The Economics of Happiness

Inaugural Lecture

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Part 1
The approach
Part 2
What makes us happy?
Happiness Economics
Part 3
New Research
Part 4
Societal Impact

Part 1

The approach

The origins



Adam Smith
(1723-1790)

Jeremy Bentham
(1748-1832)

Francis Edgeworth
(1845-1926)

Happiness ≠ Life satisfaction





Are subjective well-being data just noise?



Part 2

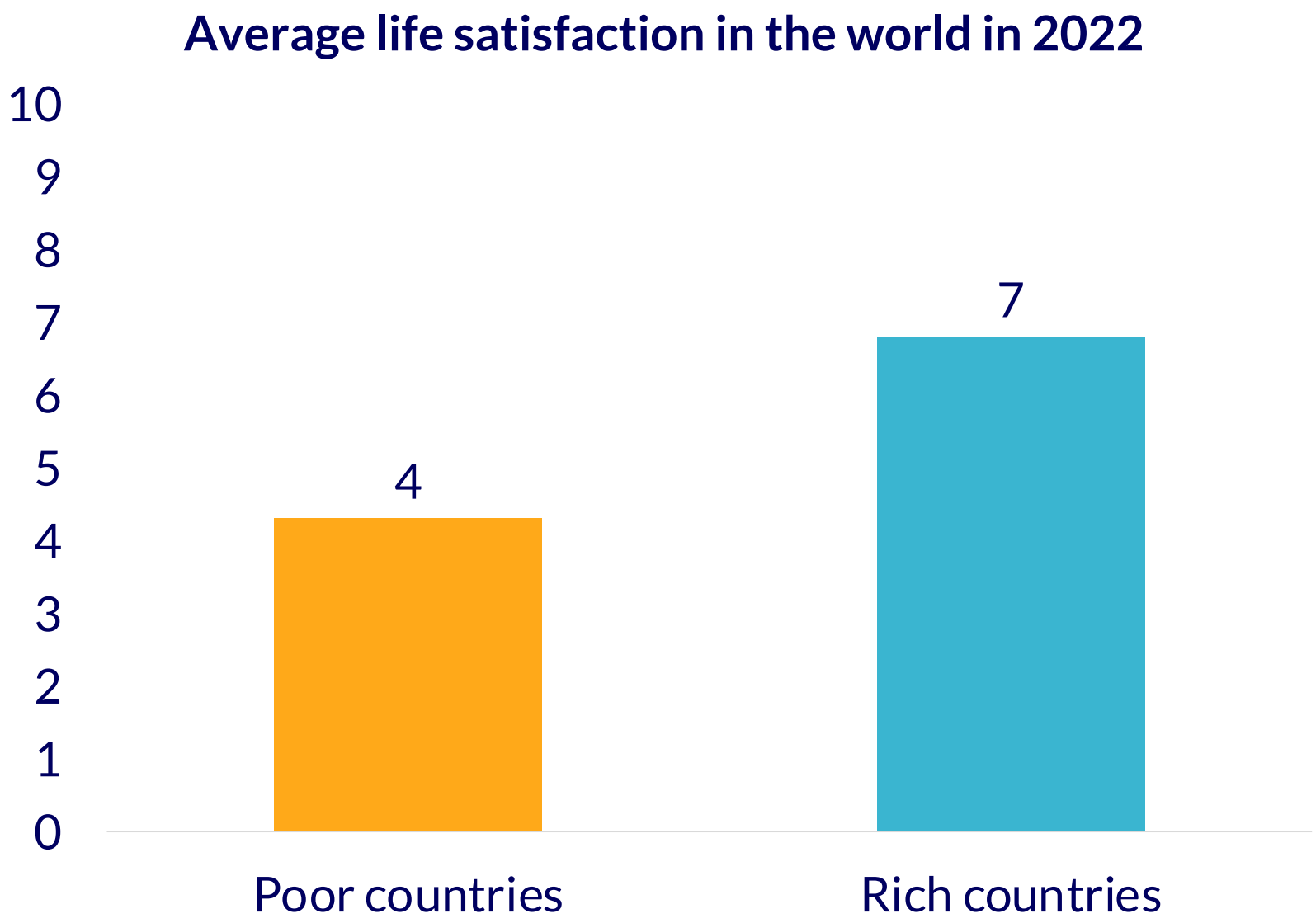
What makes us happy?

The Easterlin paradox

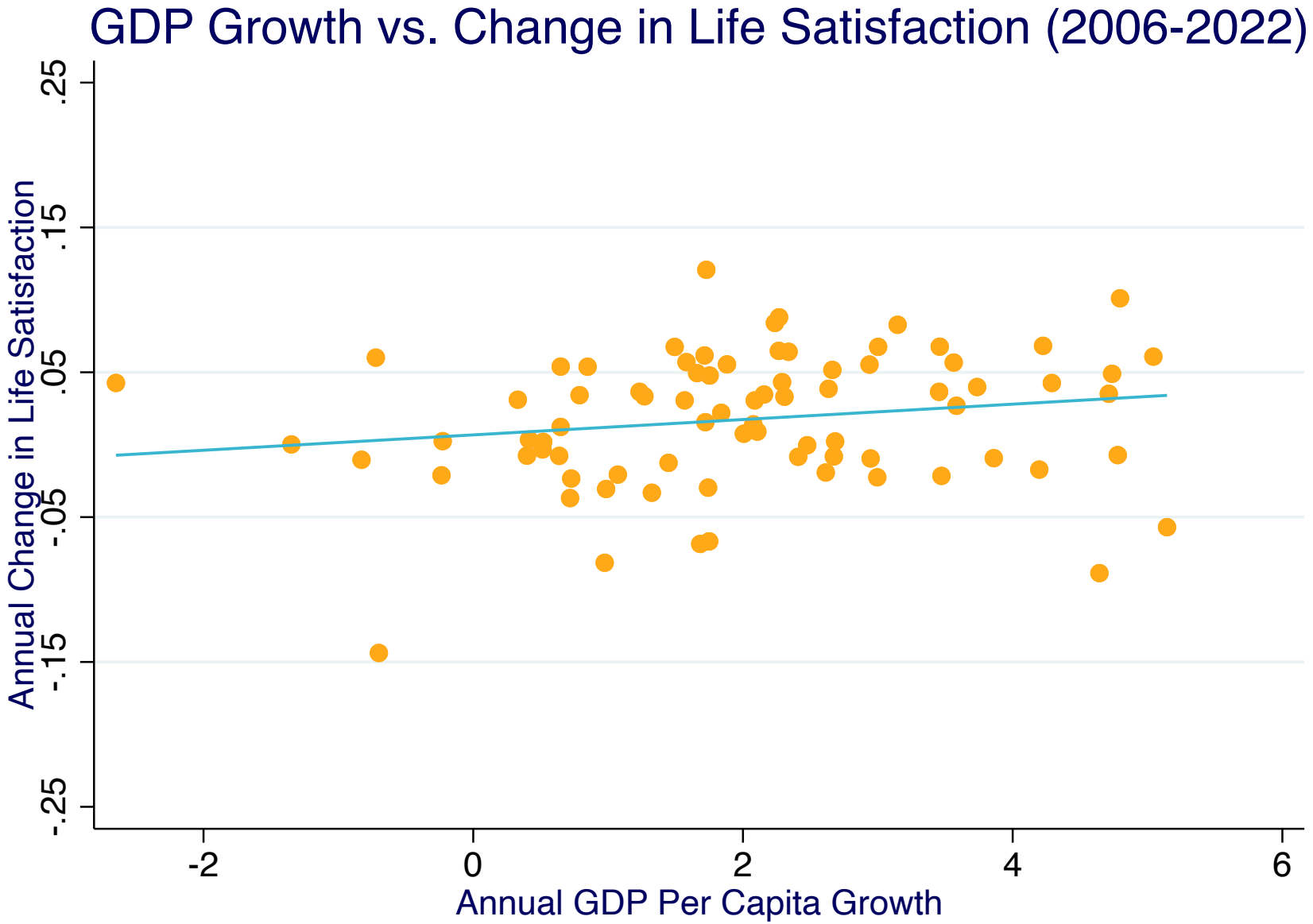


Richard Easterlin (b. 1926)

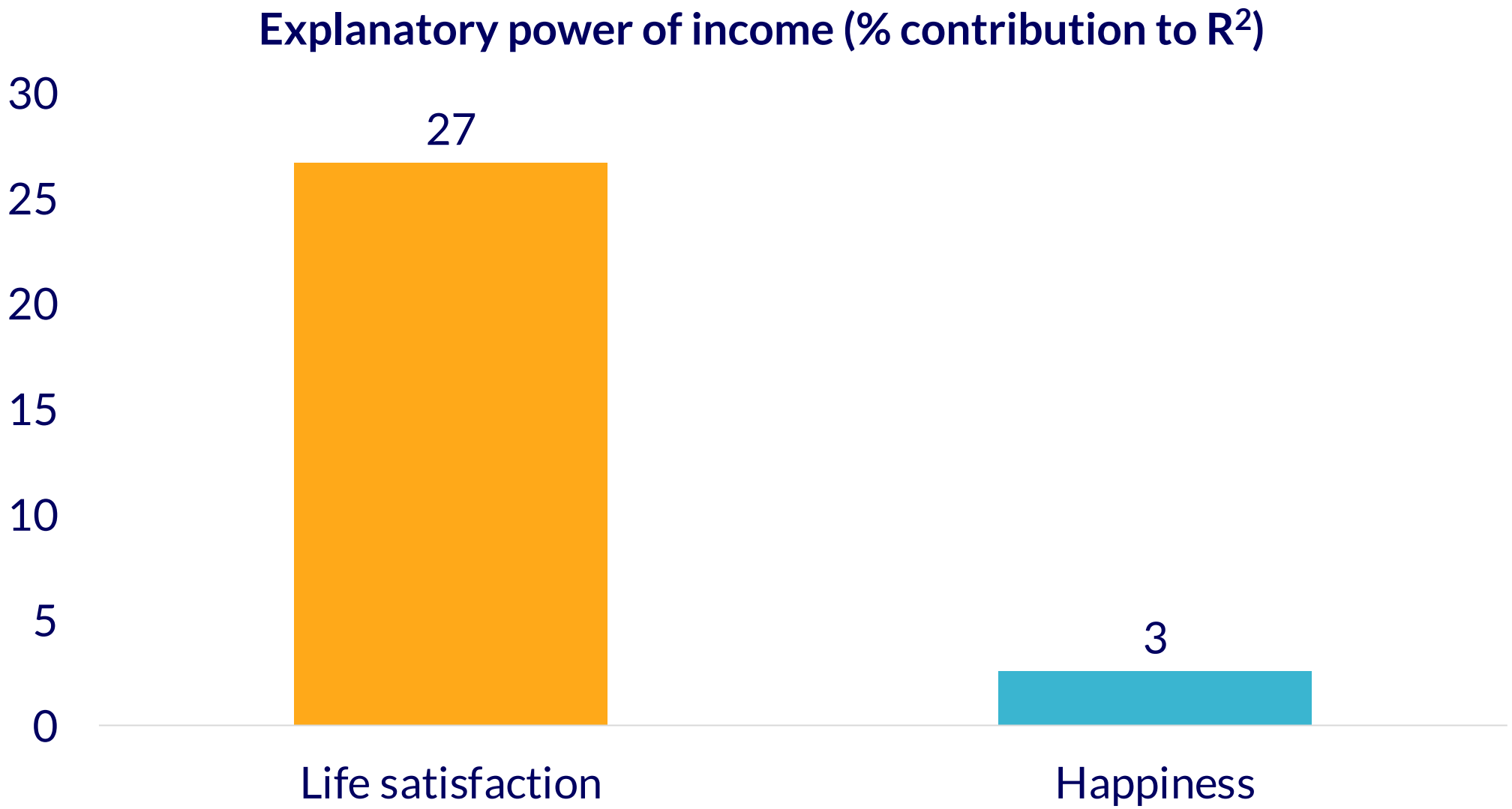
At a point in time…



Over time …


GDP Growth vs. Change in Life Satisfaction (2006-2022)
Annual Change in Life Satisfaction
.25
.15
.05
-.05
-.15
-.25
-2
0
2
4
6
Annual GDP Per Capita Growth

Does income matter? It depends…



Inequality

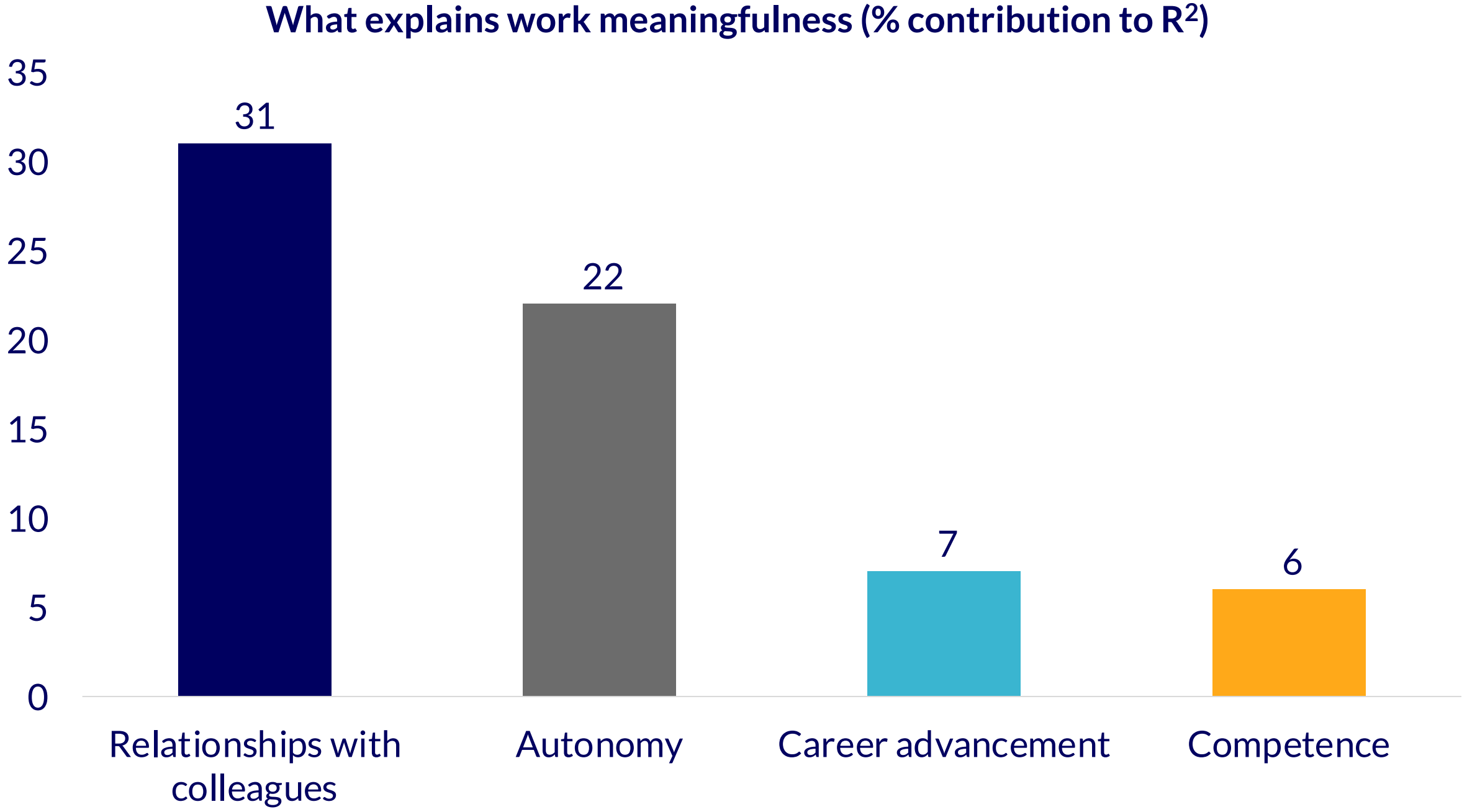


What matters the most

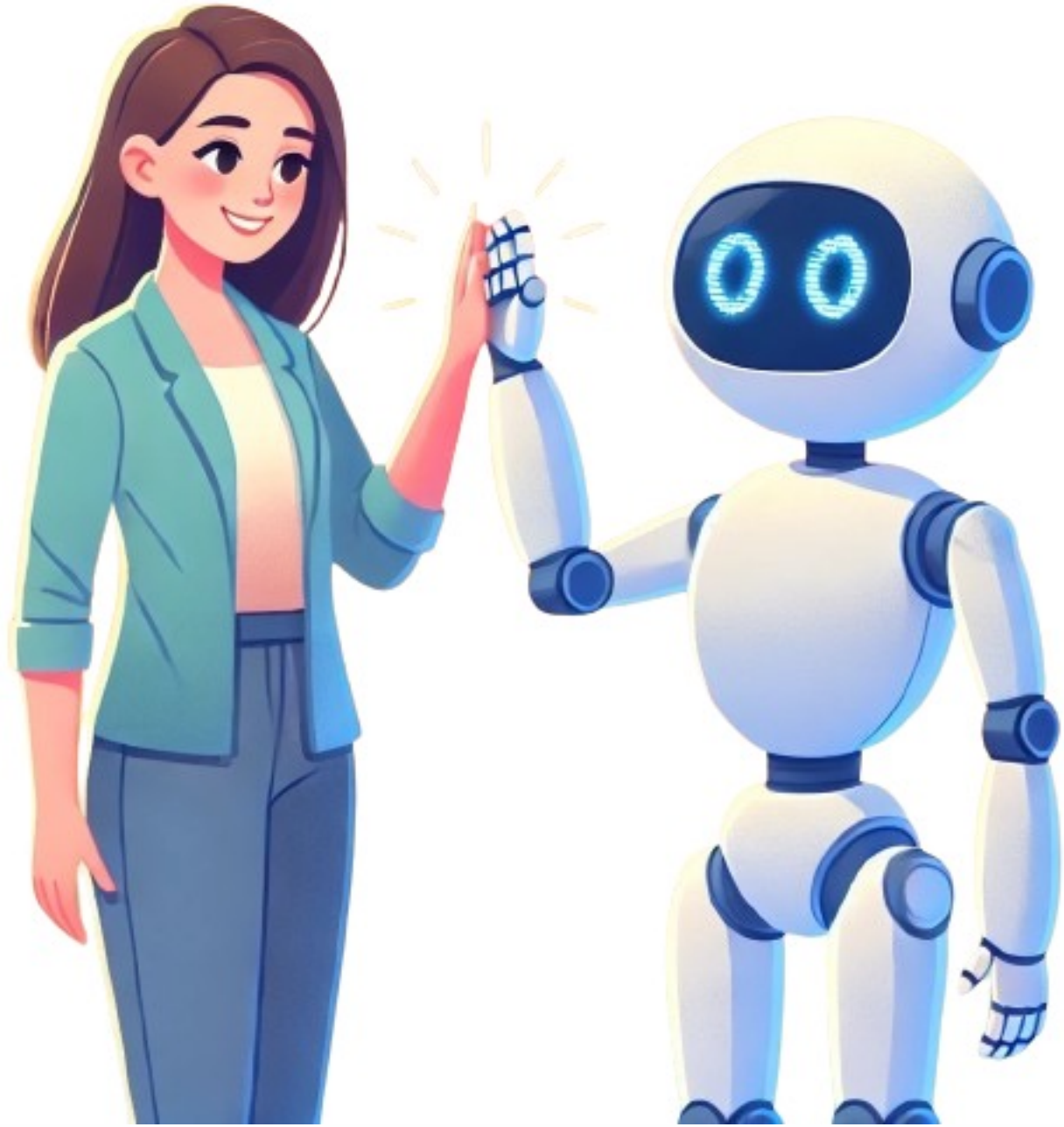


Part 3

New Research


What explains work meaningfulness (% contribution to R2)
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
31
22
7
6
Relationships with colleagues
Autonomy
Career advancement
Competence

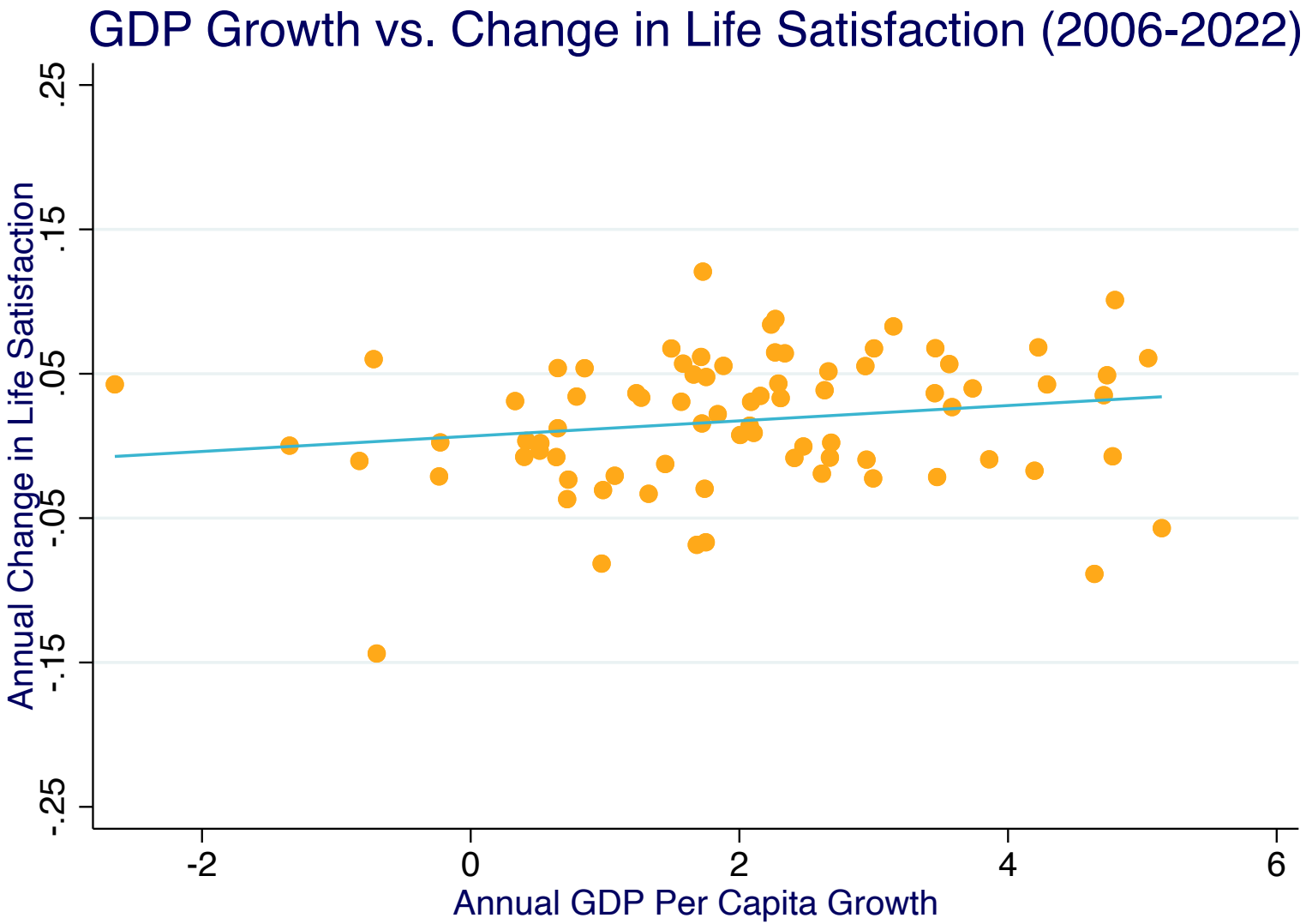




Part 4

Societal Impact

ΔGDP p.c. ≠ ΔLife satisfaction



"Your article has provided me with a ***new perspective*** *[...] to identify the possible harms that robots have on "work meaningfulness."*

This awareness will allow me to mitigate these negative impacts on the future workforce."

Back to the origins



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(1723-1790)

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THANK
YOU