



# Resilience and inequalities

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Boing Boing Resilience Forum  
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10<sup>th</sup> October 2011



*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
Some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all.  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
Who violently sweep your house  
Empty of its furniture.  
Still treat each guest honourably.  
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.  
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
Meet them at the door laughing,  
And invite them in.* (Jelaluddin Rumi, 1207-73)



*During these months something had matured in me  
All I'd to do was let it flourish.  
Just to have grown enough to accept my destiny.*

*Every pretty blouse I put on a kind of celebration.  
I feel so light and radiant and cheerful.  
In suffering we share our loss with all creation.*

*No admittance to Jews. The air I breathe is mine.  
That man cycling on Beethovenstraat,  
His yellow star of David a crocus in the sunshine.*

*Such ripening strength. Gone the Bohemian waif.  
I want to be there at every front.  
I don't ever want to be what they'll call 'safe'.*

from Etty Hillesum by Micheal O'Siadhail

# Summary

- Mental wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing: the new cause of everything
- Mental wellbeing and inequalities
- Some questions



*Pockets  
People & Places  
Prospects*

# (Mental)...Wellbeing.....

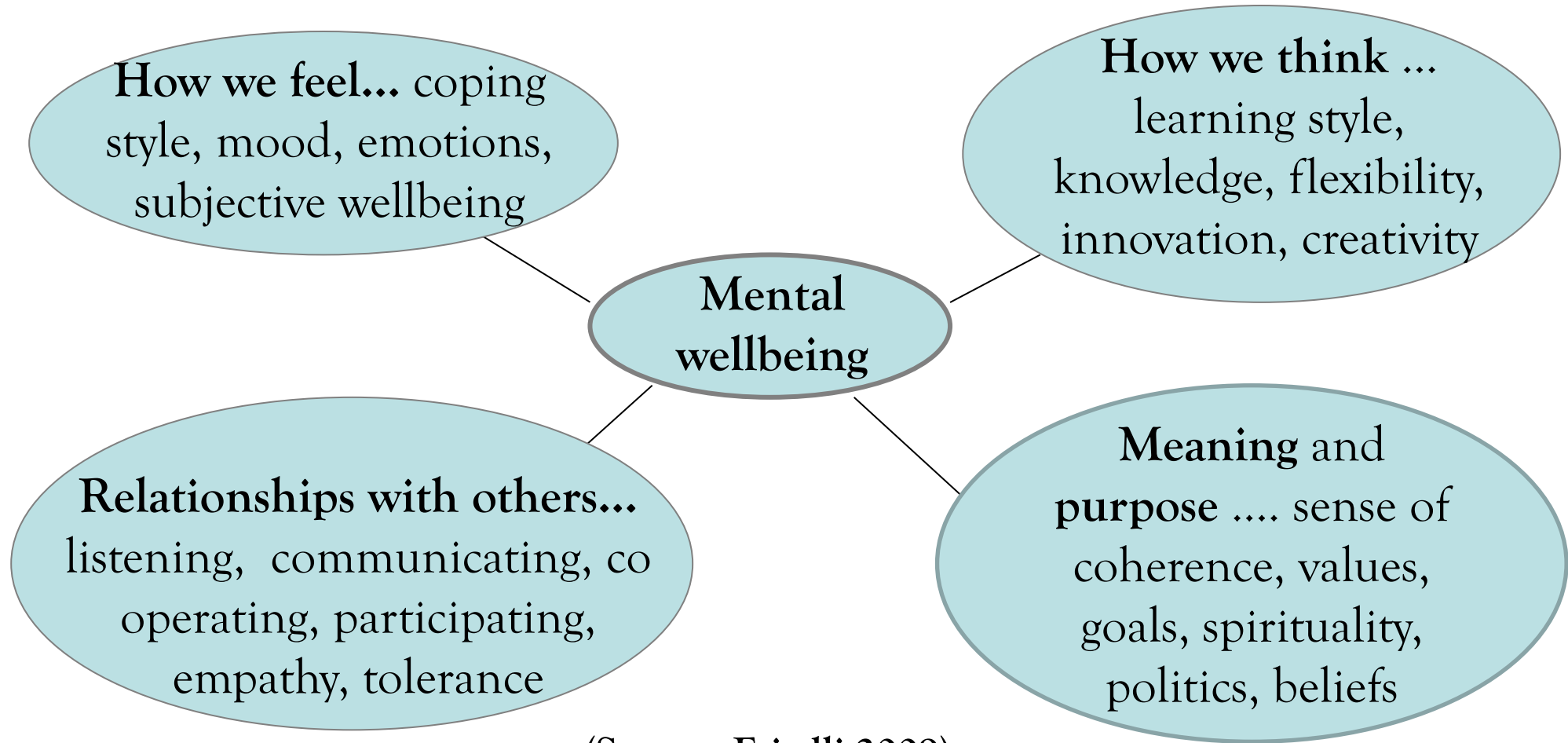


Our own personal evaluation of  
how we feel about and  
experience our lives

*It's a hearts and minds thing....*

# Dimensions of wellbeing

*If I am not for myself, who will be for me?  
And if I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?*



(Source: Friedli 2009)

*Arguably, the study of resilience should involve context first and child second...*

Michael Ungar

The flight  
of the phoenix  
rising  
within the  
flames  
from dust  
and ashes  
to resurrect  
again...



Text/picture source: DawnVictoriaHanna  
[dawnhanna.blogspot.com/.../phoenix-  
rising.html](http://dawnhanna.blogspot.com/.../phoenix-rising.html)



# Mental wellbeing: the new determinant

*He worked hard for respect but he could not find it.  
There was in the world a great shortage of respect and  
Chanu was among the famished*

Monica Ali, Brick Lane



# Outcomes associated with positive mental health



A worthwhile goal in itself and leads to better outcomes:

- reduces prevalence of mental illness
- physical health: mortality/morbidity
- health behaviour
- employability, productivity, earnings
- educational performance
- crime / violence reduction
- pro-social behaviour/social integration/relationships
- quality of life

# Mental wellbeing as a core asset...

*an appreciative approach that recognises the intrinsic worth in people and places.*



O'Leary et al 2011

- Resilient places
- Resilient communities
- Resilient individuals

*“extent to which communities are able to exercise informal social controls or come together to tackle common problems”*

*“mostly to do with the quality of social relationships”*

Bartley 2006

# Measuring national well-being

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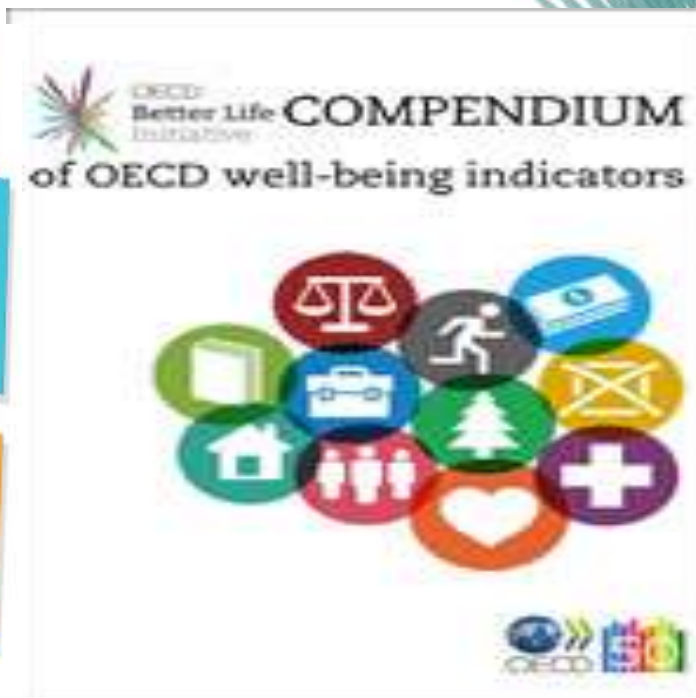
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## The State of Happiness

Can public policy shape people's  
wellbeing and resilience?

David Brown, Martin Roper, Peter Wainwright  
Chief, Policy, at the time of writing

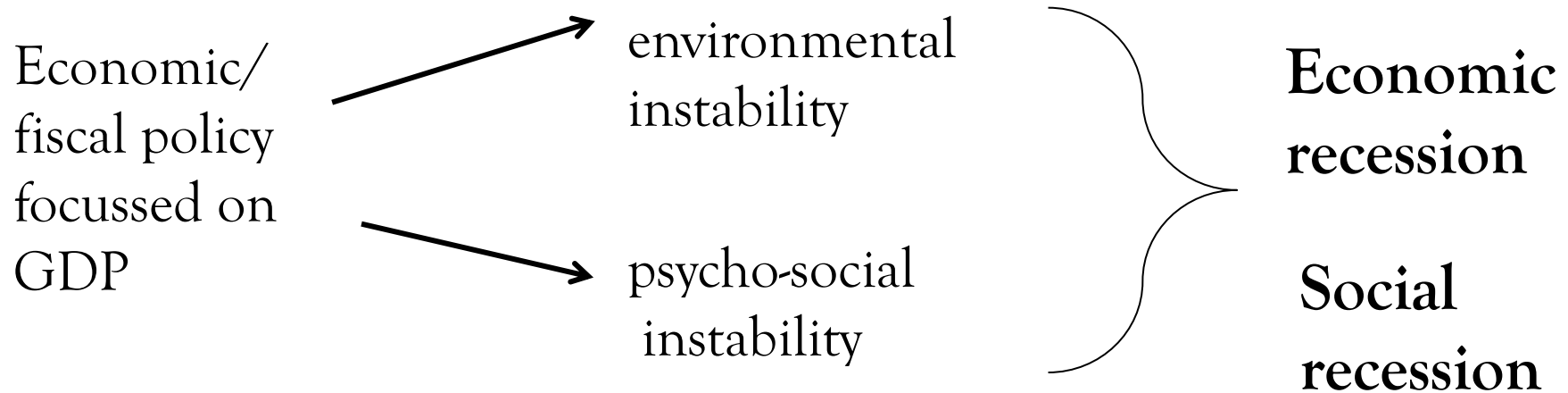


National Accounts of Well-being

# Money Economy, Core Economy



*Well-being depends on certain freedoms being upheld, as well as on economic assets*  
Amartya Sen



materialism

consumerism

individualism



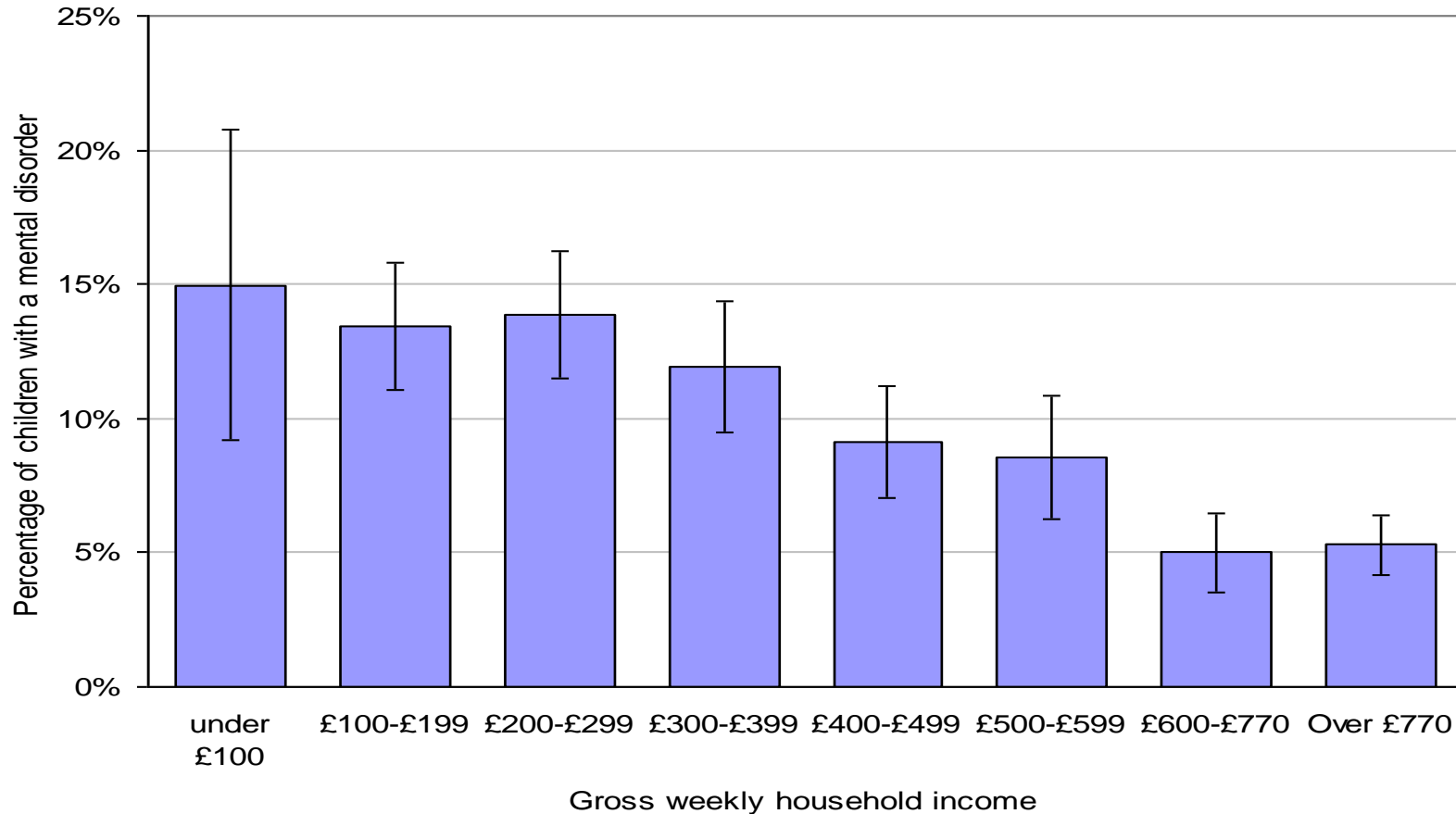
# Mental wellbeing and inequalities

*The importance of mental health is directly and indirectly related at every level to human responses to inequalities*

*All in the caravan may move forward, but how far behind do those at the back have to fall, before they cease to be part of the same caravan?*

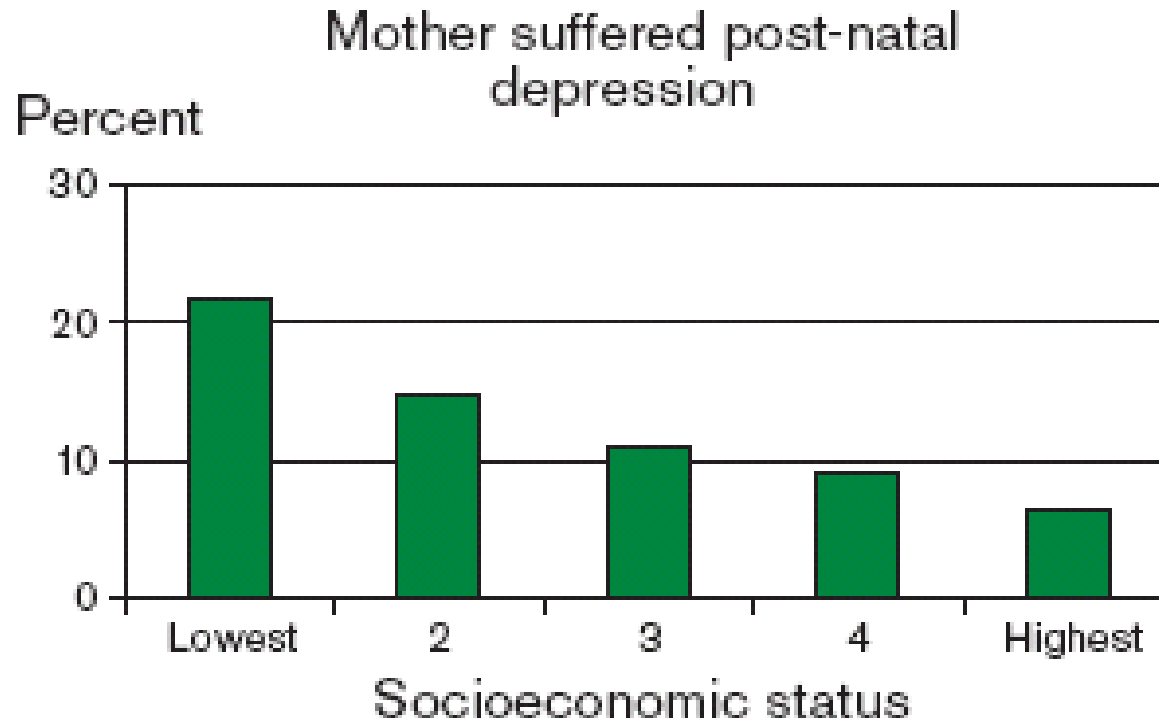
Polly Toynbee

# Mental health of children by parental income



Source: Meltzer et al 2000 *Mental health of children and adolescents in Great Britain*

# Mental health and the social gradient

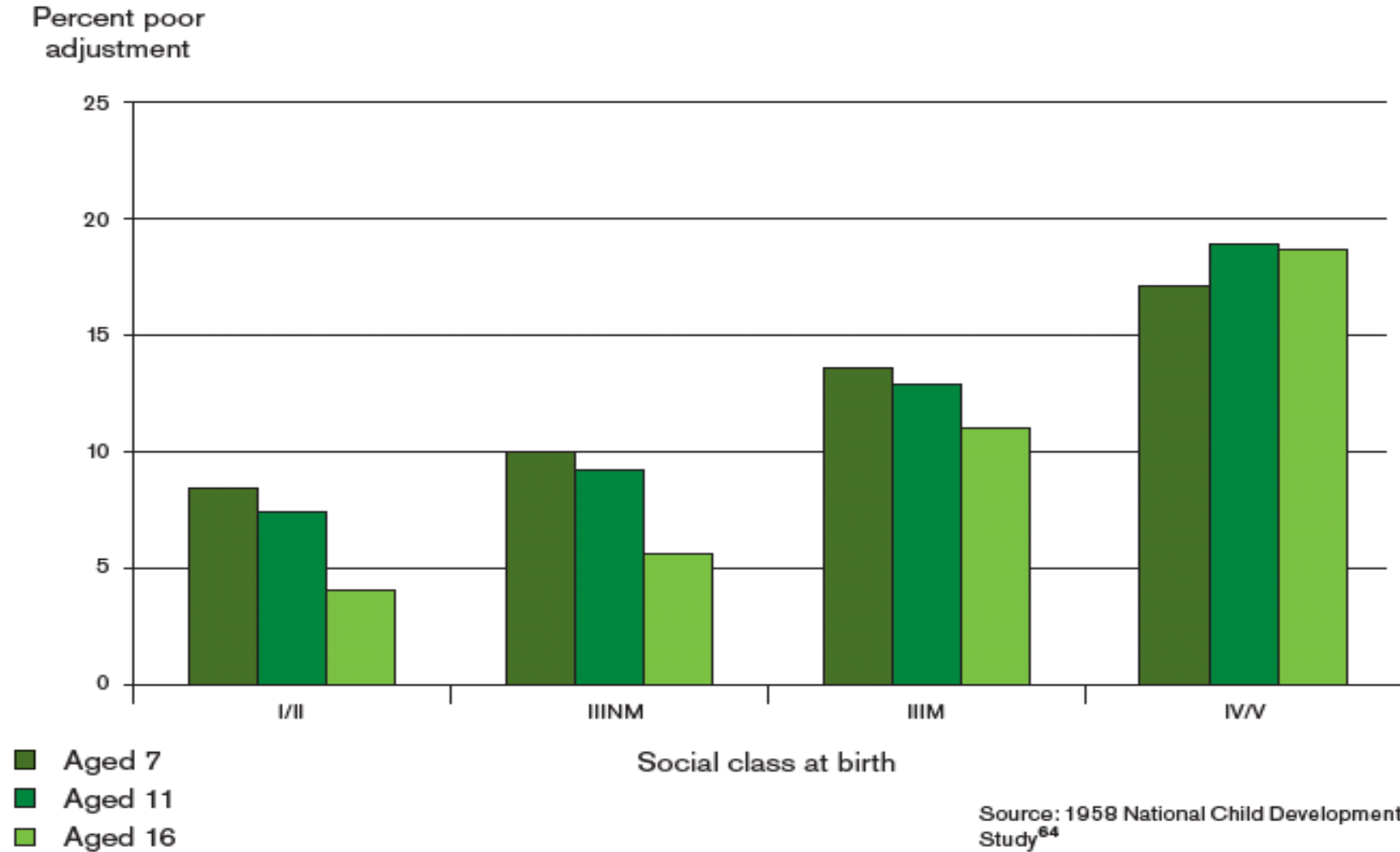


*“Infants develop the attachment behaviours that optimally enhance their survival in their own characteristic environments.”* Crittenden, 2000

Source: Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Marmot Review 2010



# Rates of poor social/emotional adjustment by father's social class at birth





# Mental health and deprivation

*Not 'every family in the land'*

*Findings from 9 large scale population based studies:*

- Material and relative deprivation
- Childhood socio-economic position
- Low educational attainment
- Unemployment
- Environment: poor housing, poor resources, violence
- Adverse life events
- Poor support networks

(Melzer et al 2004; Rogers & Pilgrim 2003; Stansfeld et al 2008; APMS 2007)

*Cycle of invisible barriers:*

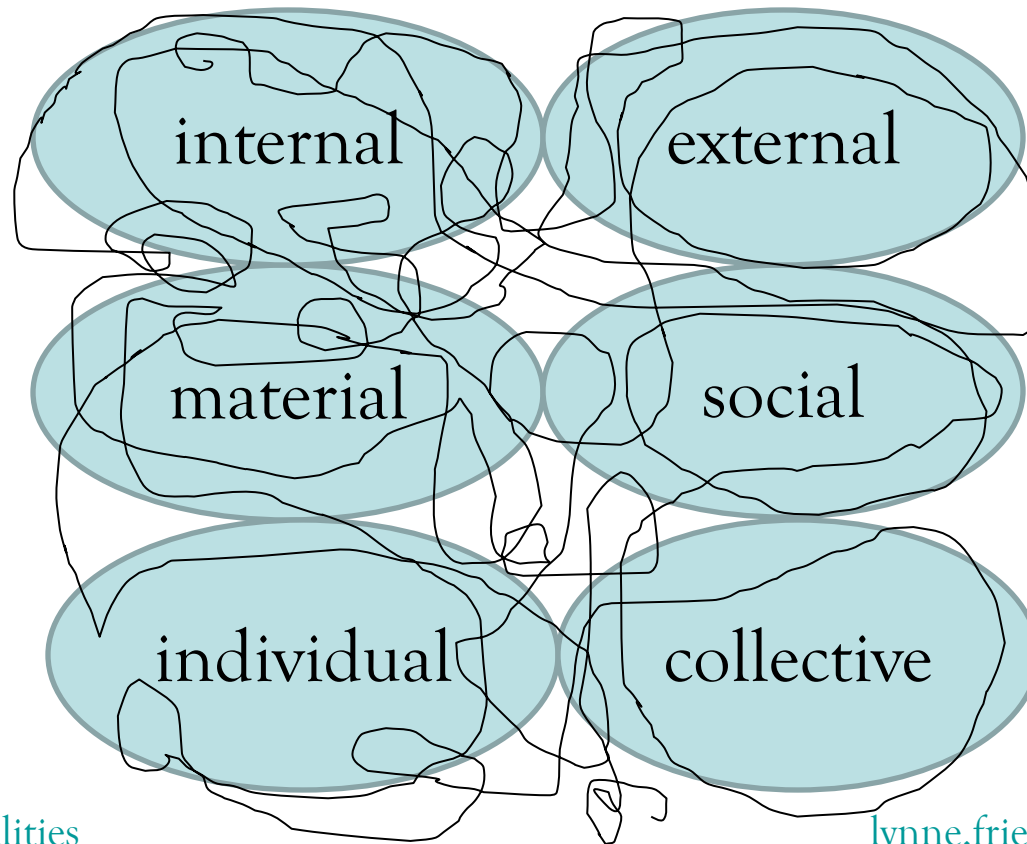
- Poverty of hope, self-worth, aspirations



# Sources of resilience

*“Although the risks and contradictions of life go on being as socially produced as ever, the duty and necessity of coping with them has been delegated to our individual selves.”*

Zygmunt Bauman




# What matters most?



*One of the 'hidden costs of individualism' is the failure to recognise that people's wellbeing can be enhanced by opportunities to act in solidarity with others.*

Friedli 2011

- Individual skills and attributes
  - *(behaviour, attitudes and feelings)*
- Family, relationships, support & networks
  - *(people in our lives)*
- Material resources
  - *(financial security, environment)*
- Inequalities in *distribution* of resources
  - *(what we have in relation to others)*



“...the Greeks and Romans lived, I suppose, very comfortably though they had no linen. But in the present times, through the greater part of Europe, a **creditable day labourer would be ashamed to appear in public without a linen shirt**, the want of which would be supposed to denote that disgraceful degree of poverty which, it is presumed, nobody can fall into without extreme bad conduct. Custom in the same manner has rendered leather shoes a necessary of life in England. **The poorest creditable person of either sex would be ashamed to appear in public without them**”

(Adam Smith Wealth of Nations 1776 cited in Zaveleta 2008)

# What do we know about resilience?



*‘Freedom to live a valued life’*

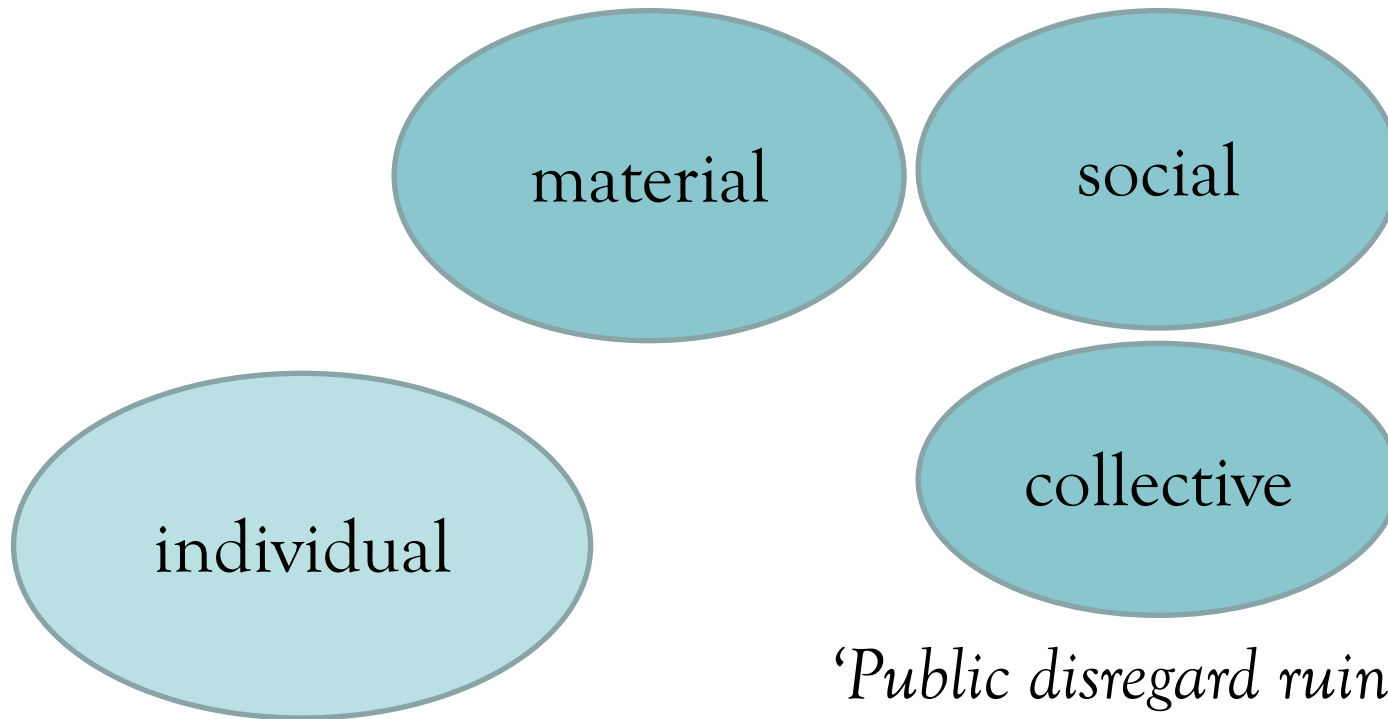
Amartya Sen

- *“Mostly to do with the quality of social relationships”*
- Socially patterned
- Primarily protective among equals
- Generally trumped by material advantage

# Towards an ecology of resilience

*Policy responses that enhance connections, collectivity and financial security*

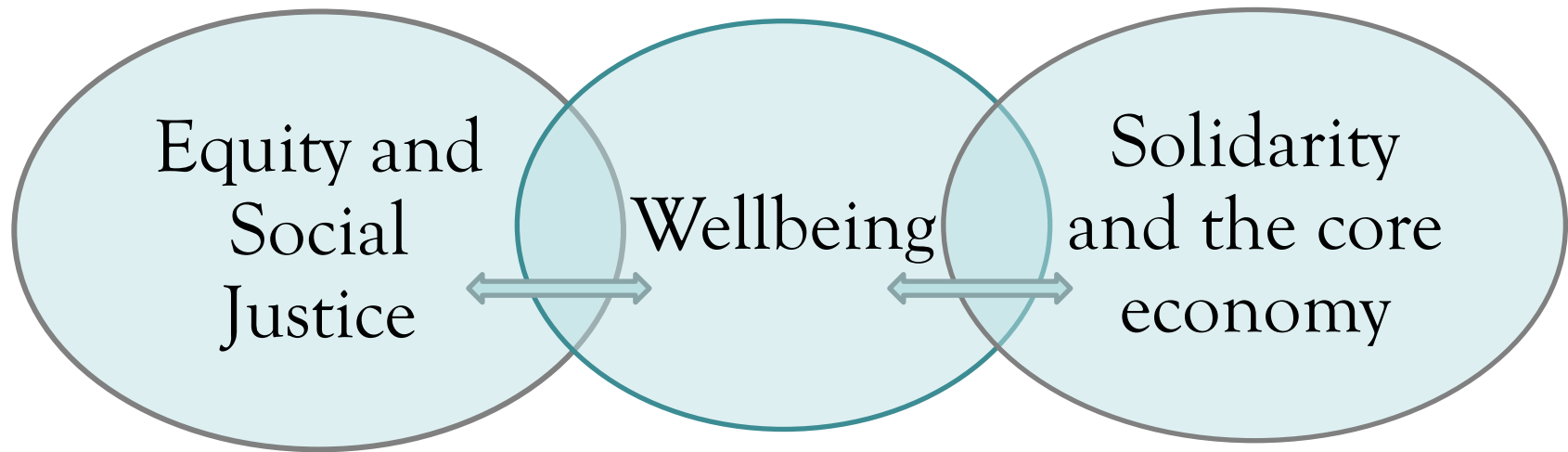
*‘Power of collective socialisation is often overlooked’*



*‘Public disregard ruins the spine’*

# Return to the social....

- Wellbeing is produced socially
- Quality of social relationships has a context
- *I am, because we are...*





Ring the bells that still can ring,  
Forget your perfect offering,  
There is a crack in everything,  
That's how the light gets in.

Leonard Cohen 'ANTHEM'





*A just society is one that is aware  
that it is not yet sufficiently just,  
that is haunted by this awareness  
and thereby spurred into action*

Zygmunt Bauman