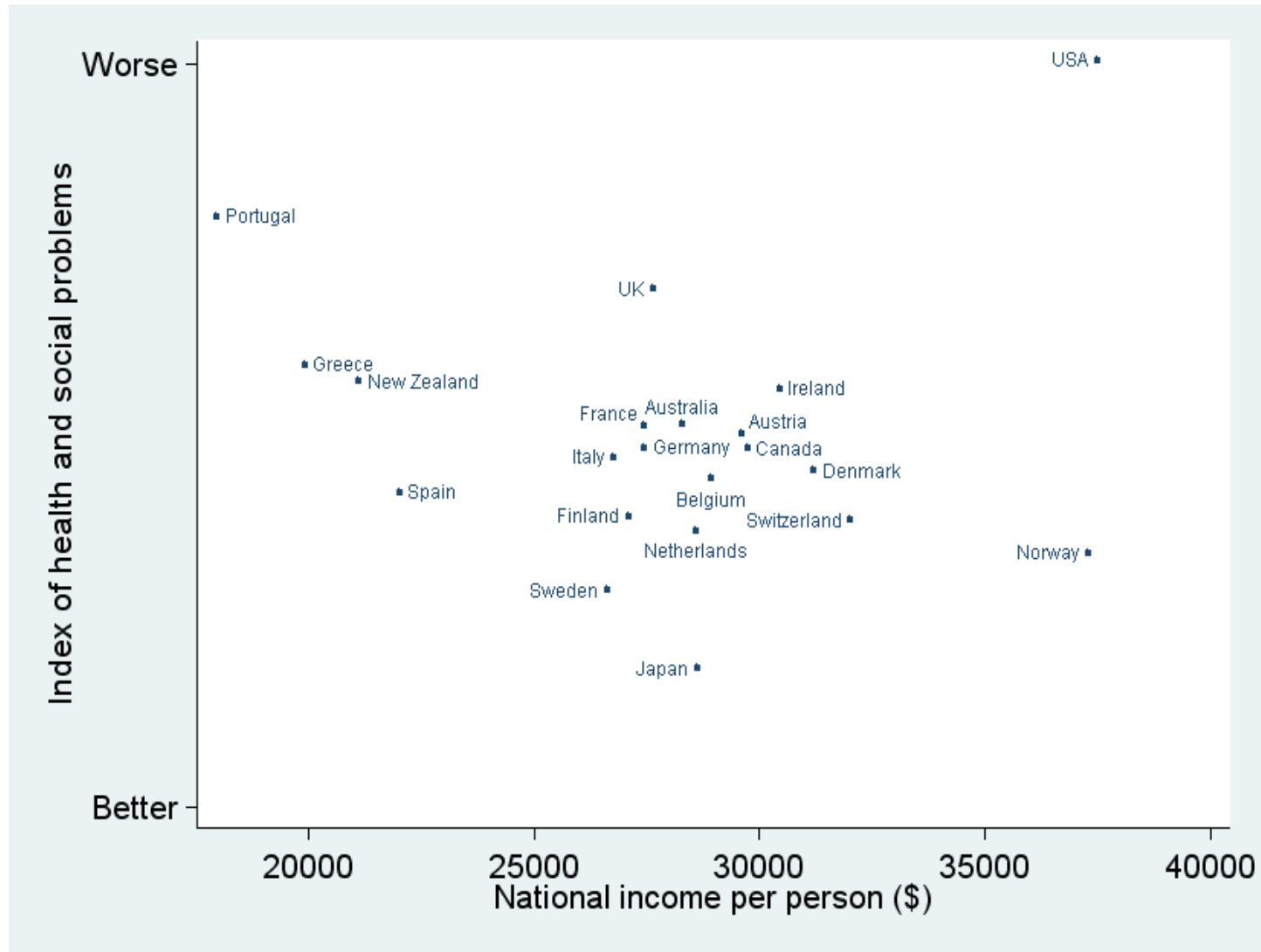
- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility



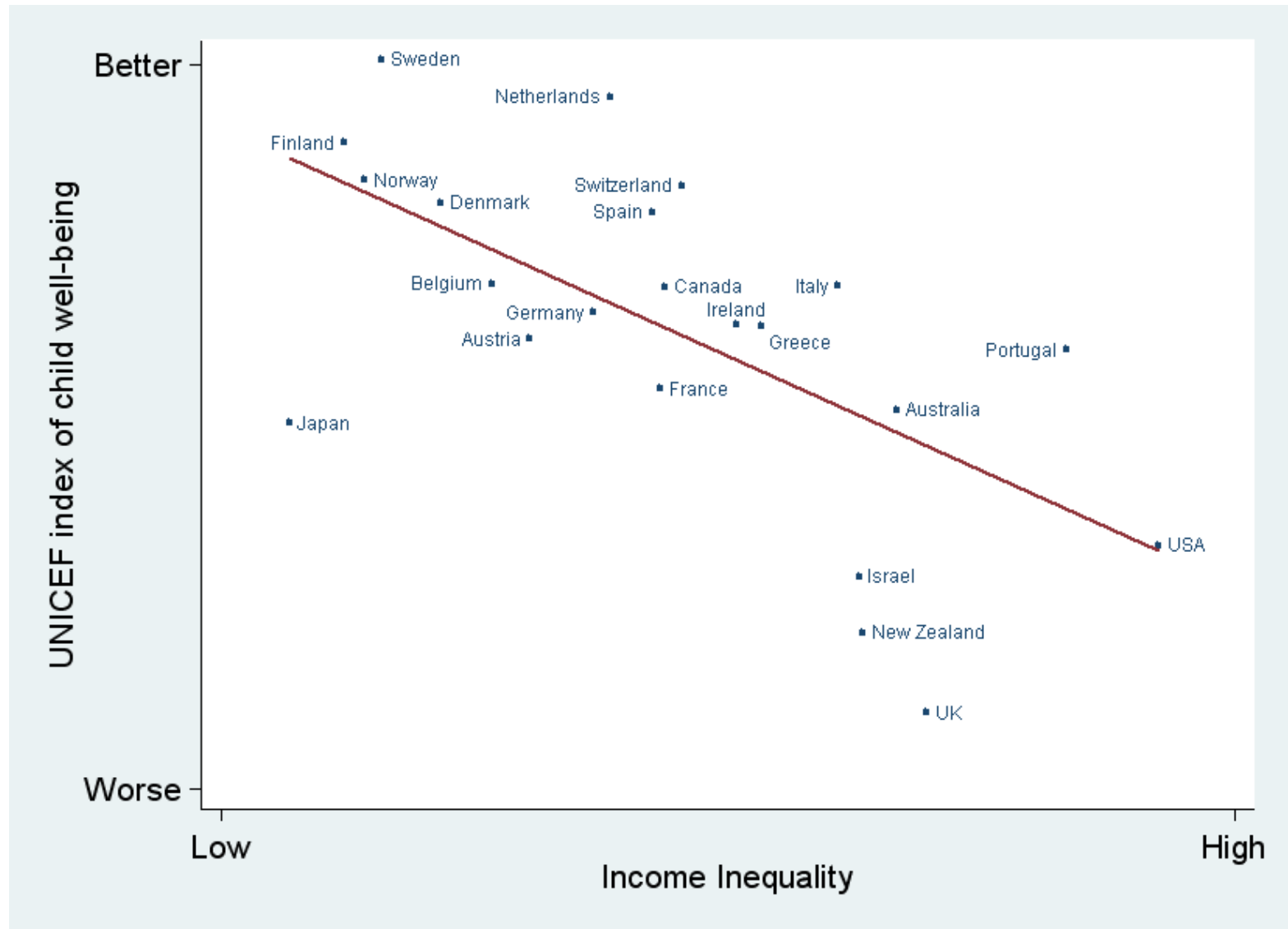
Health and Social Problems are not Related to Average Income in Rich Countries

Index of:

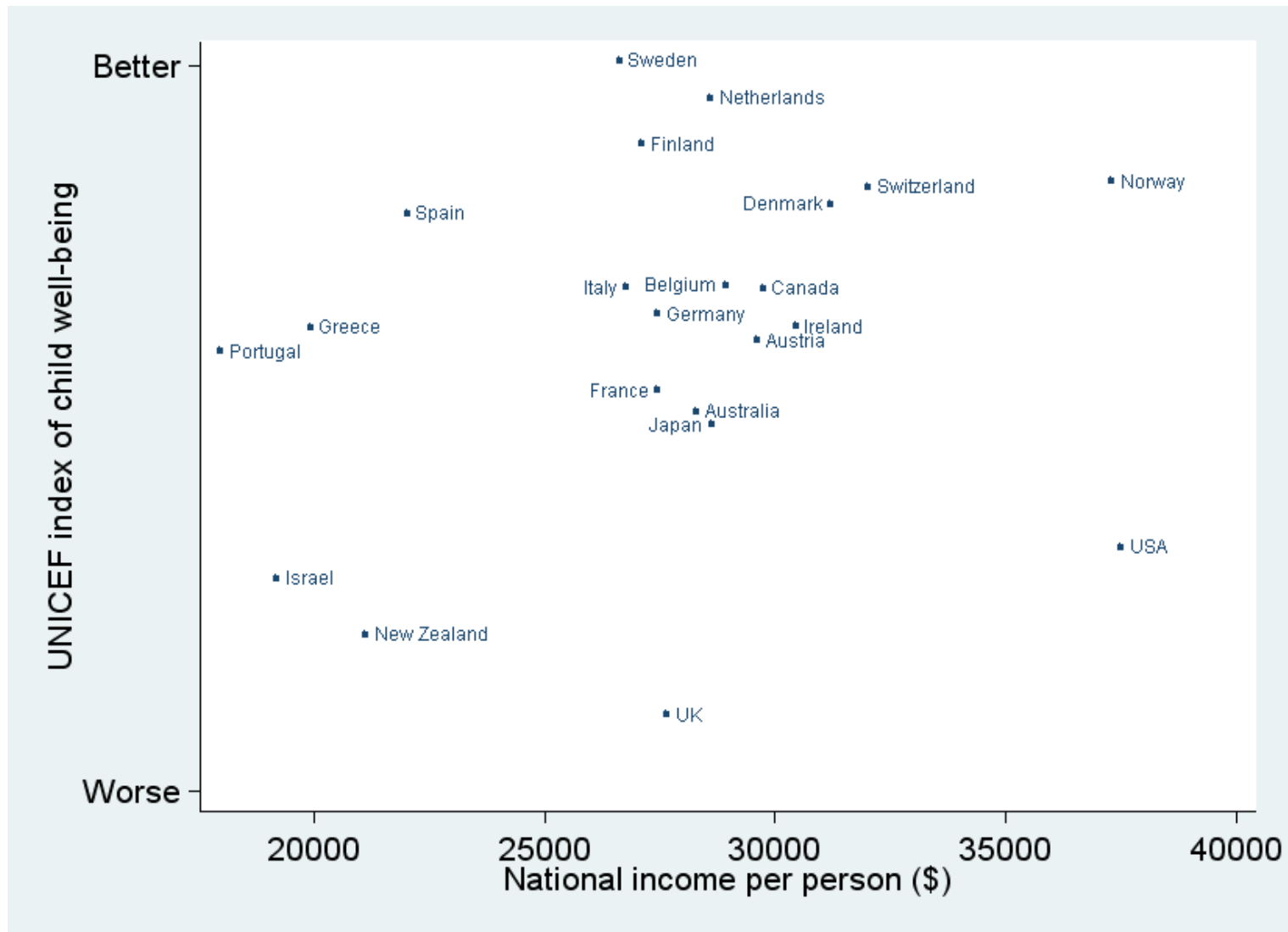
- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility



Child Well-being is Better in More Equal Rich Countries



Child-Wellbeing is Unrelated to Average Incomes in Rich Countries

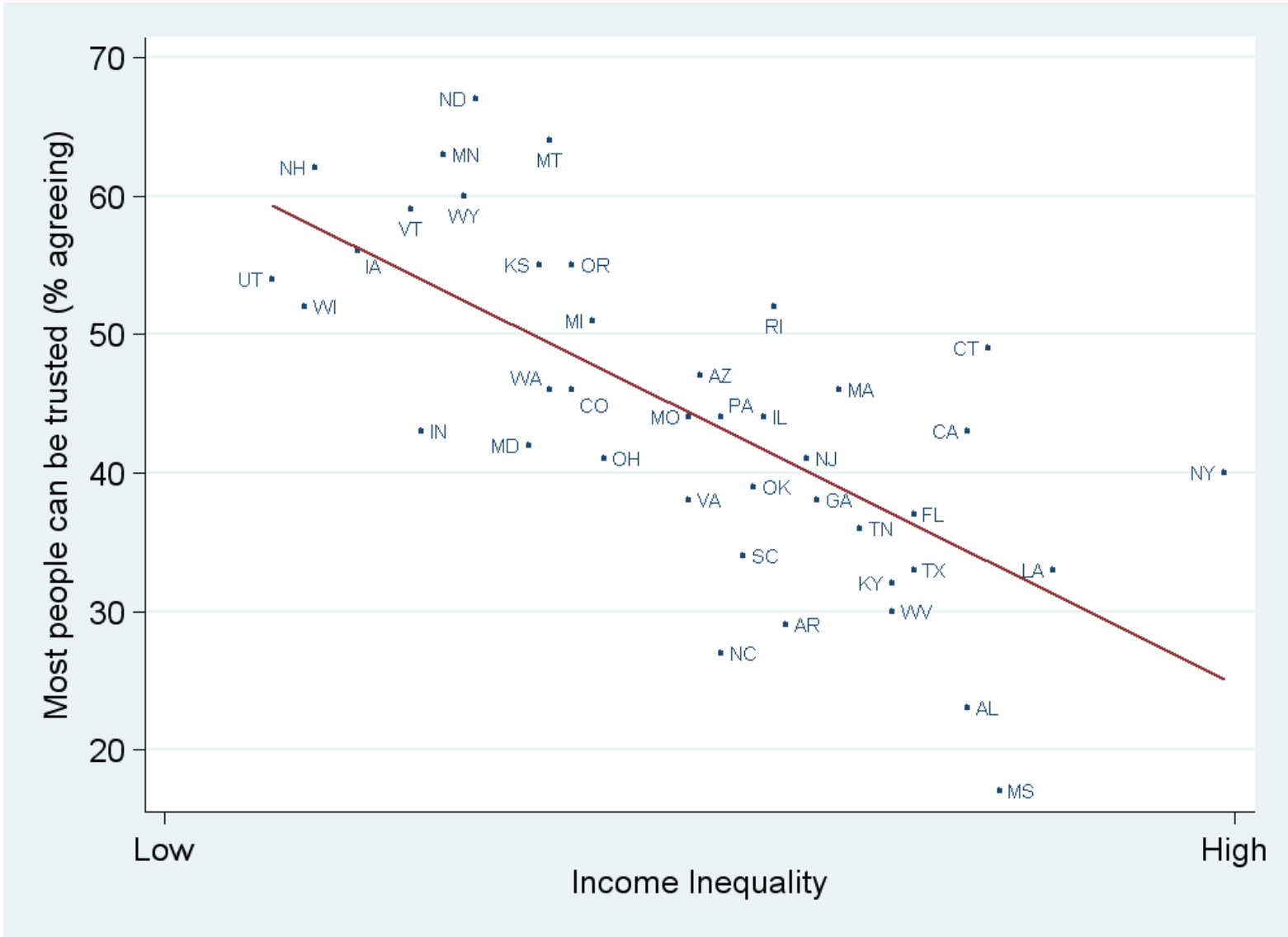


Levels of Trust are Higher in More Equal Rich Countries



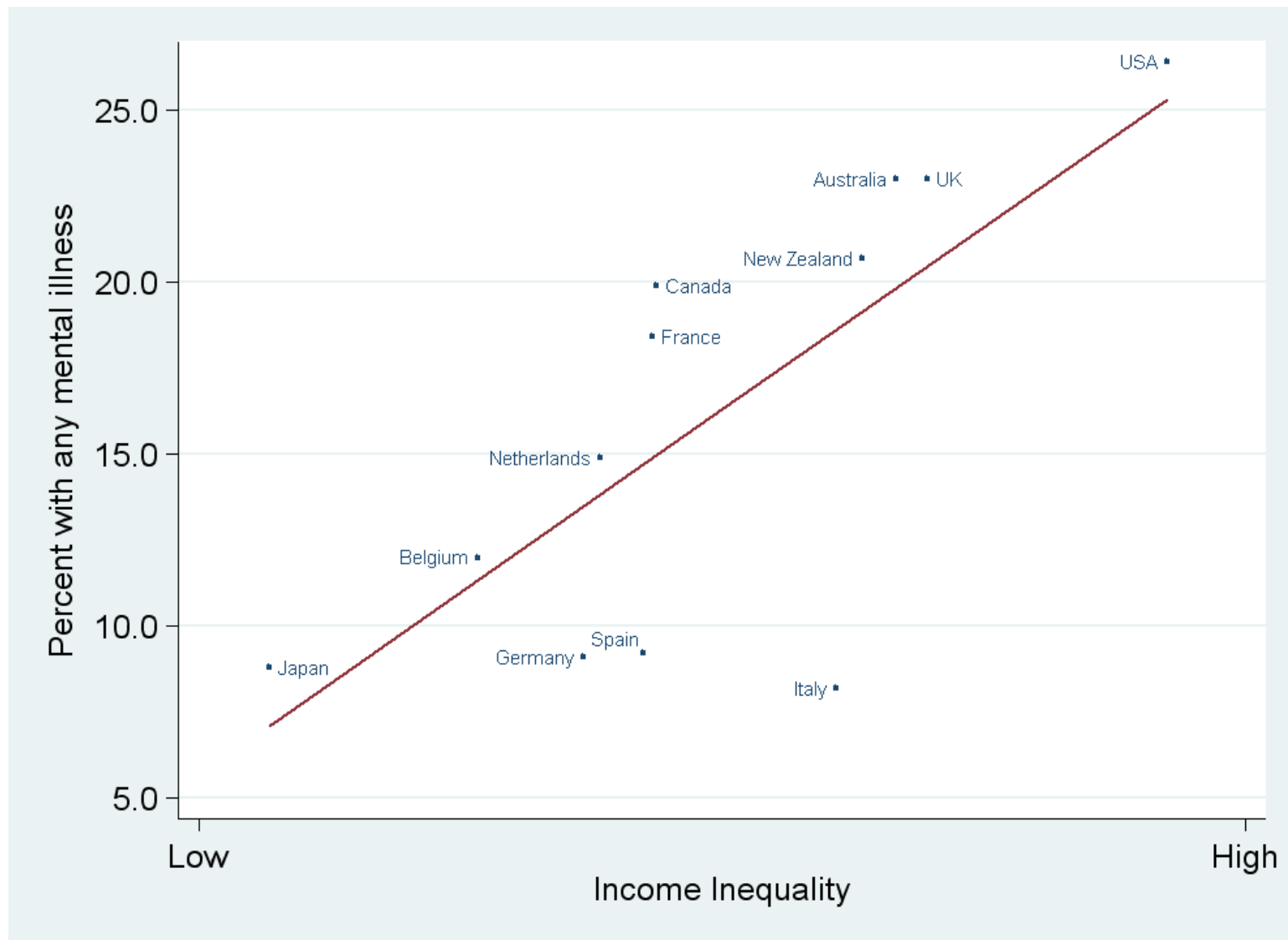
Source: Wilkinson & Pickett, *The Spirit Level* (2009)

Levels of Trust are Higher in More Equal US States



Source: Wilkinson & Pickett, *The Spirit Level* (2009)

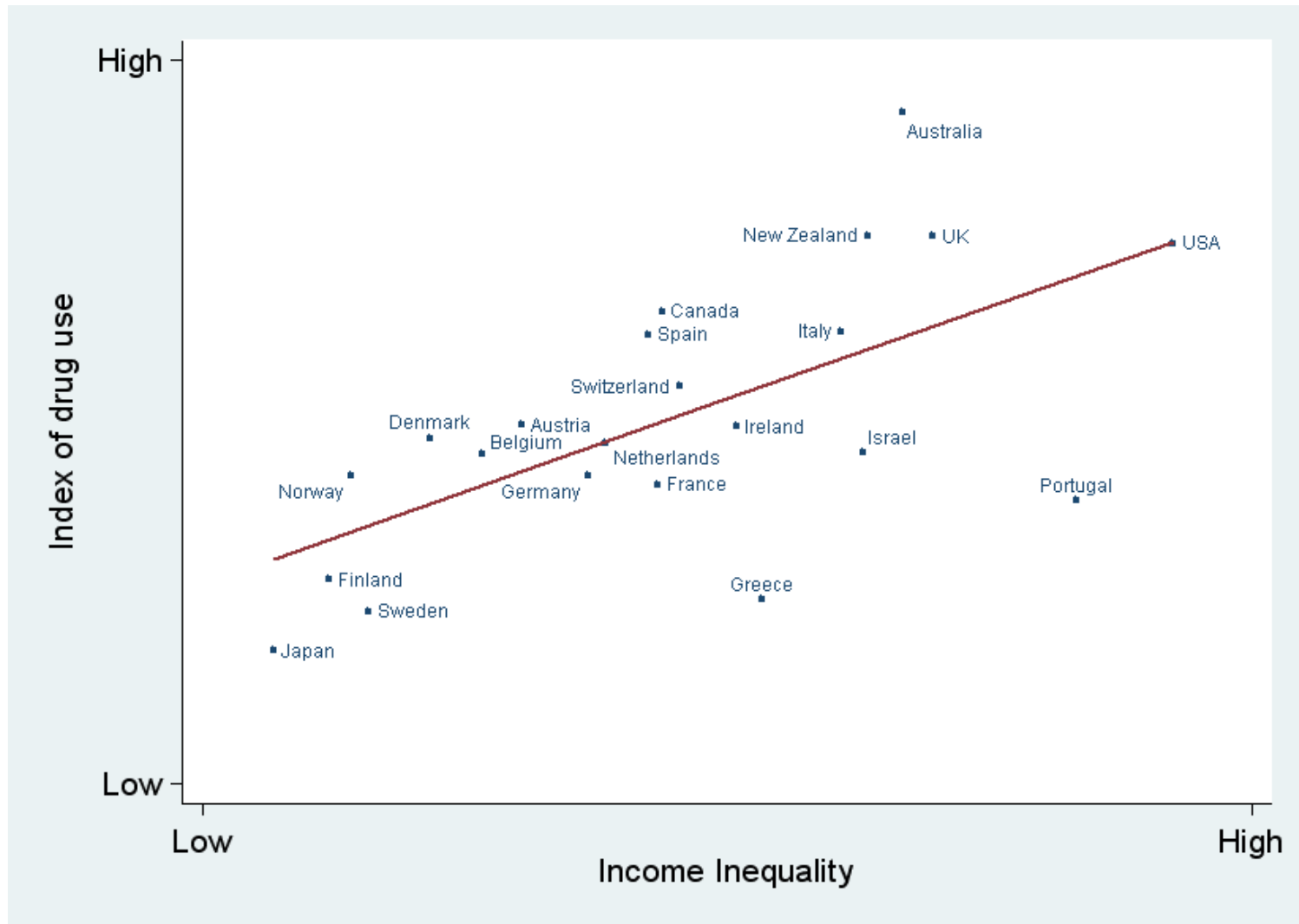
The Prevalence of Mental Illness is Higher in More Unequal Rich Countries



Infant Mortality Rates are Higher in More Unequal Countries



Drug Use is More Common in More Unequal Countries

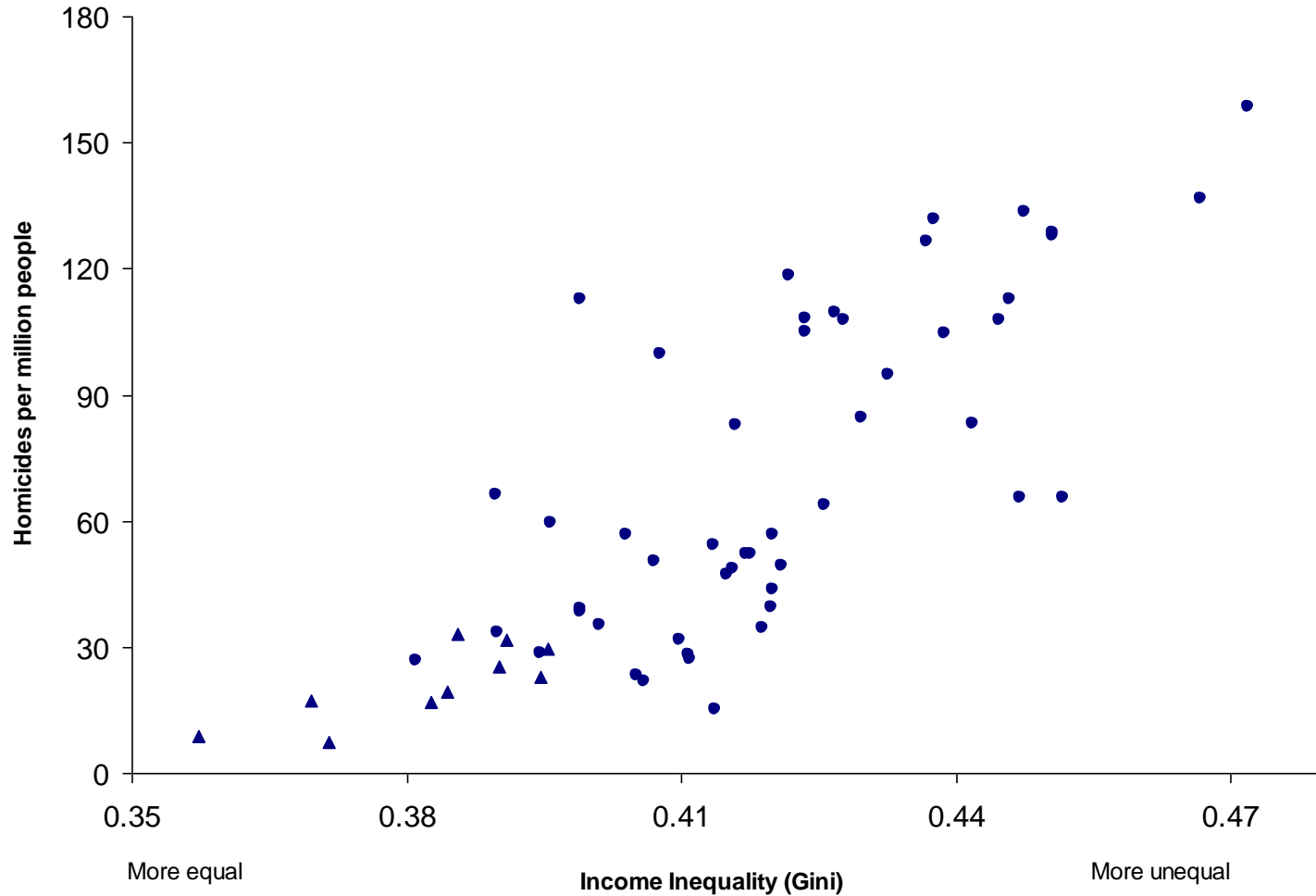


Index of use of: opiates, cocaine, cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines

Teenage Birth Rates are Higher in More Unequal Rich Countries



Homicide and income inequality: US States and Canadian Provinces

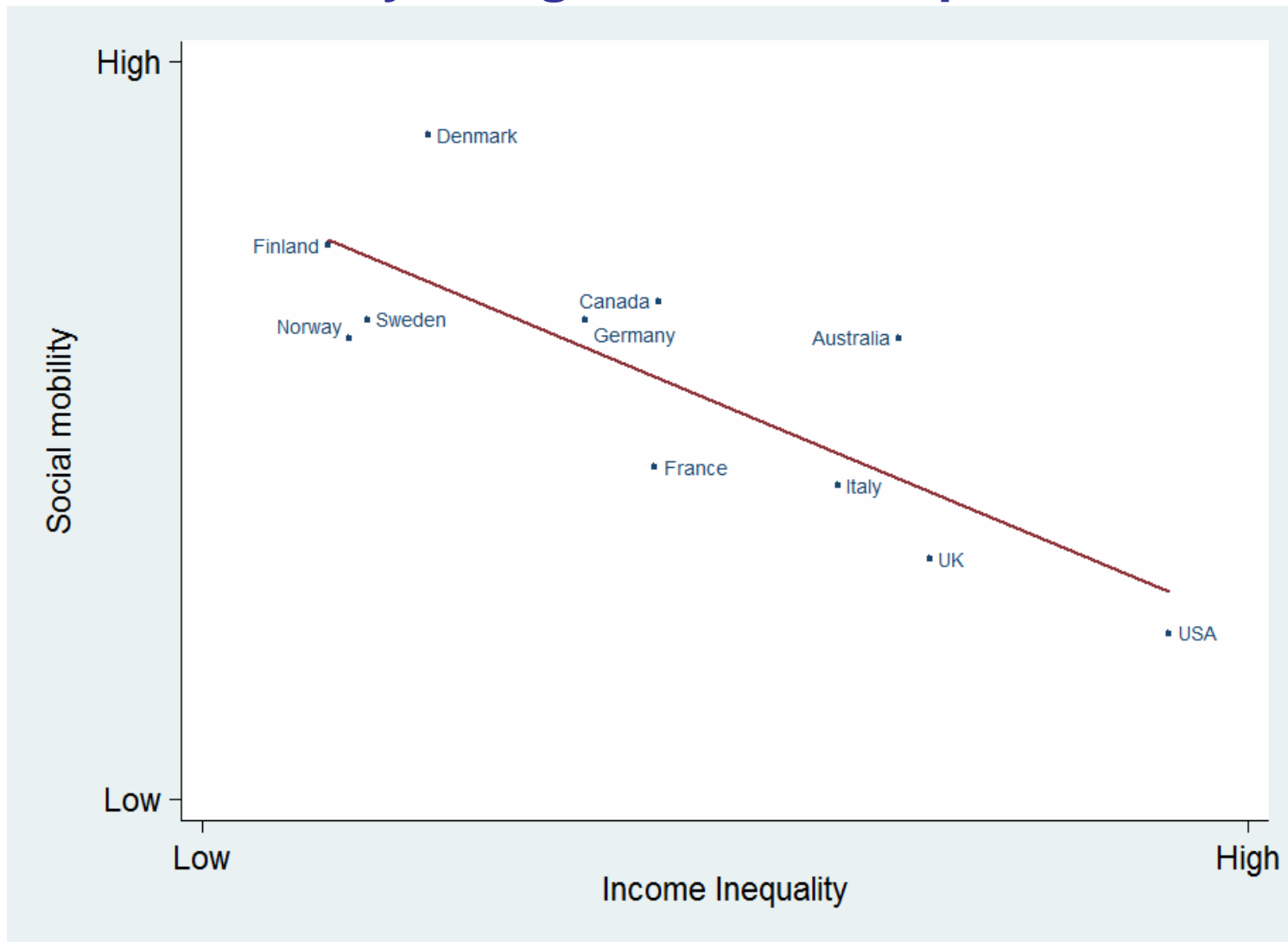


Source: Daly M, Wilson M, Vasdev S. Income inequality and homicide rates in Canada and the United States. *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 2001; 43: 219-36.

Rates of Imprisonment are Higher in More Unequal Countries



Social mobility is higher in more equal countries



Intergenerational income mobility data from: Blanden J. (2009) Centre for Economic Performance, LSE. Paper No' CEEDP0111.

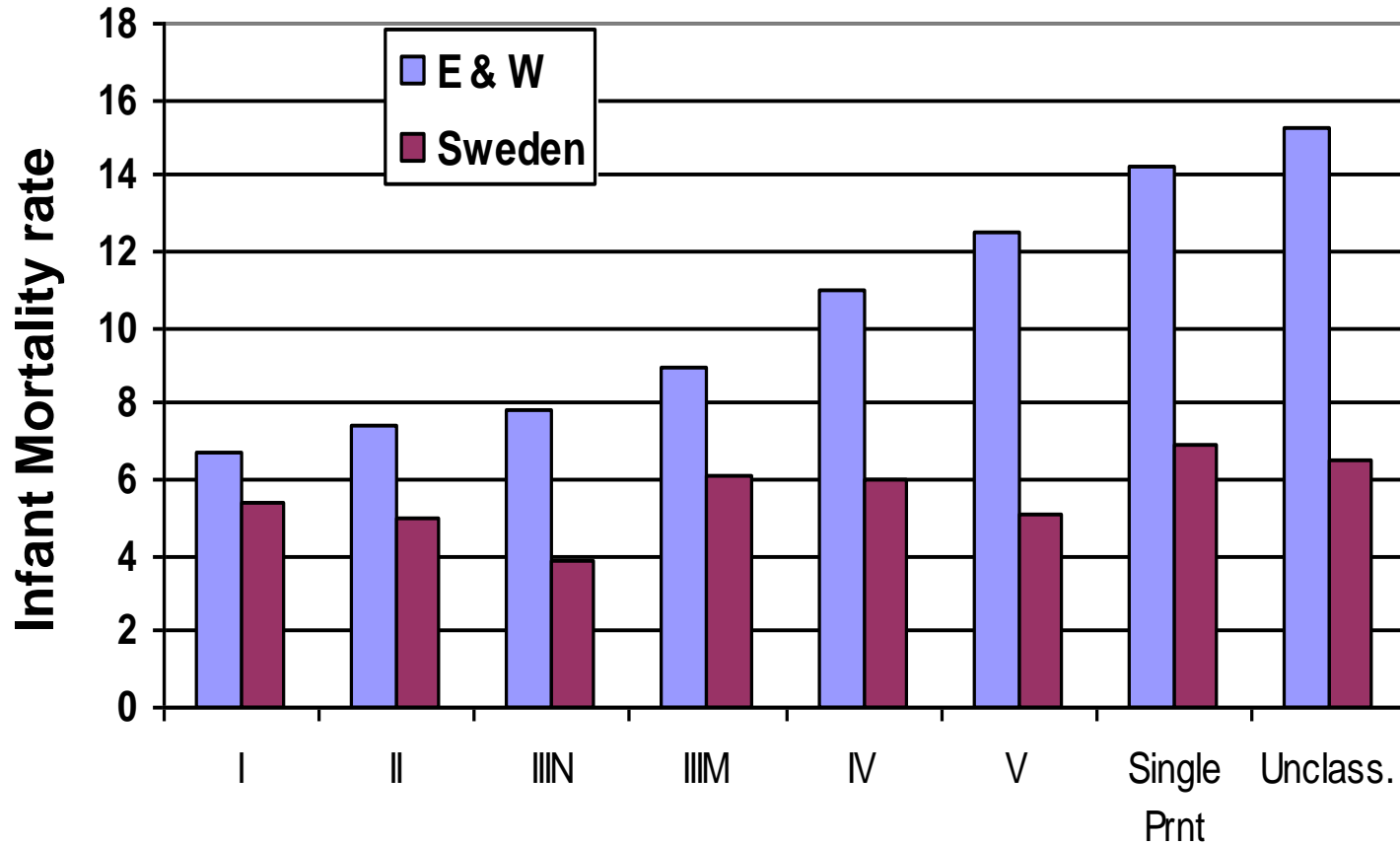
Correlations & p-values: Index of Health & Social Problems

Indicator	International data		US data	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Trust	-0.66	<0.01	-0.70	<0.01
Life expectancy	-0.44	0.04	-0.45	<0.01
Infant mortality	0.42	0.04	0.43	<0.01
Obesity	0.57	<0.01	0.47	<0.01
Mental illness	0.73	<0.01	0.18	0.12
Education score	-0.45	0.04	-0.47	.01
Teen birth rate	0.73	<0.01	0.46	<0.01
Homicides	0.47	0.02	0.42	<0.01
Imprisonment	0.75	<0.01	0.48	<0.01
Social mobility	0.93	<0.01	-	-
Index	0.87	<0.01	0.59	<0.01

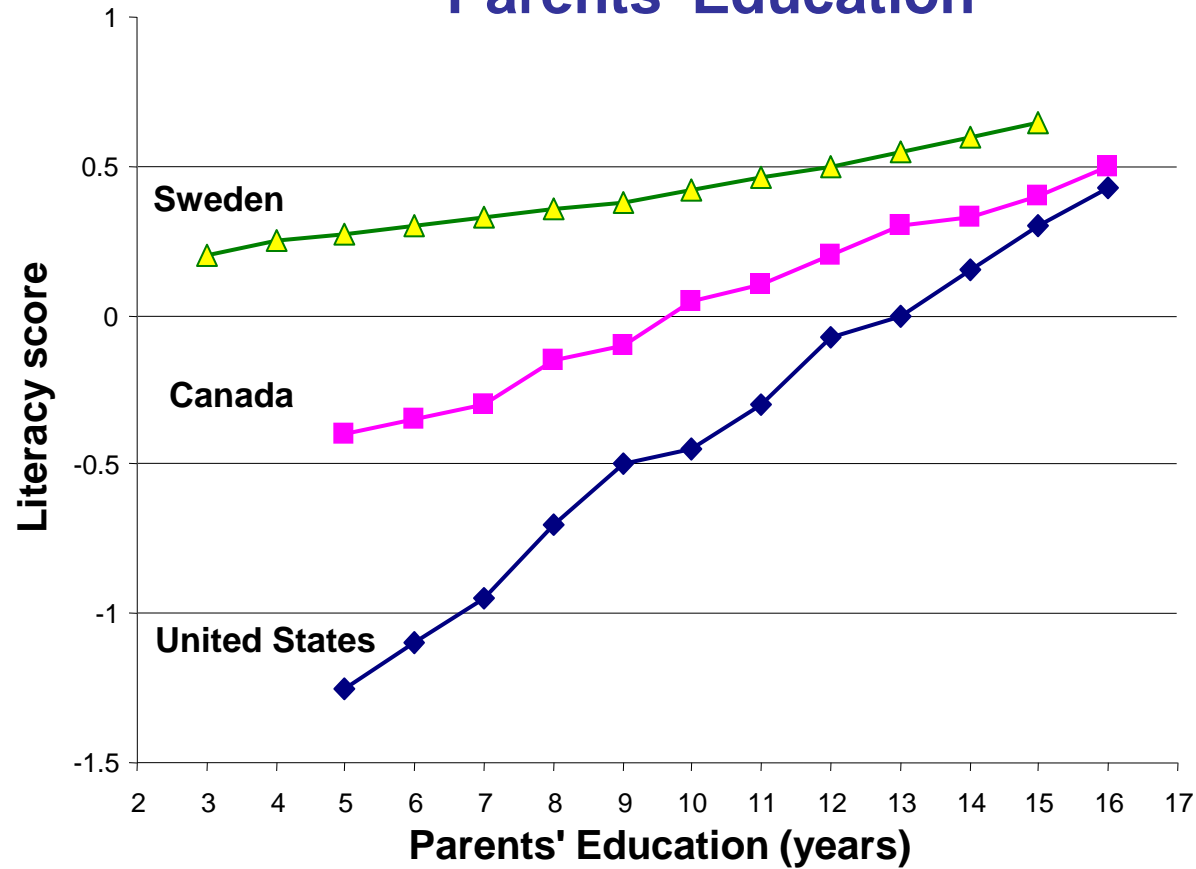
Almost everyone benefits from greater equality.

Usually the benefits are greatest among the poor but extend to the majority of the population

Infant Mortality by Social Class: Sweden and England & Wales



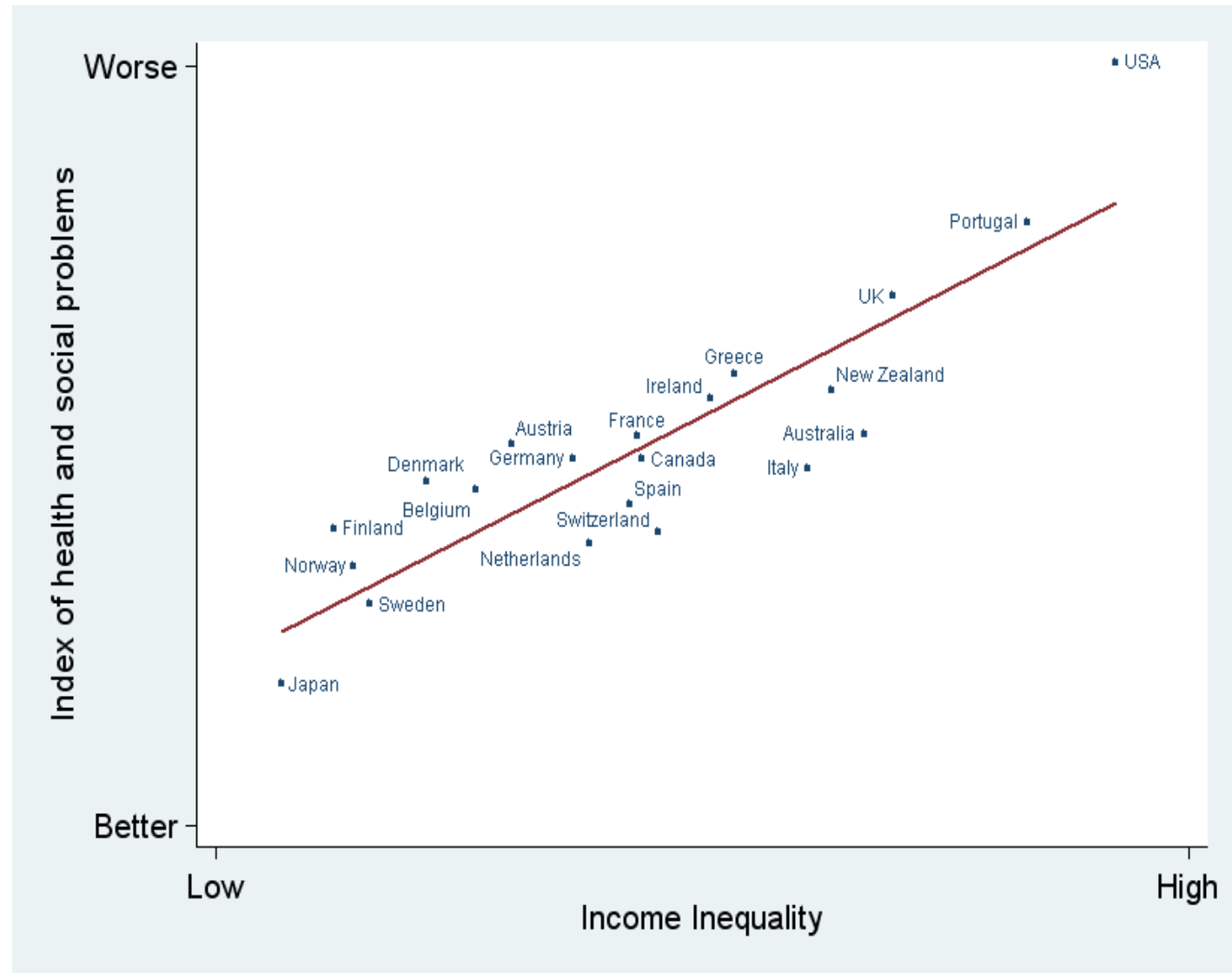
Literacy Scores of 16-25 year olds by Parents' Education



Health and Social Problems are Worse in More Unequal Countries

Index of:

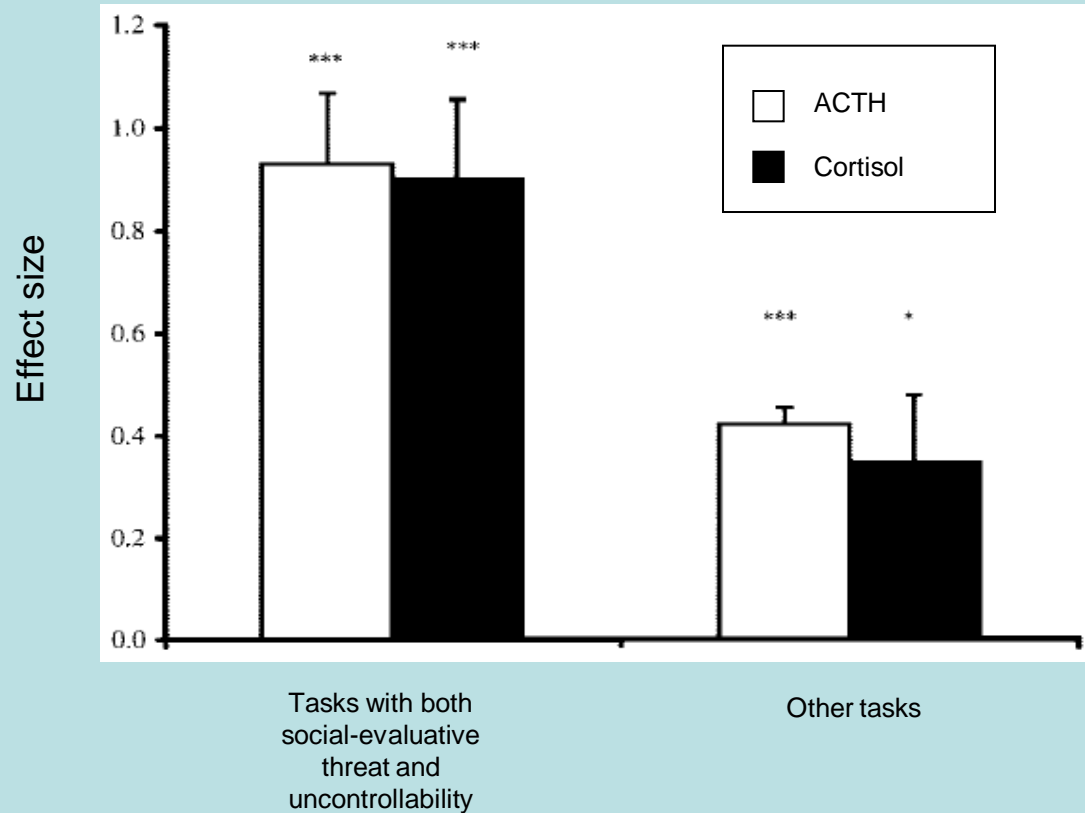
- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility



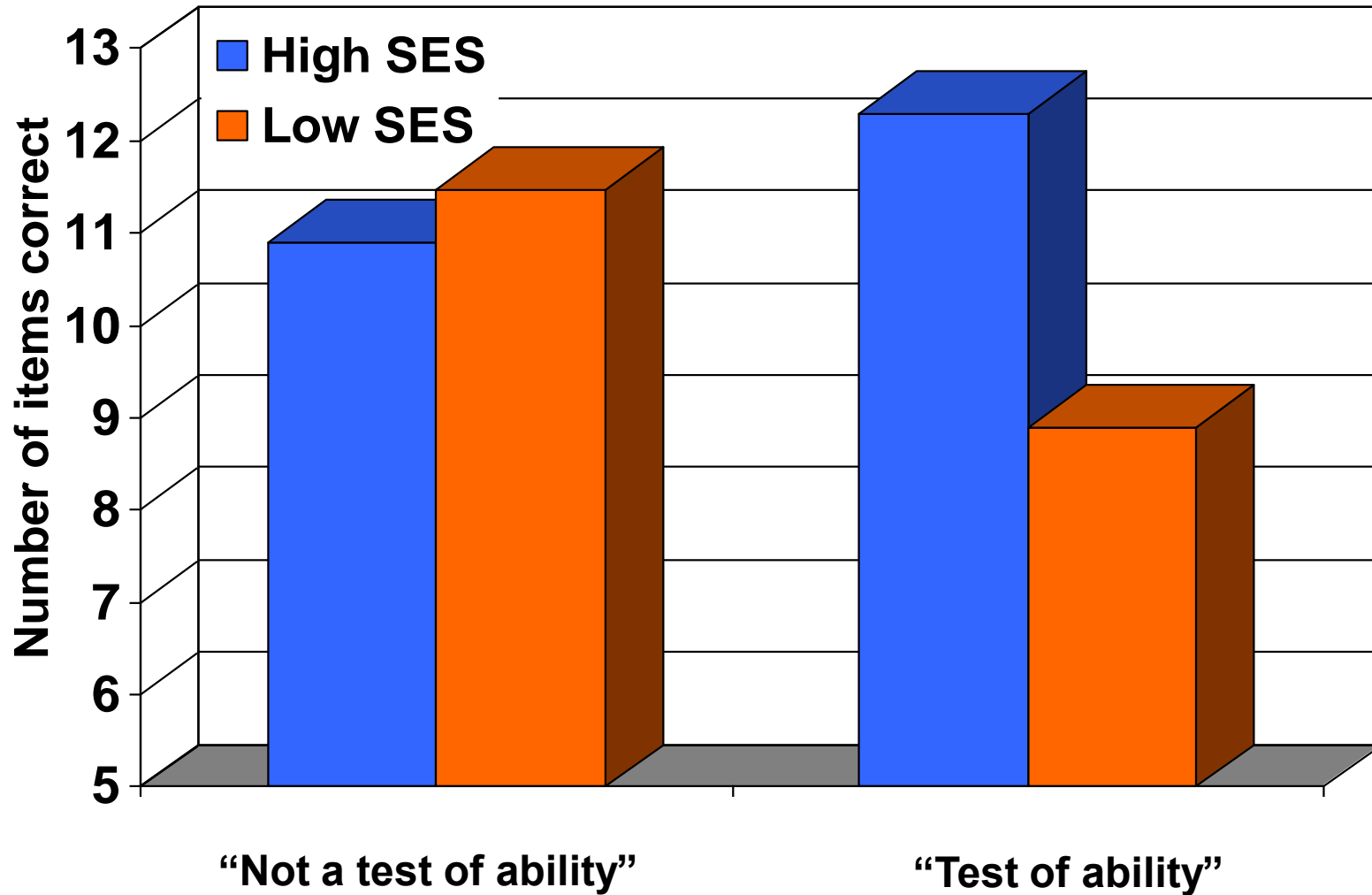
Psychosocial risk factors for ill health

- **Low social status**
- **Weak social affiliations**
- **Stress in early life (pre- and postnatally)**

What kind of stress most reliably raises cortisol levels?

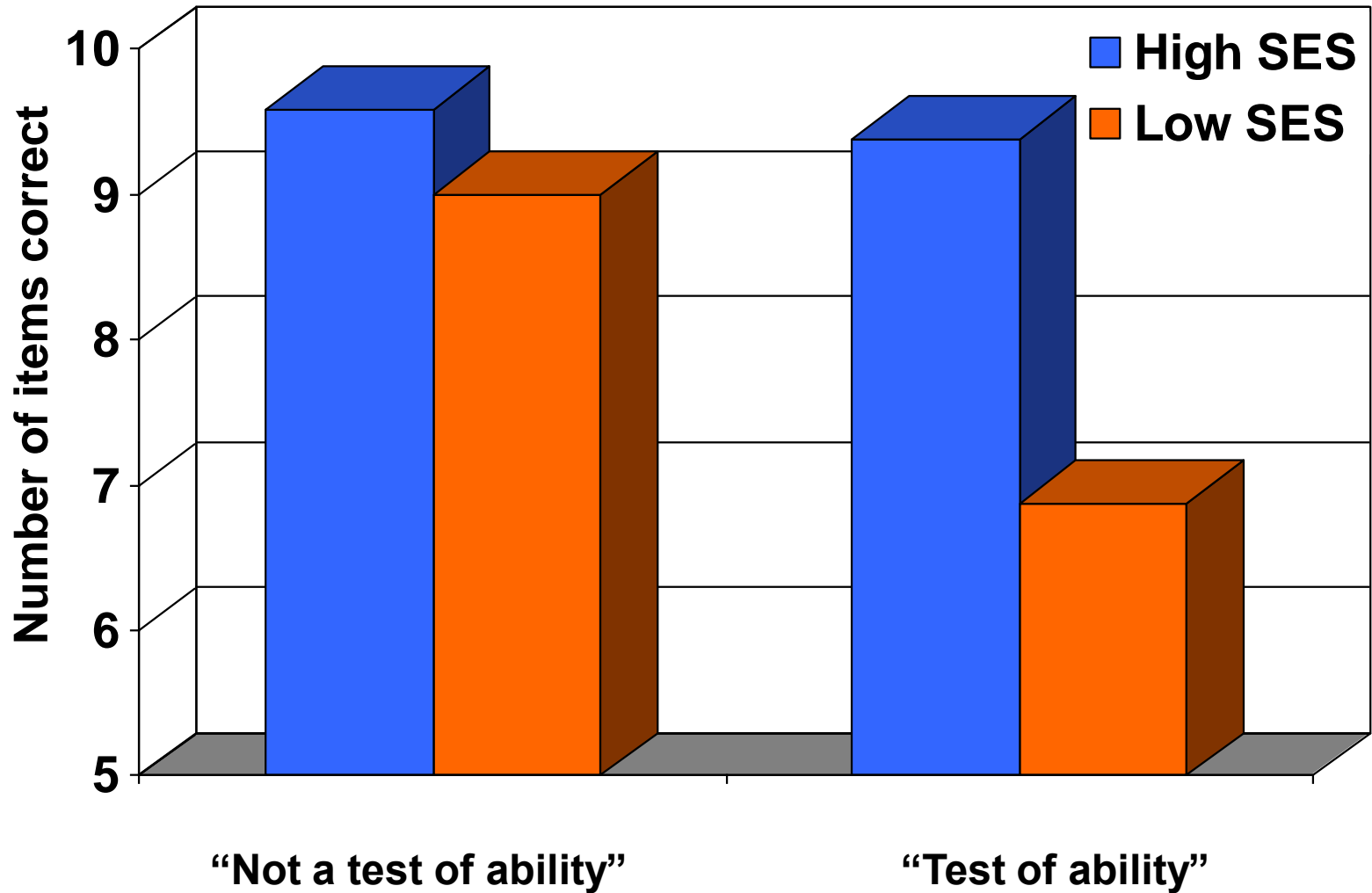


Effect of stereotype threat: Verbal GRE: high & low SES



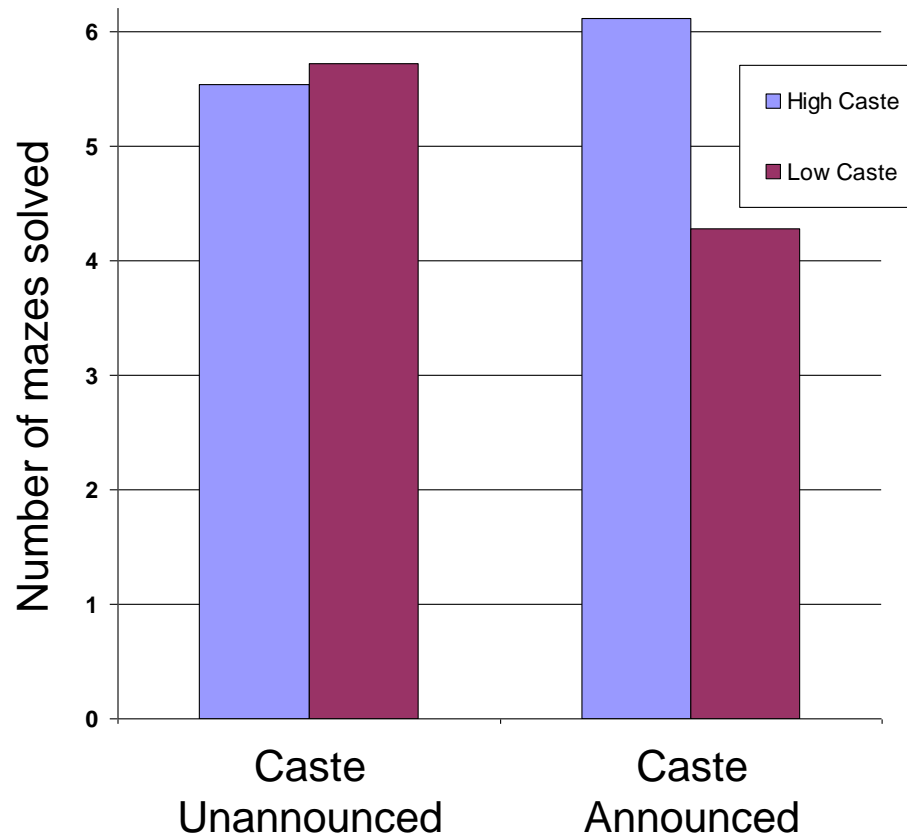
Effect of stereotype threat

Advanced Progressive Matrices Test: high & low SES



Stereotype Threat

The effect of caste identity on children's performance



Gilligan J. *Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes.*

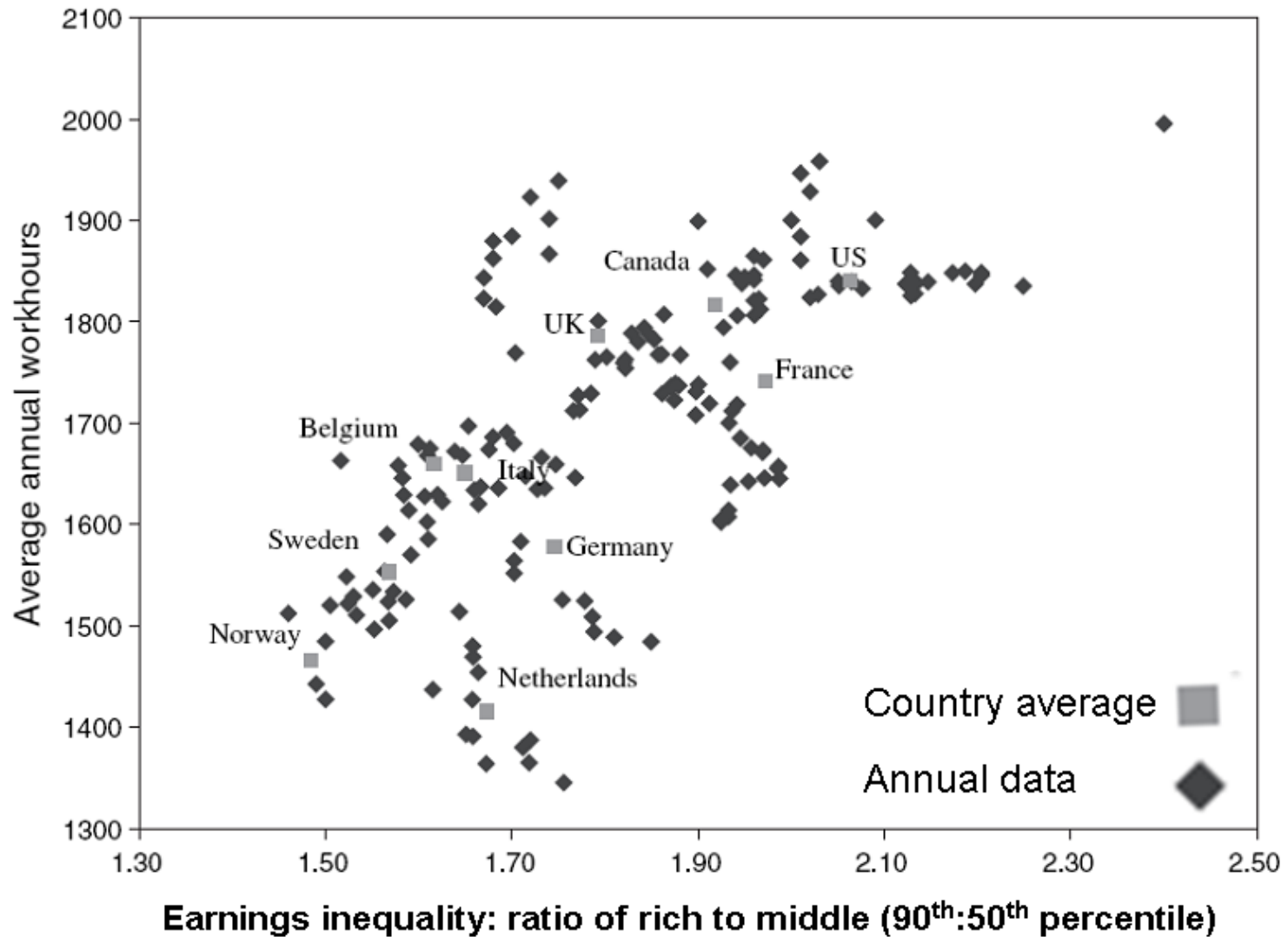
(G .P. Putnam 1996)

" ...the prison inmates I work with have told me repeatedly, when I asked them why they had assaulted someone, that it was because 'he disrespected me', or 'he disrespected my visit' (meaning 'visitor'). The word 'disrespect' is central in the vocabulary, moral value system, and psychodynamics of these chronically violent men that they have abbreviated it into the slang term, 'he dis'ed me.'" p.106

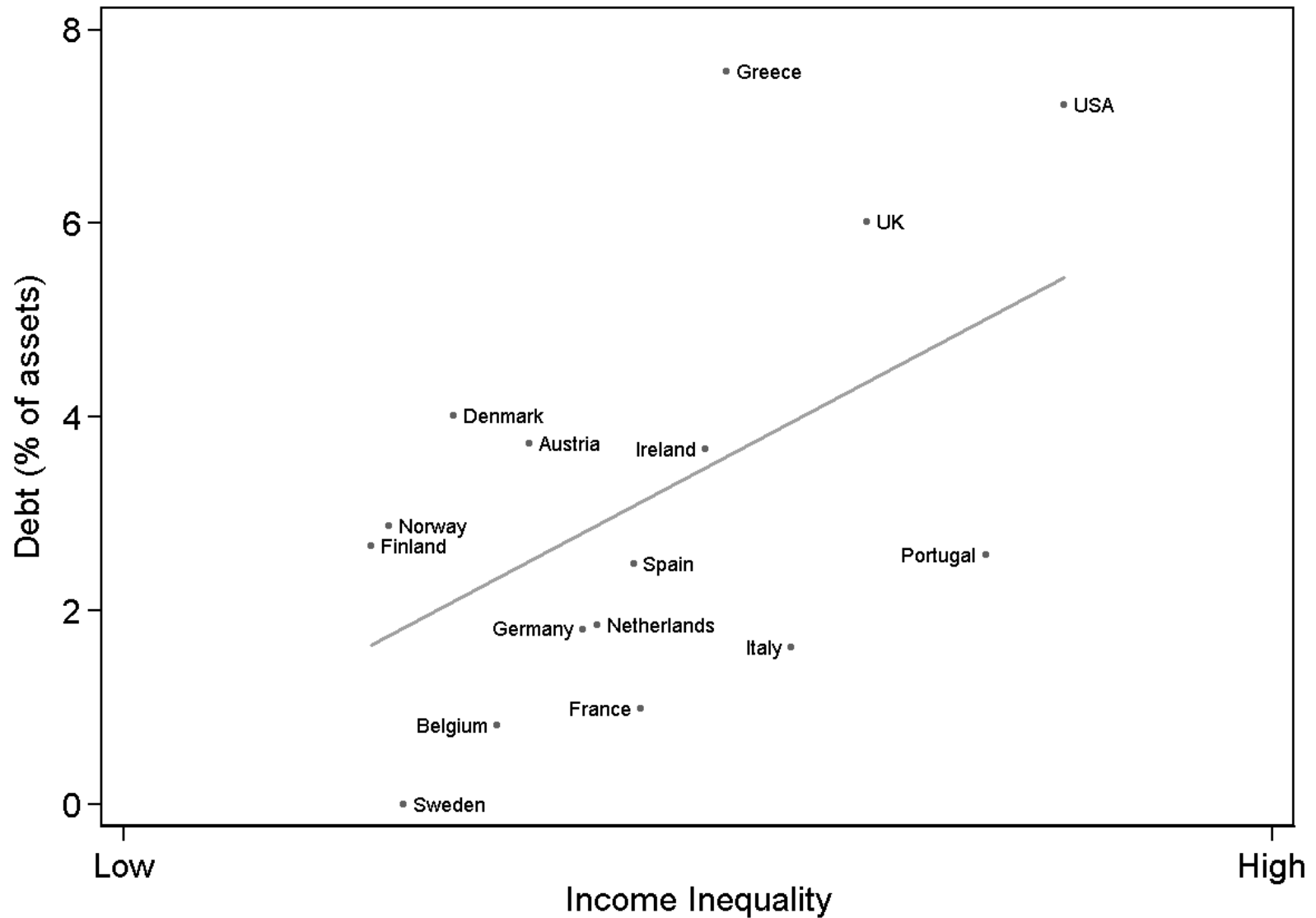
A few pages further on Gilligan continues:-

"I have yet to see a serious act of violence that was not provoked by the experience of feeling shamed and humiliated, disrespected and ridiculed, and that did not represent the attempt to prevent or undo this "loss of face " - no matter how severe the punishment, even if it includes death." p.110

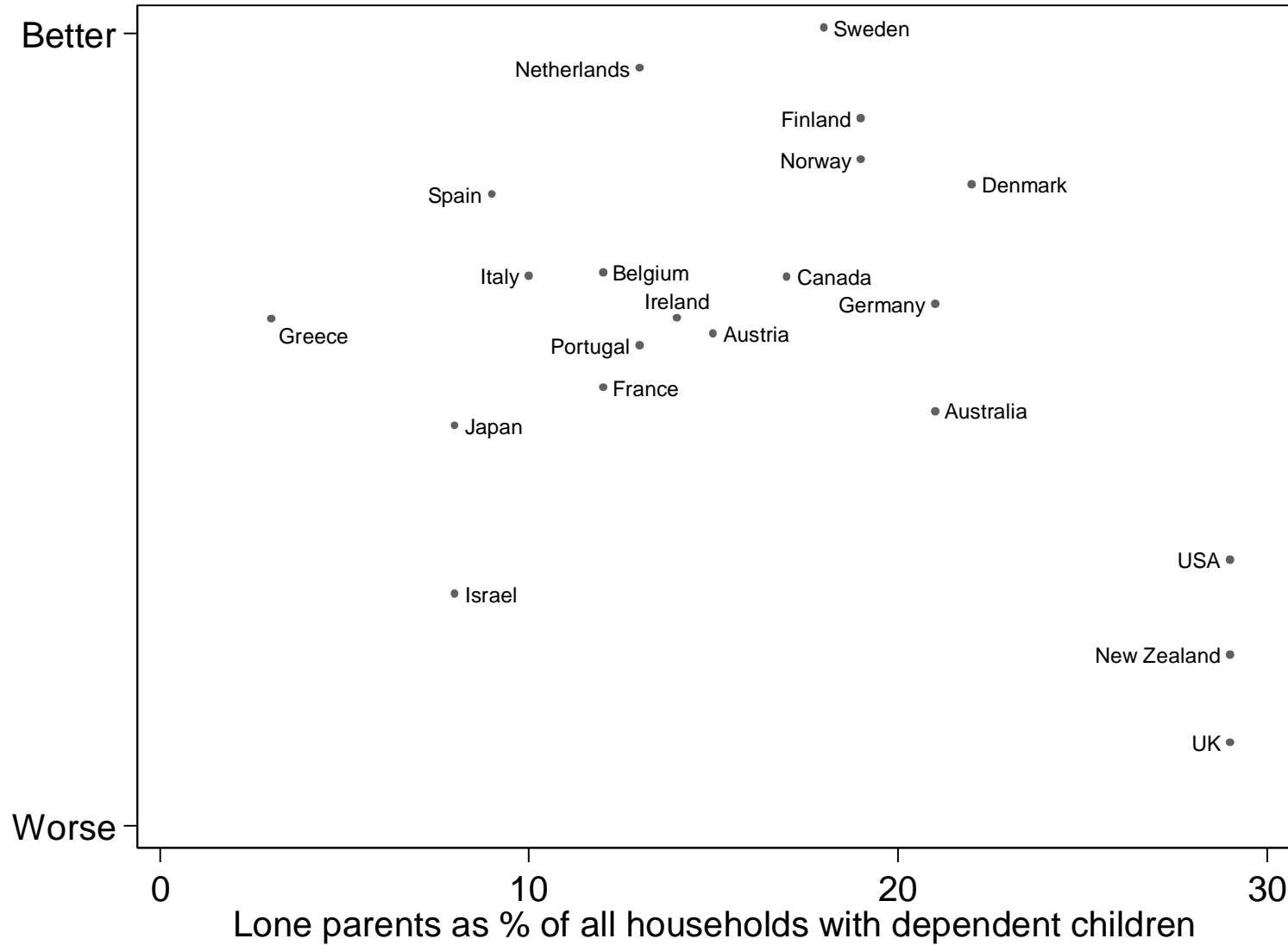
Working hours are longer in more unequal countries



Inequality and household debt (as % of financial assets)



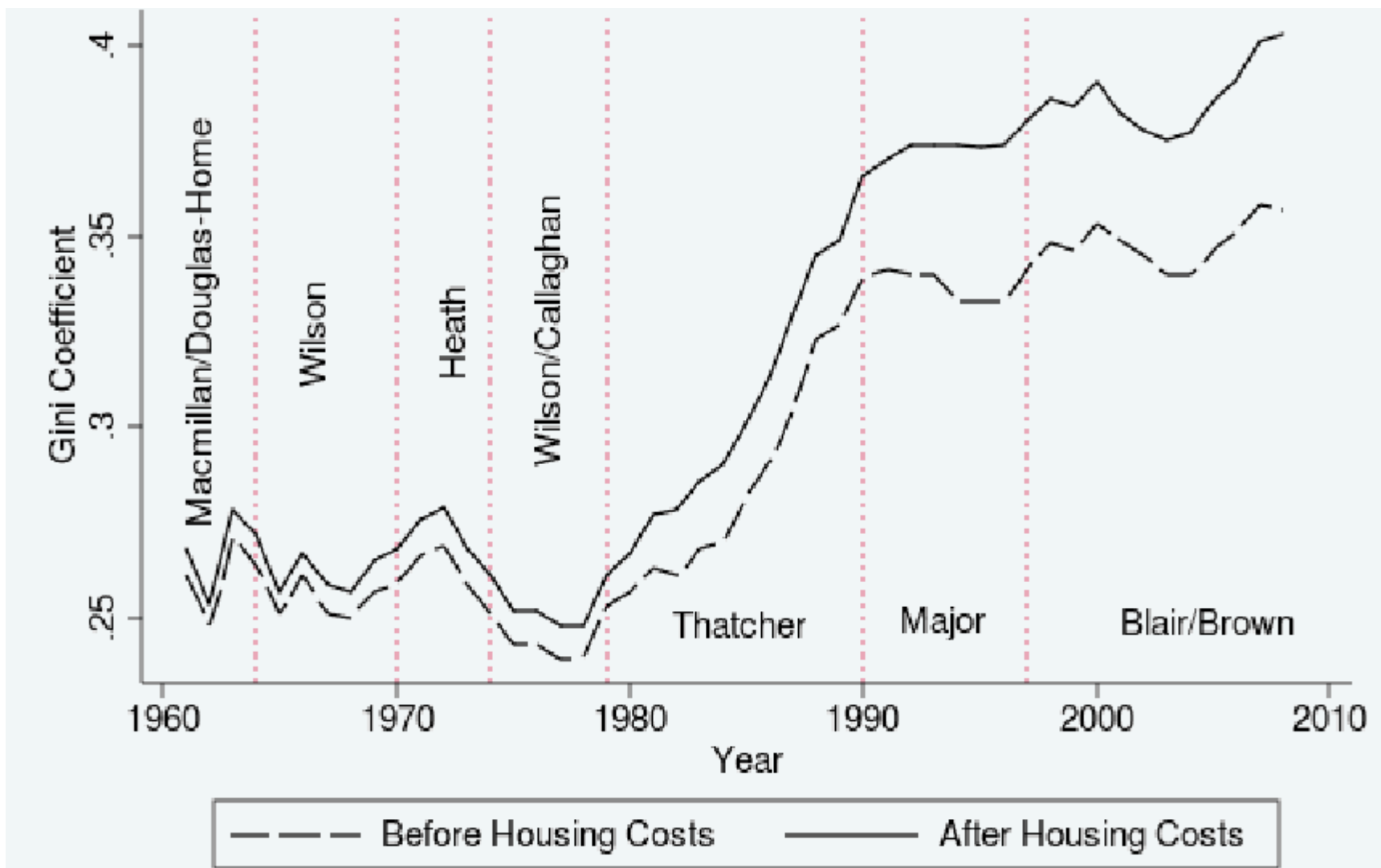
Single parents and child wellbeing



The effects of inequality - a two stage process

- 1. adult experience of inequality**
- 2. passed on to children – epigenetics?**

Inequality (Gini) Great Britain 1961 - 2008



Source: Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) Commentary C116 Data Appendix.

The public and policy response?

more:-

Police

Doctors

Social Workers

Drug rehabilitation units

Educational Psychologists

But...services are expensive and only partially effective.



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

'A sweeping theory of everything' *Guardian*



For more information:

... a book

and a website...

The **Equality Trust**

<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk>

Table 2 | Correlations of measures of child wellbeing with income inequality, and average income across the 50 US states (including District of Columbia)

Measure of child wellbeing	Income inequality		Average income	
	<i>r</i>	P value	<i>r</i>	P value
Teenage births ¹²	0.72	<0.001	-0.55	<0.001
Juvenile homicides ¹²	0.31	0.03	0.00	0.99
Infant mortality*	0.55	<0.001	-0.20	0.15
Low birth weight*	0.65	<0.001	-0.01	0.99
Educational performance (combined maths and reading scores for 15 year olds)† ⁴	-0.69	<0.001	0.08	0.58
Dropping out of high school† ⁴	0.66	<0.001	-0.28	0.04
Overweight	0.64	<0.001	-0.07	0.63
Mental health problems	0.37	0.01	-0.14	0.33

*Similar findings have been reported elsewhere.^{11 40}

†Similar findings have been reported elsewhere.¹¹

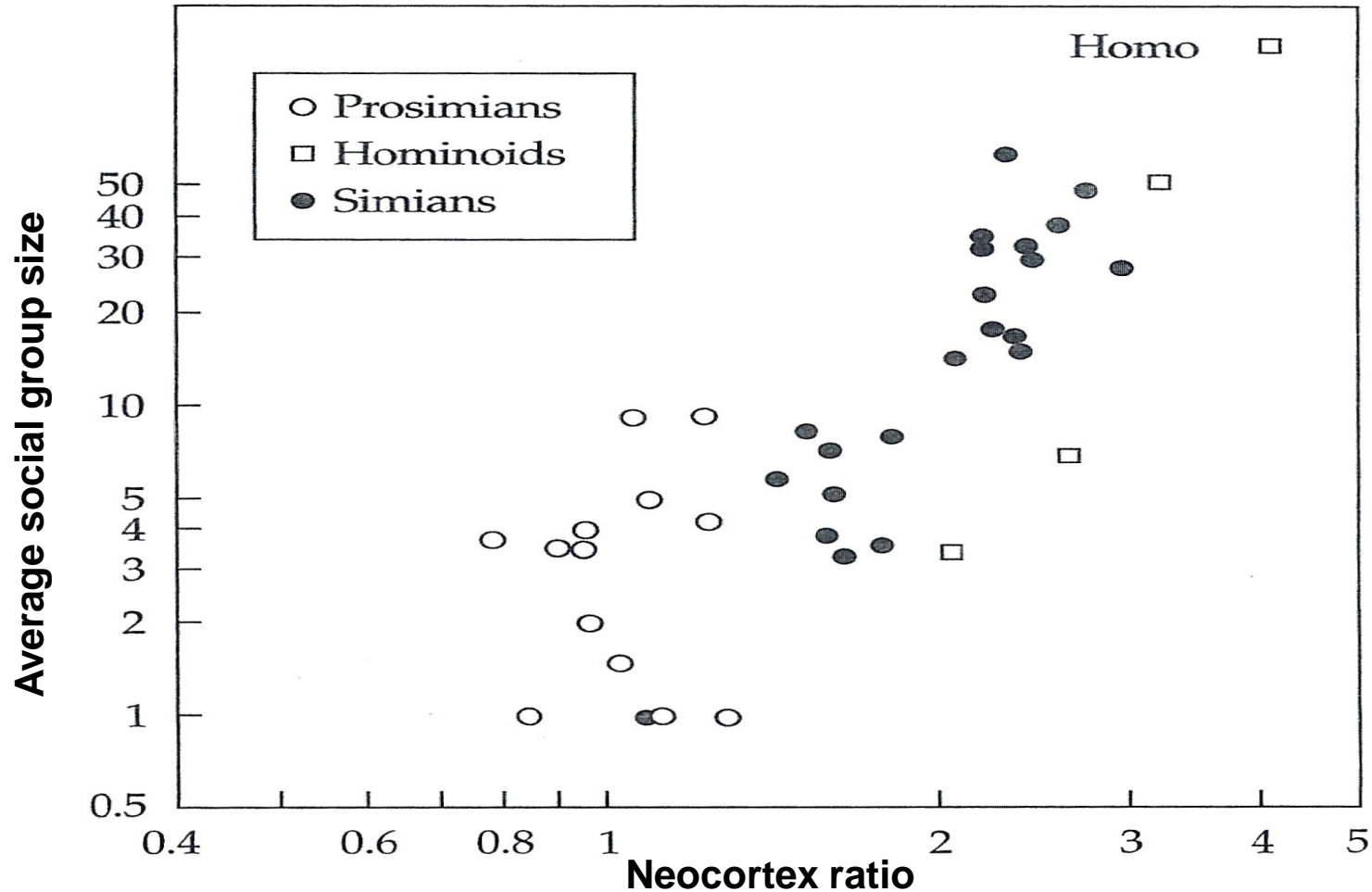
Social Status and Friendship

Two sides of the same coin:

Social status (dominance hierarchies, pecking orders) are orderings based on power, coercion and privileged access to resources – regardless of the needs of others.

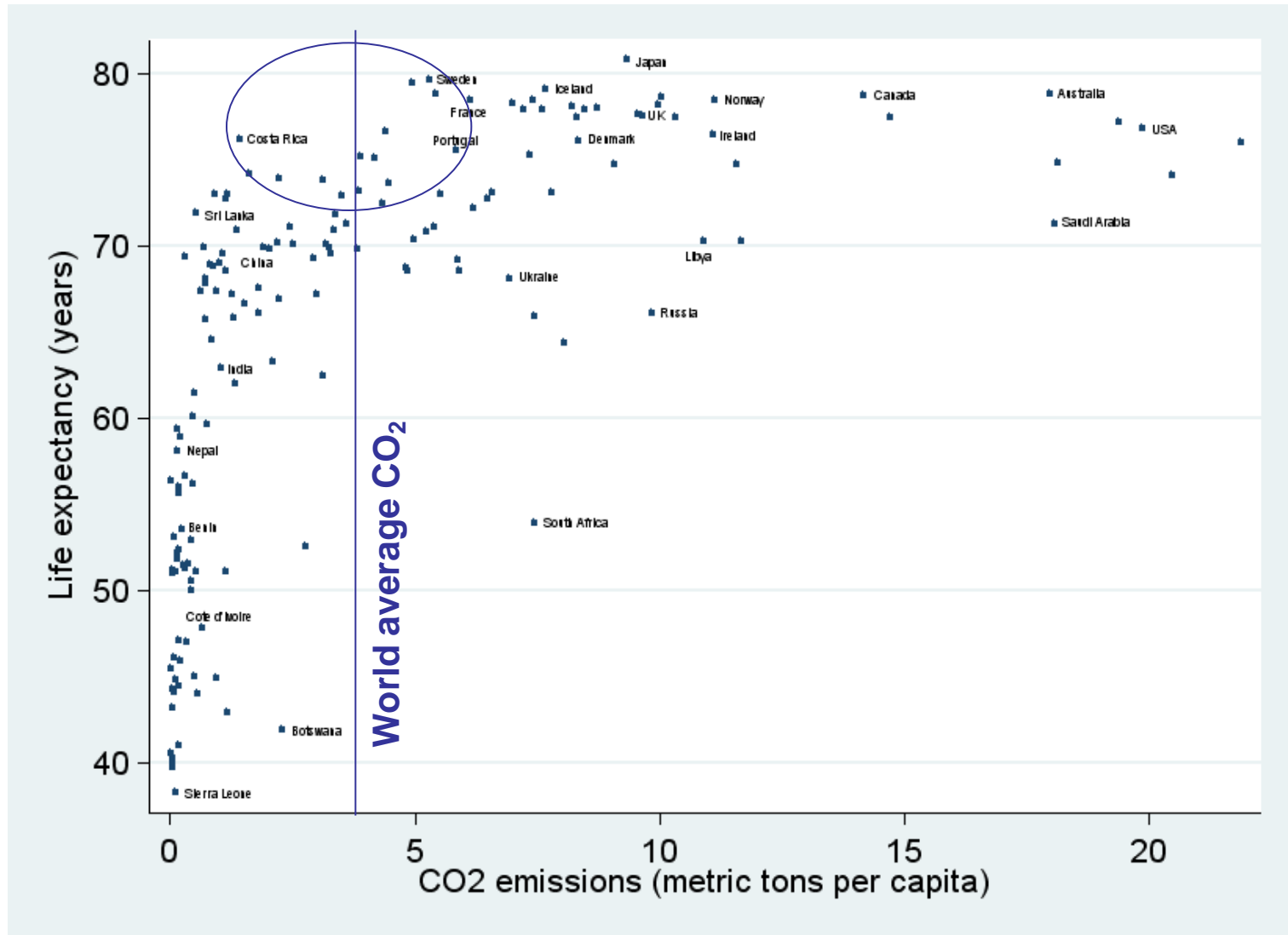
Friendship, in contrast, is based on reciprocity, mutuality, social obligations, sharing and a recognition of each other's needs.

The Social Brain: the neocortex is a larger proportion of the brain in primate species with larger social groups



Dunbar R. Brains on two legs: group size and the evolution of intelligence In: Tree of Origin: F de Waal. (ed) 2001.

CO₂ emissions and life expectancy



More equal countries are more generous foreign aid donors

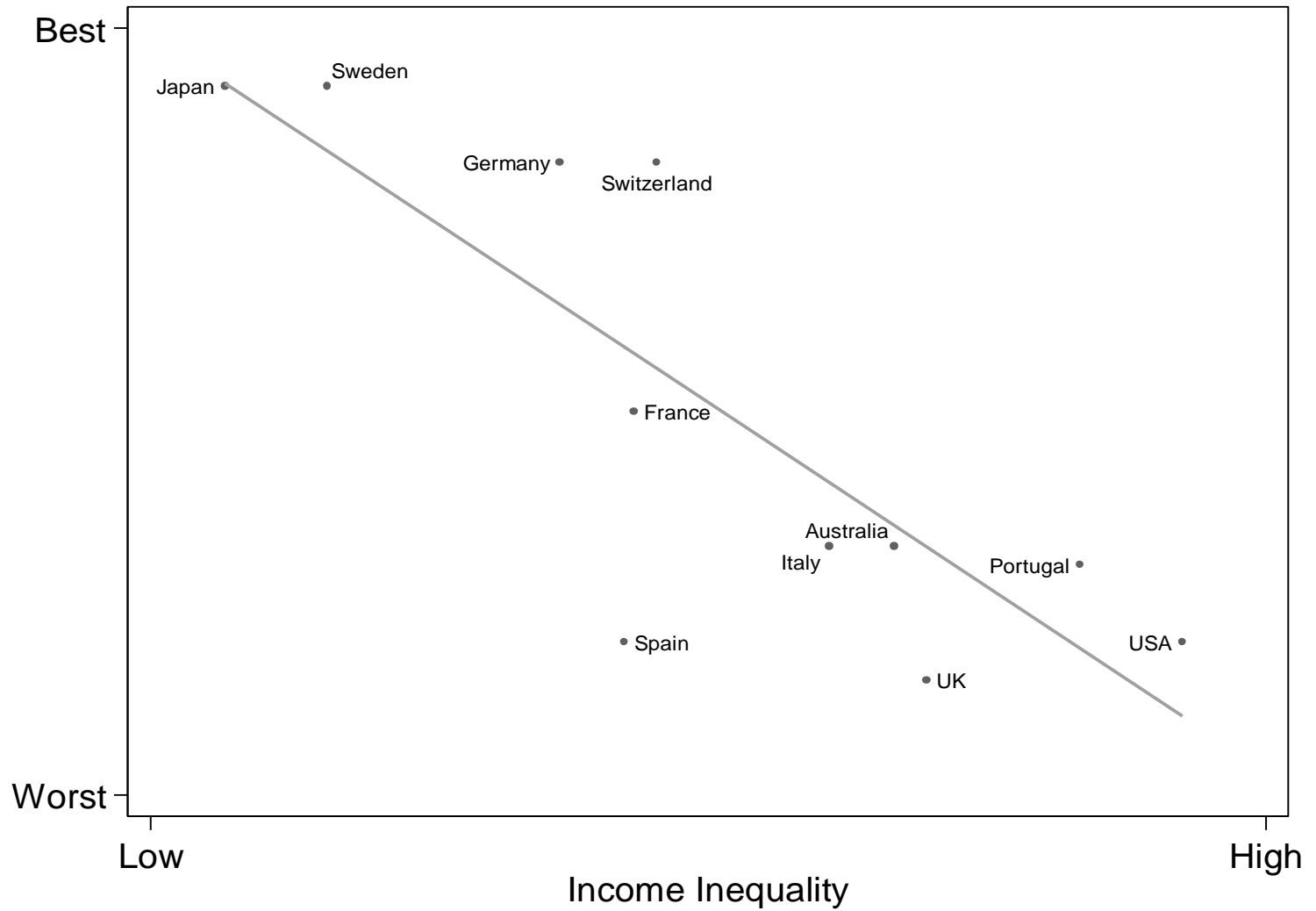


Business leaders in more equal countries give a higher priority to complying with international environmental agreements

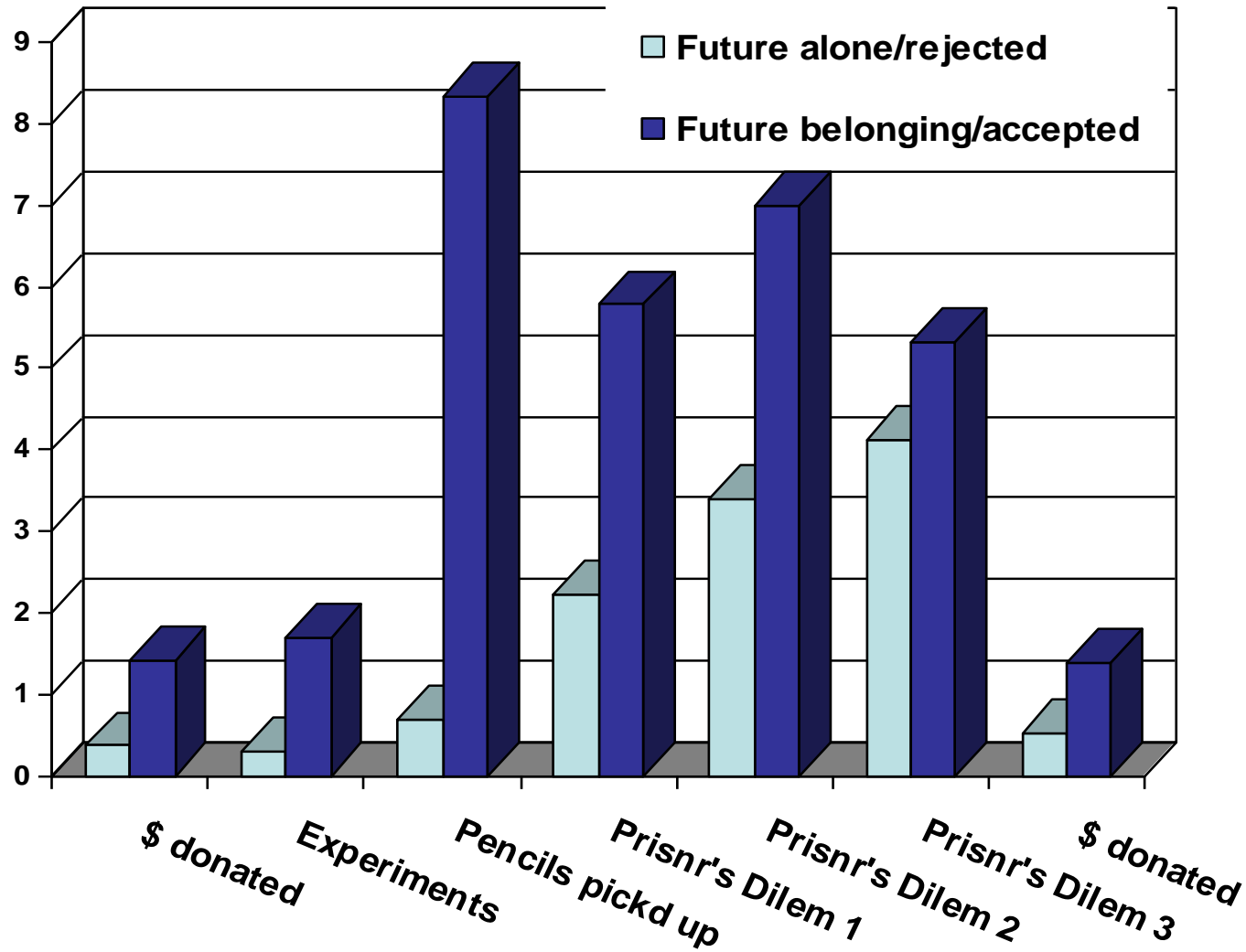


With permission from R De Vogli & D Gimeno

More equal countries recycle more waste



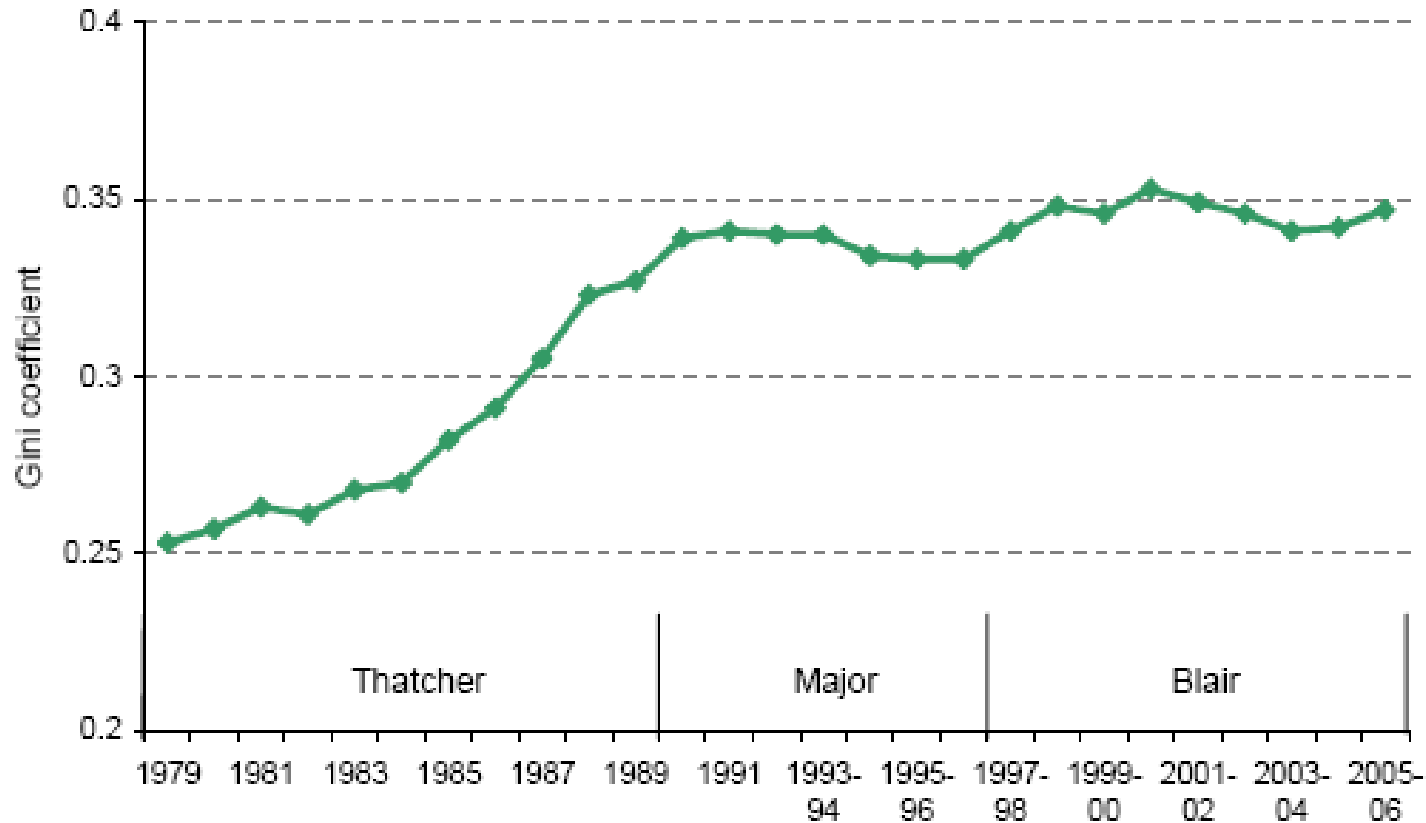
Social exclusion decreases prosocial behaviour: 7 experiments



Twenge JM, Baumeister RF, DeWall CN, Ciarocco NJ, Bartels JM. Social exclusion decreases prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2007; 92(1): 56-66.

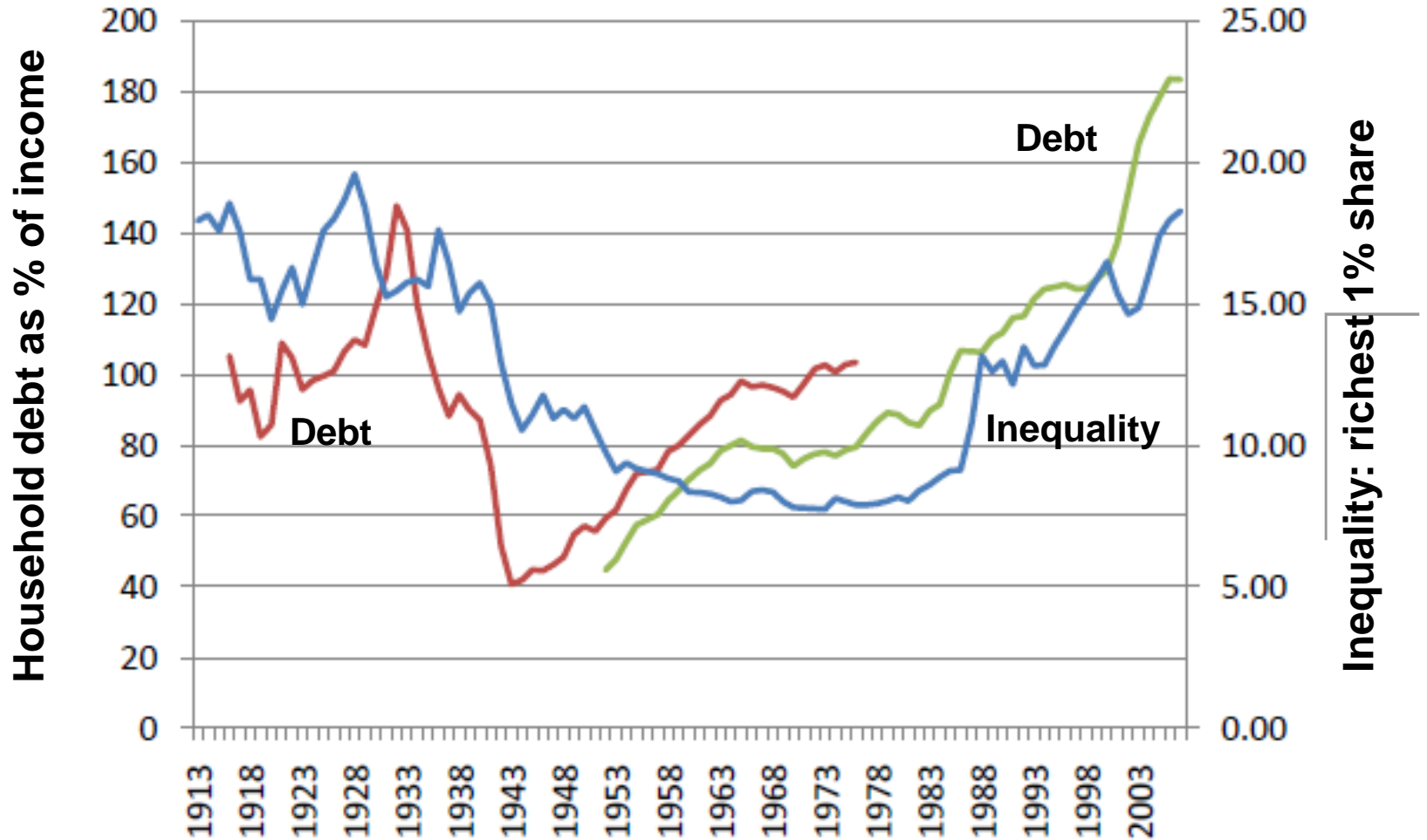
Why are we so sensitive to inequality?

Trends in income inequality 1979-2005/6 (Gini coefficient, Great Britain.)



Brewer M, Goodman A, Muriel A, Sibieta L. *Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2007*. Institute of Fiscal Studies, London.

Inequality and Household Debt 1913-2007

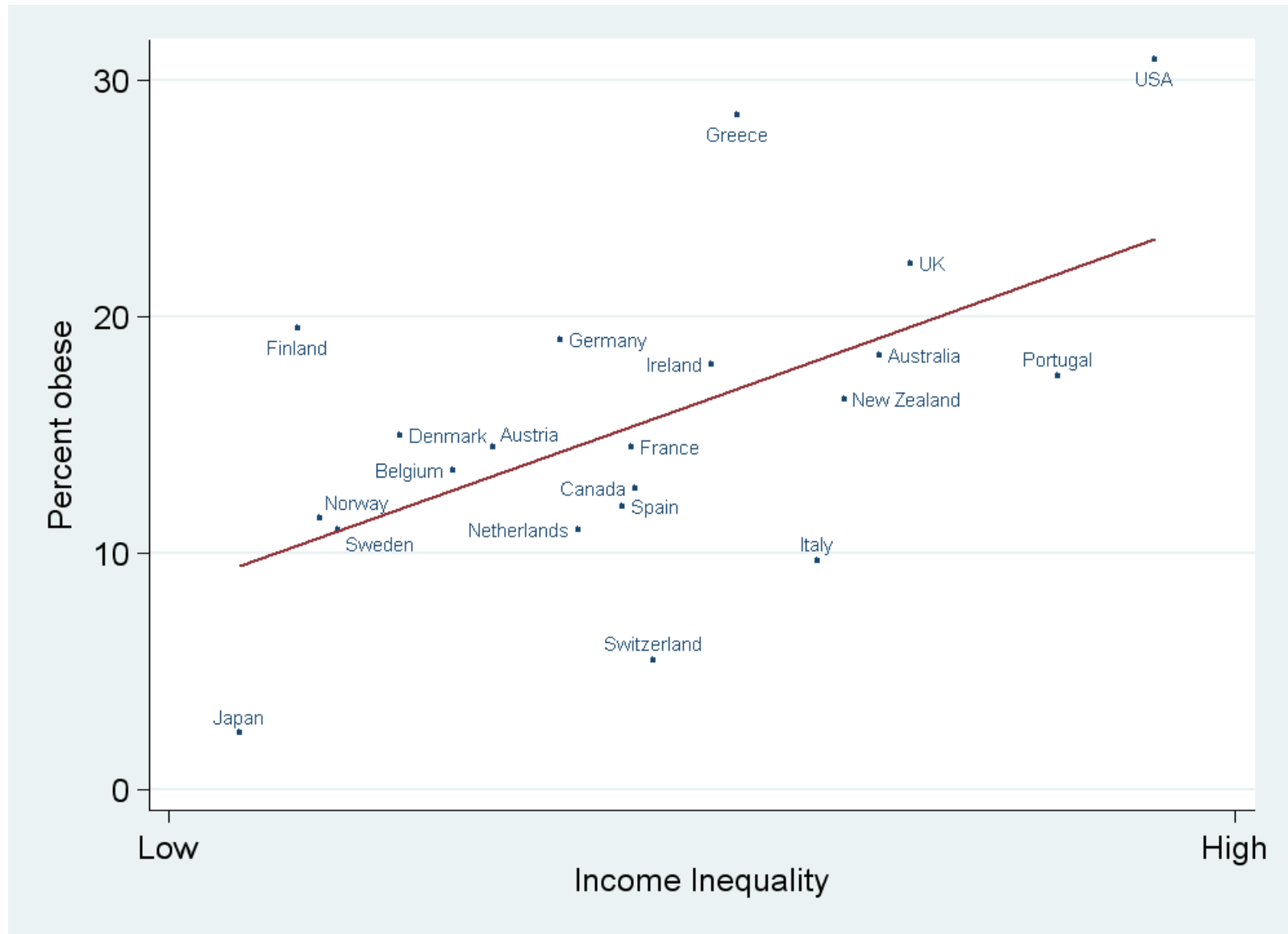


P. Krugman Inequality and Crisis: coincidence or causation?
Data from: Picketty-Saez, Historical Statistics, Federal Reserve.

More equal societies are more innovative



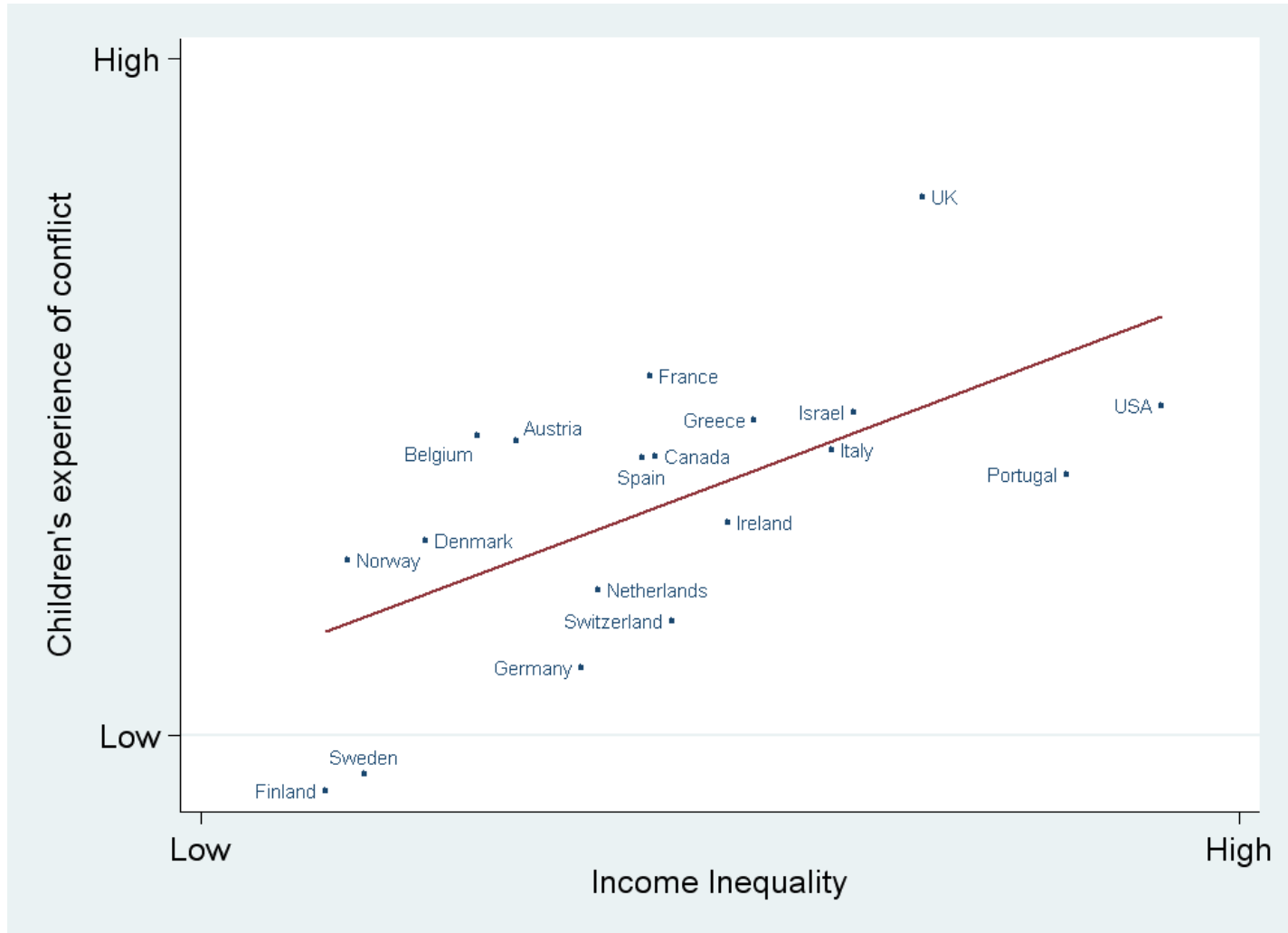
More Adults are Obese in More Unequal Rich Countries



Life Expectancy is Longer in More Equal Rich Countries



Children Experience More Conflict in More Unequal Societies

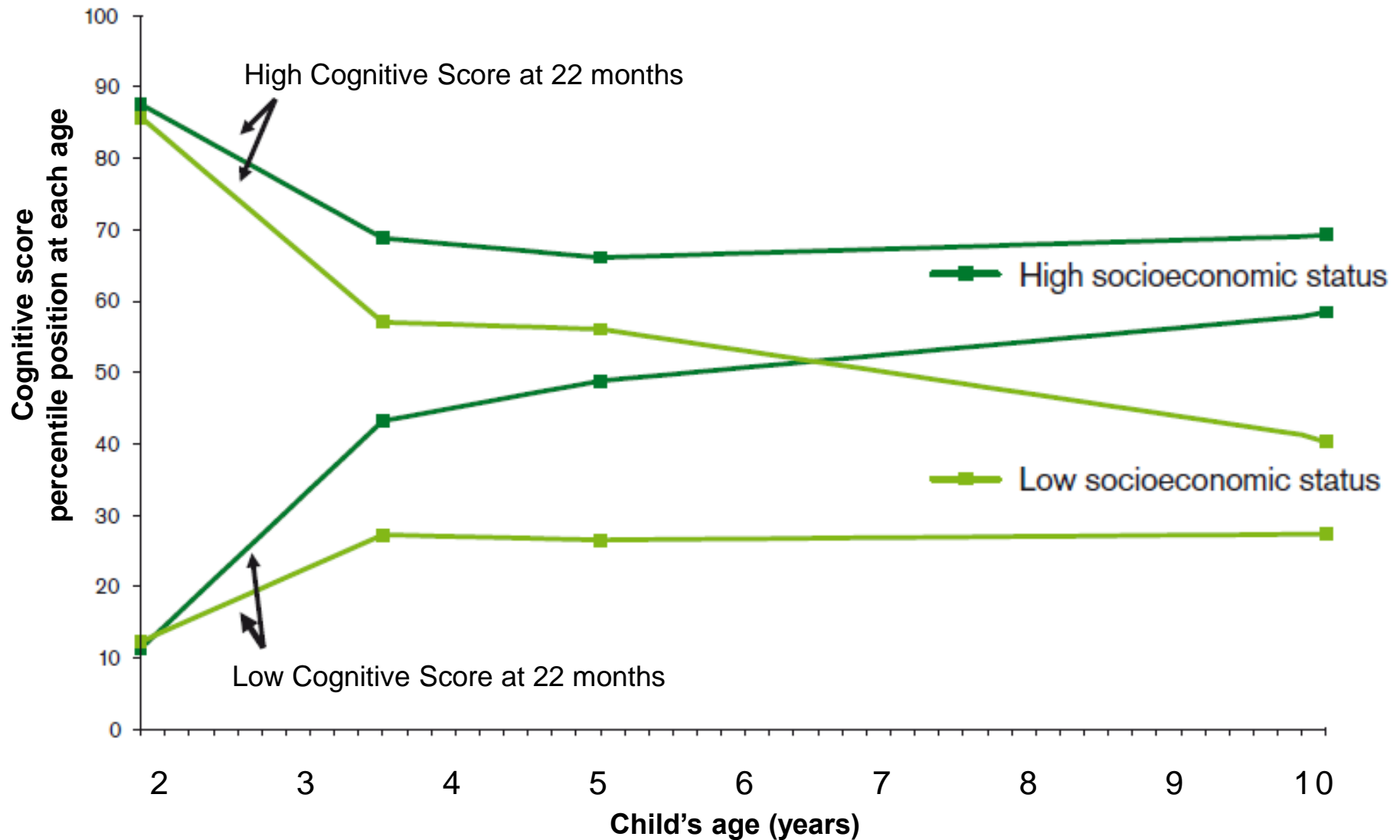


11, 13 & 15 yr olds fighting, bullying, and finding peers not kind & helpful

More Children Drop Out of High School in More Unequal US States

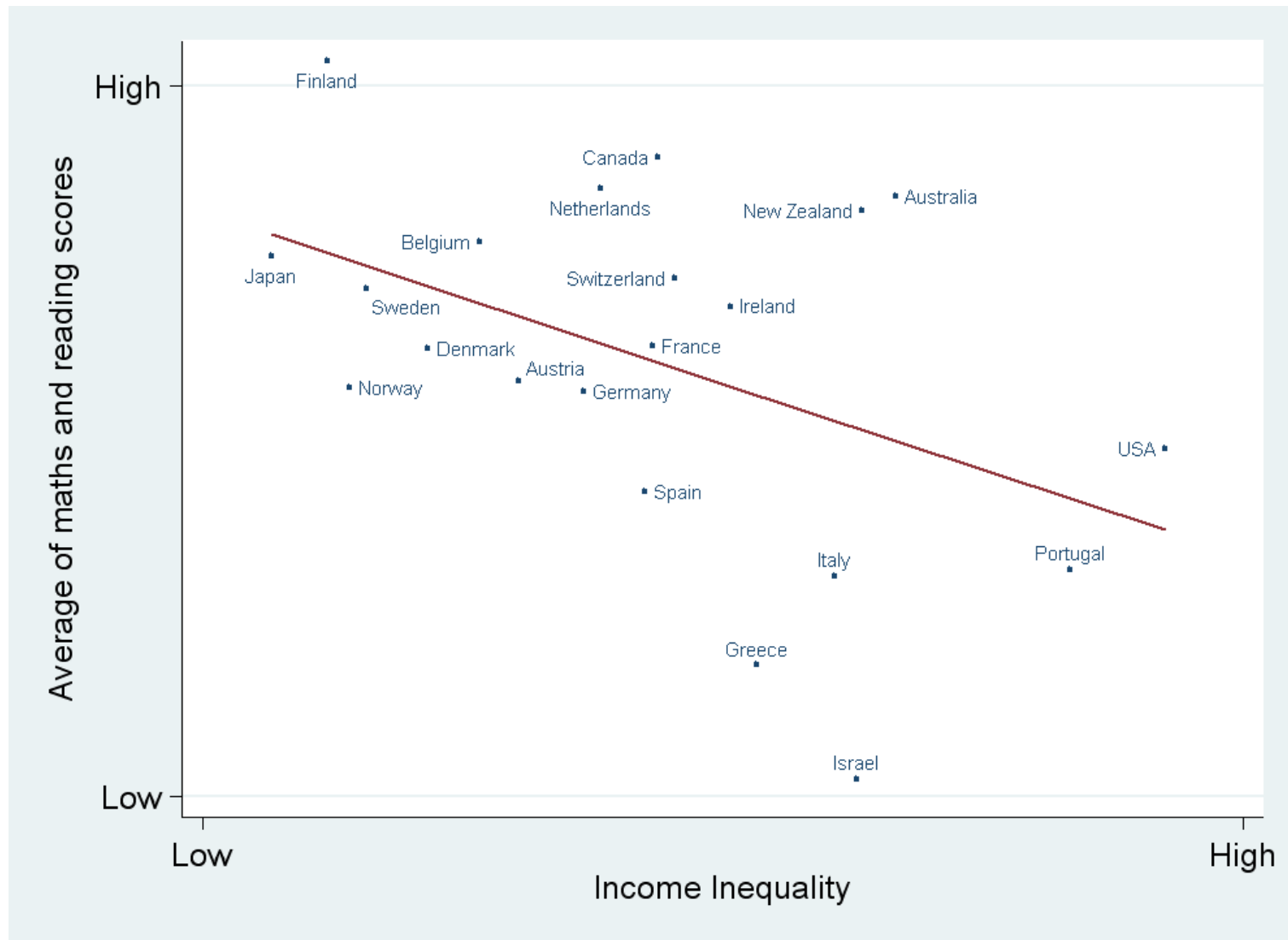


Cognitive Score: Socioeconomic status more important than starting point

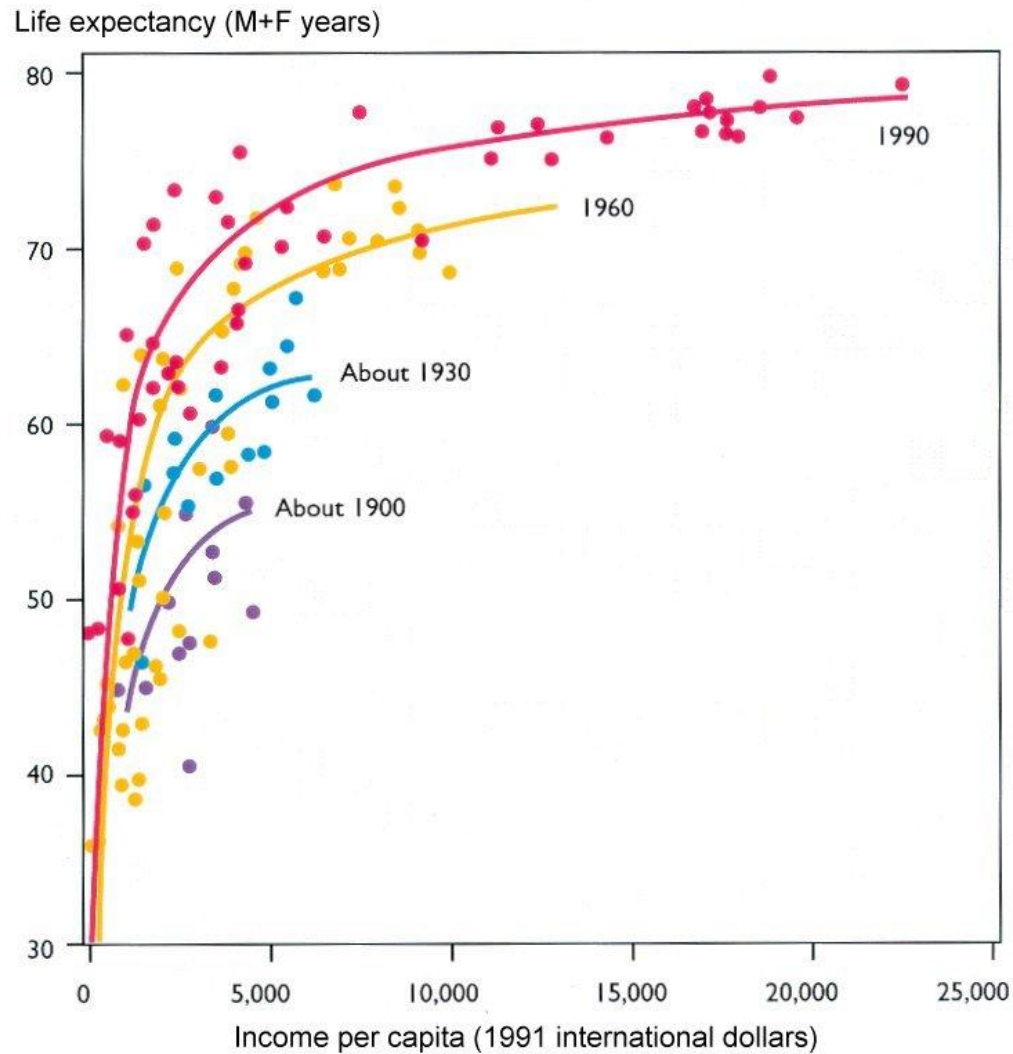


(I Feinstein. Inequality in cognitive development. 1970 British Births. *Economica* 2003; 70: 3-97)
(from The Marmot Review 2010)

Educational Scores are Higher in More Equal Rich Countries

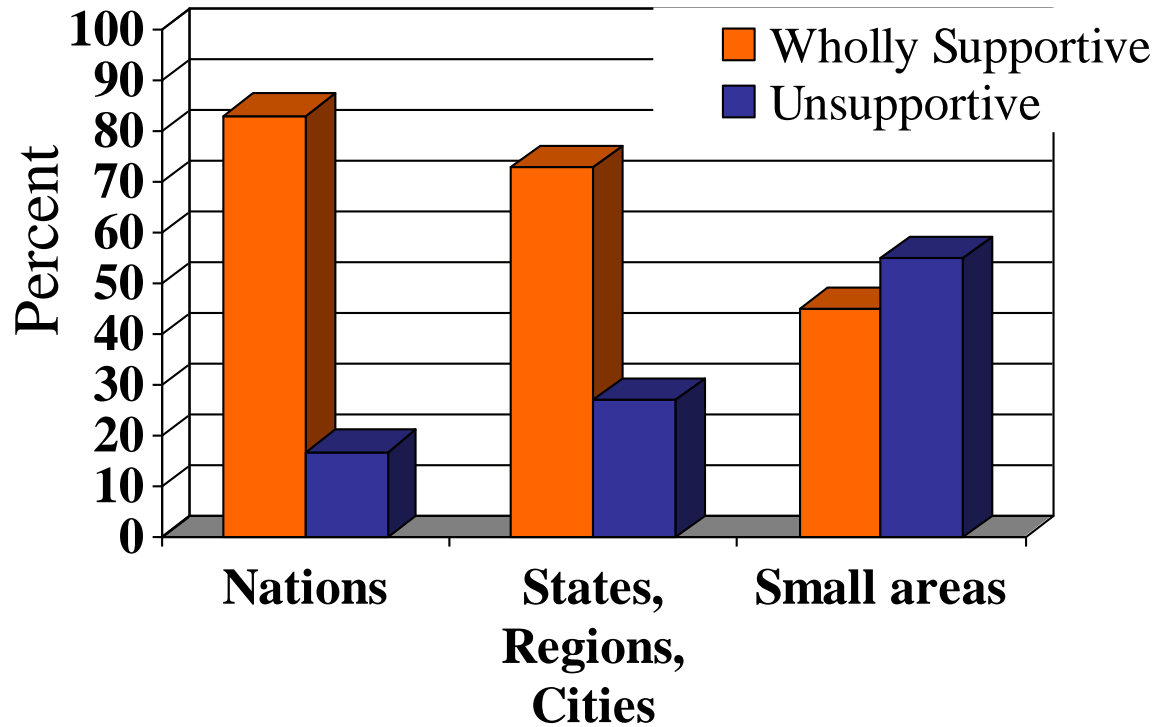


The changing relation between life expectancy and income.

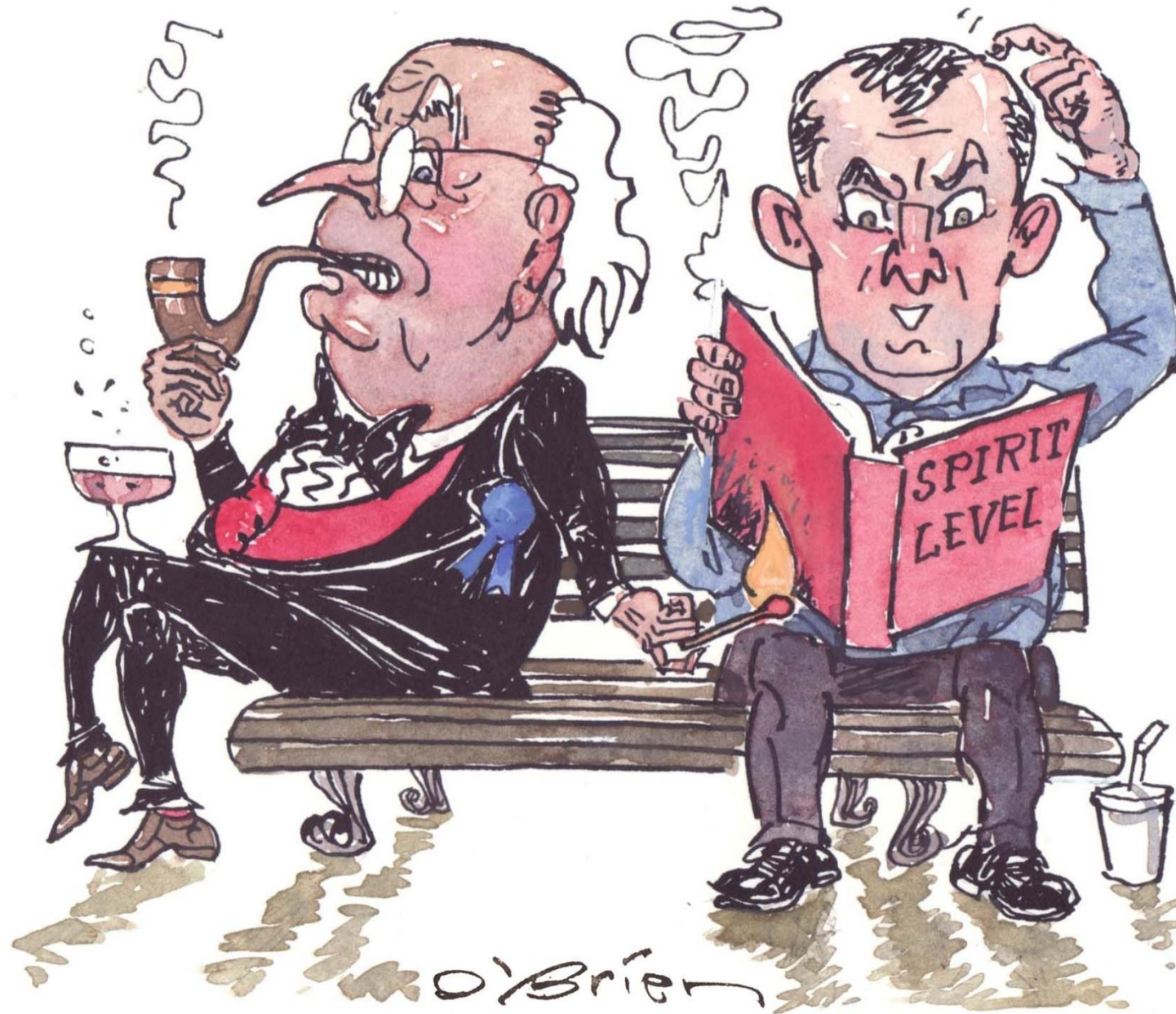


Reproduced from World Bank, *World Development Report 1993*

Review of 168 analyses of the relation between income inequality and health.



Wilkinson RG, Pickett KE. Income inequality and health: a review and explanation of the evidence. *Social Science and Medicine* 2006; 62: 1768-84.



Source: Bagehot, On equality. *The Economist*, 19th August 2010