

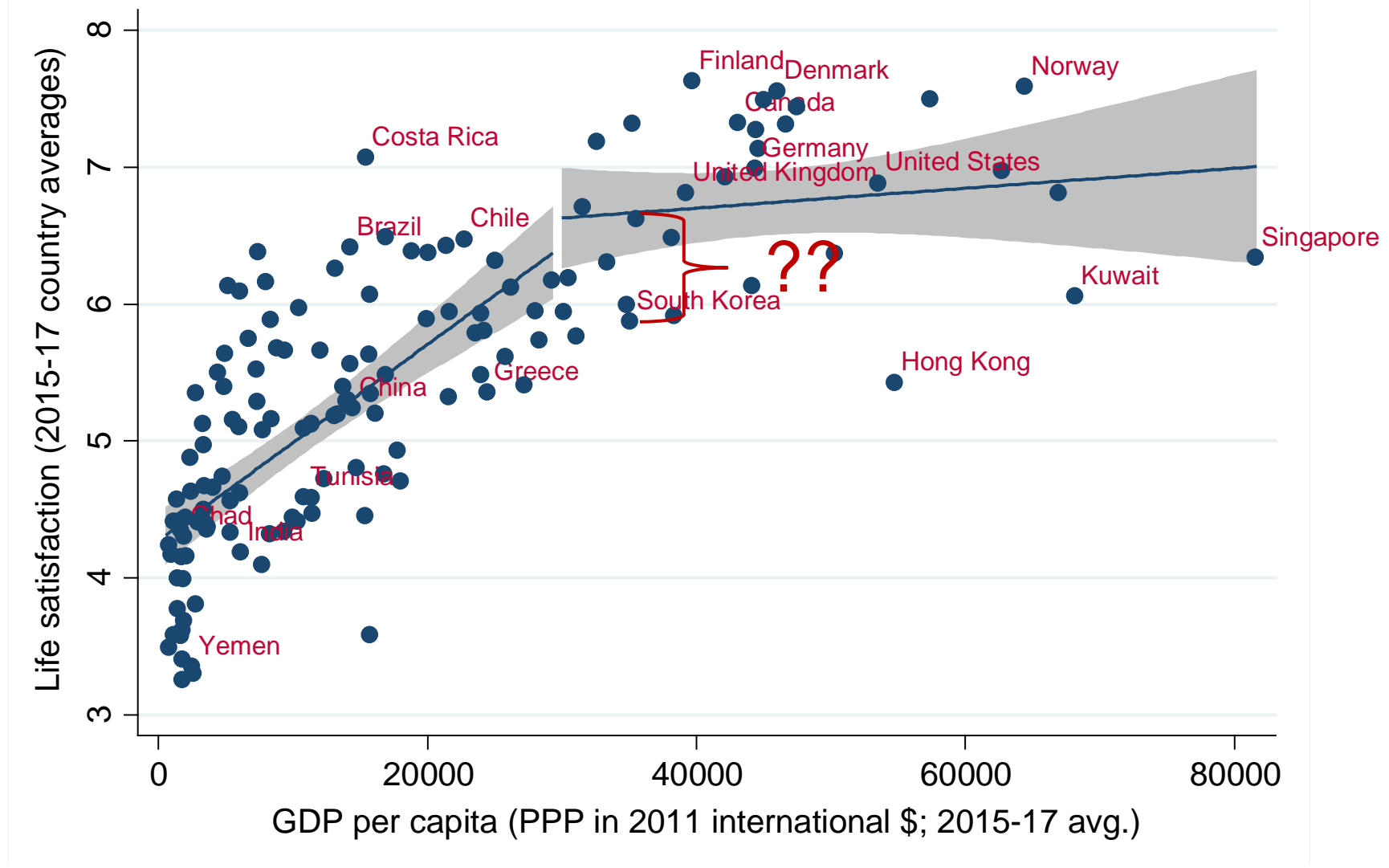
# Selected measures needed to better understand Korean's low satisfaction with life

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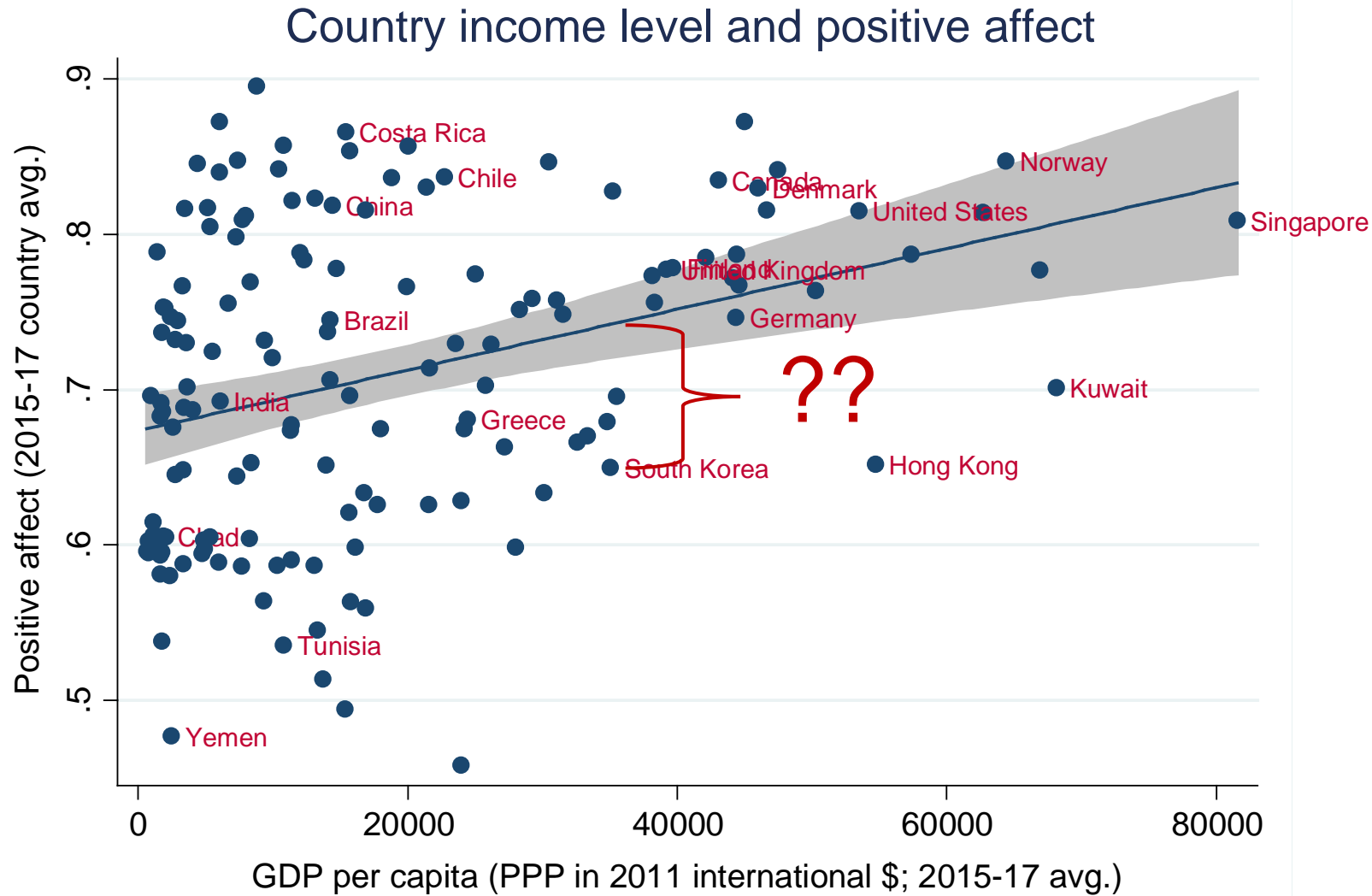
6<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum 2018, Incheon

## Country income level and life satisfaction

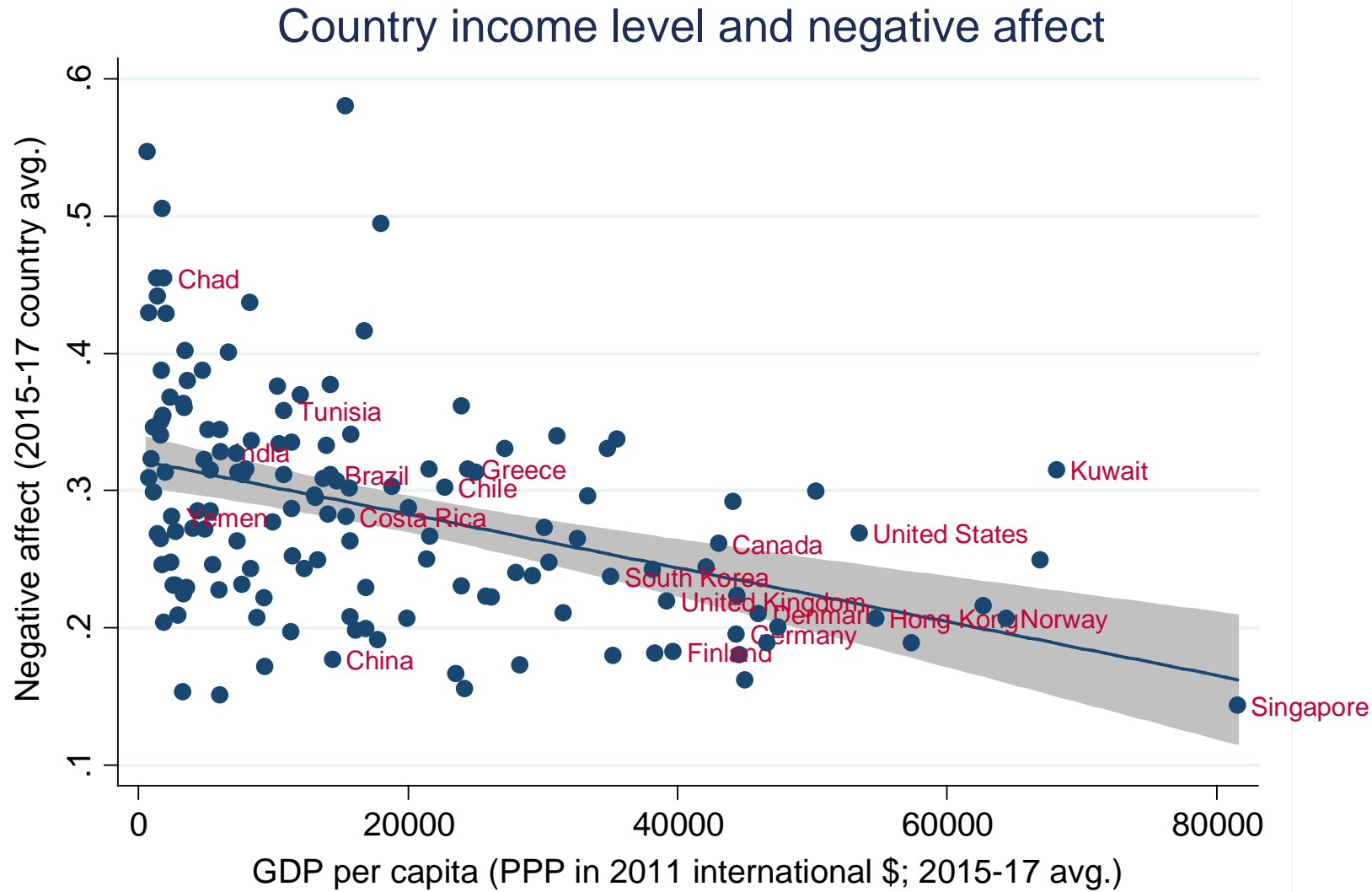


Life satisfaction:  
 Asks respondents to rate their life on a scale from 0 to 10, with the worst possible life as a 0 and the best possible life as a 10.

Source: World Bank, WDI, and World Happiness Report 2018.



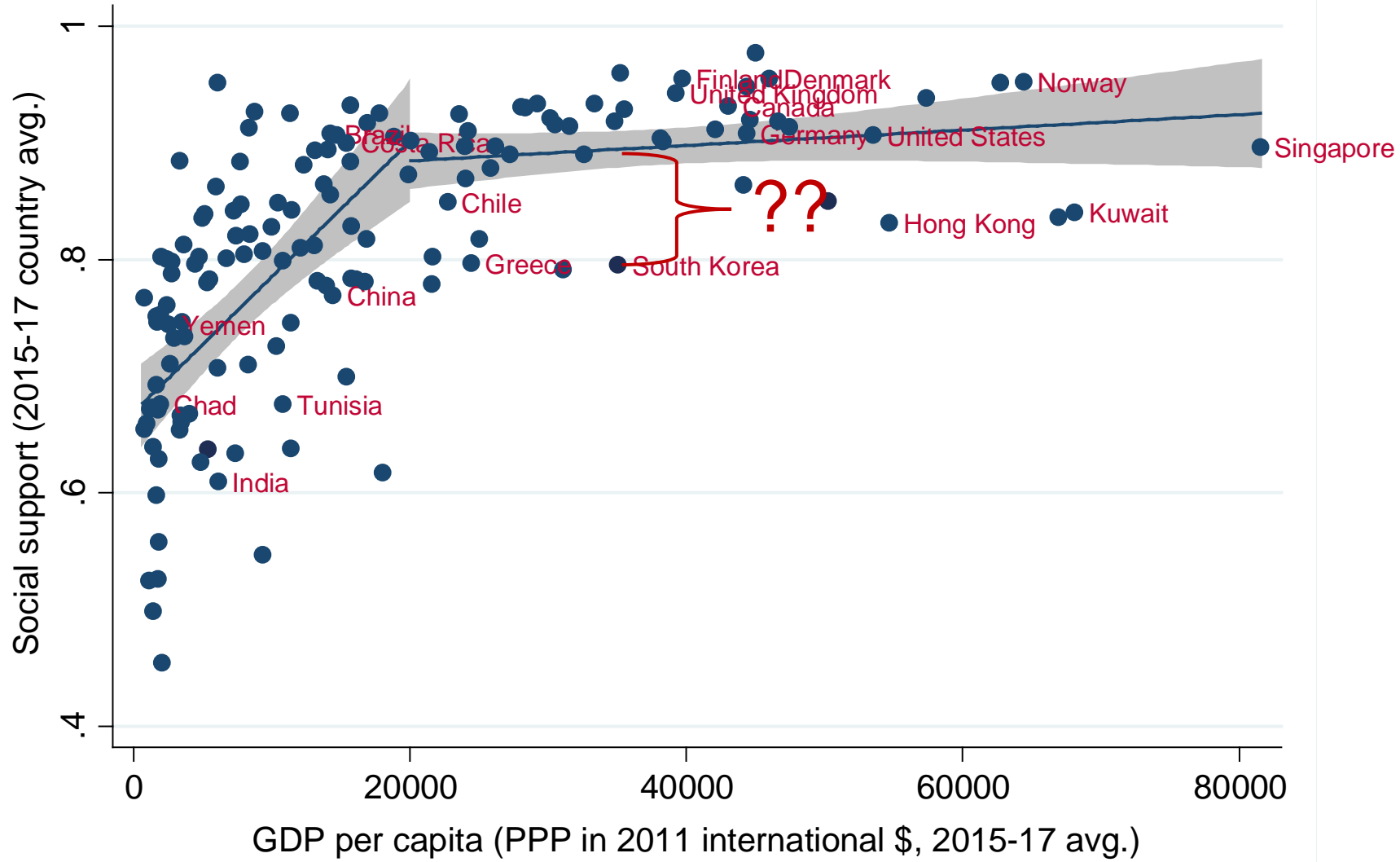
Positive affect:  
Average of previous-day  
affect measures for  
**enjoyment and  
laughter.**



Negative affect:  
Average of previous-day affect measures for **worry, sadness, and anger.**

Source: World Bank, WDI, and World Happiness Report 2018.

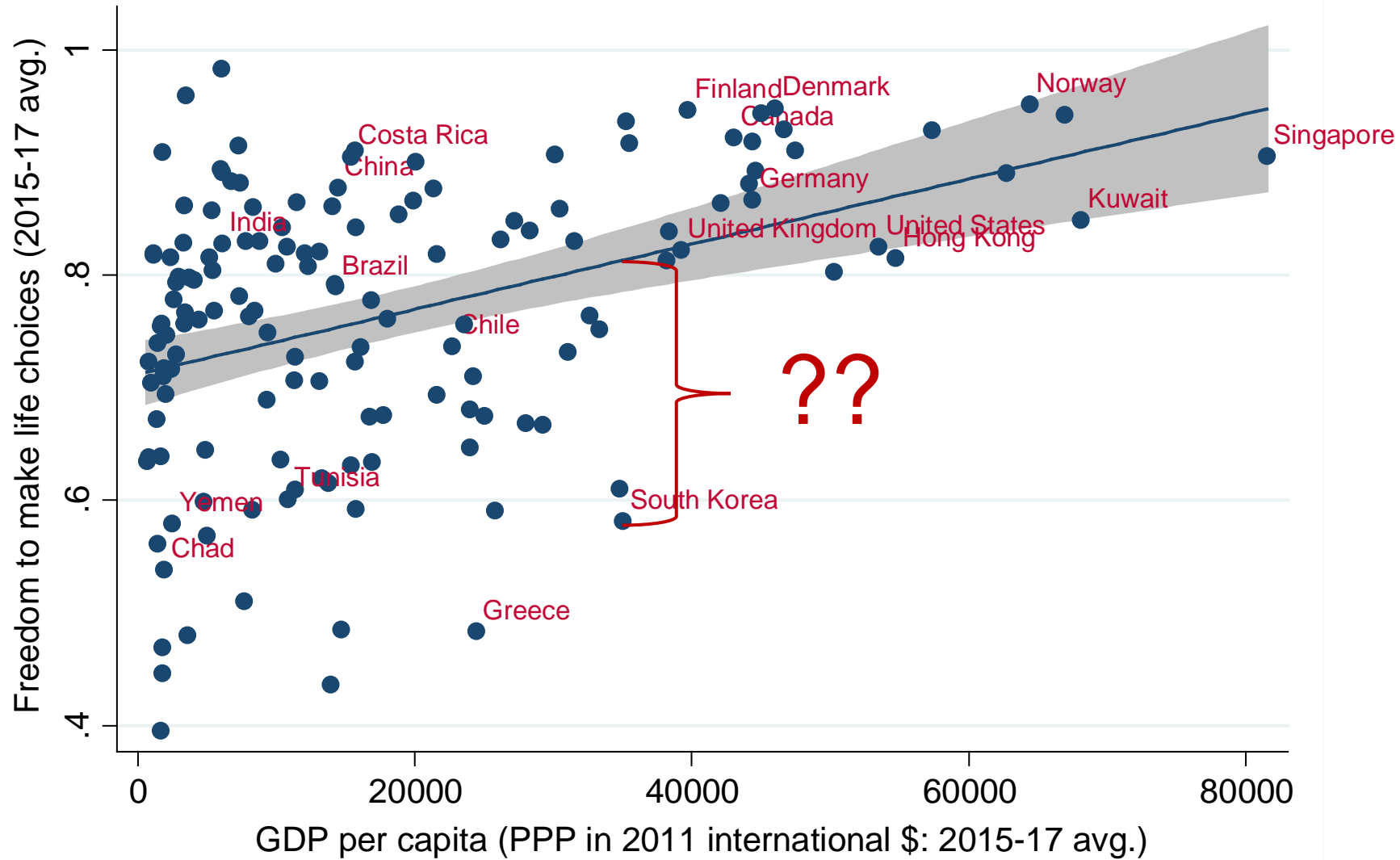
## Country income level and support from friends and family



Source: World Bank, WDI, and World Happiness Report 2018.

Social support:  
 “If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?”

# Country income level and freedom to make life choices



Source: World Bank, WDI, and World Happiness Report 2018.

## Freedom to make life choices:

“Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?”

# What might explain the lack in perceived freedom over life choices?

## ■ Traditional social norms

- Korea has a relatively narrow definition of success in life
  - Too few accepted life trajectories
  - Mainstream model: “Study hard, attend a top college, find a respectable job, marry and have children.”
  - Diversity/ creativity are still not valued enough
- Narrow definition of gender roles
- Strong hierarchies based on seniority

# What might explain the lack in perceived freedom over life choices?

## ■ Institutional factors

### – Role of private education

- High private edu costs increase the influence of parents over children
- Low intergenerational mobility due to excessive role of private education

### – Lack of risk-sharing within families limits both men's and women's choices in life

- High number of housewives increases severity of job loss of family fathers
- Men inclined to take conservative career choices
- Women often cannot follow their own careers

### – Social safety net remains weak

### – High old-age poverty rate



# Conclusions

- Korea underperforms in ***subjective*** indicators of well-being
- However, so far these indicators are only collected in detail by external actors (Gallup World Poll)
- Need to add subjective indicators to national surveys, by both KOSTAT but also other actors (KLI, KRIVET, KIHASA, etc.)

# List of suggested measures to be added to Korean surveys

- Subjective well-being measures in greater detail
  - Happiness, life satisfaction
  - Positive affect, negative affect
  - Measures related to stress, depression, job-loss fears
- Measures on perceived freedom and social support
  - Freedom to make life choices
  - Perceived obstacles to greater freedom
  - Access to help from friends and family
- Women and work
  - Access to quality child care
  - Access to part-time solutions in “good” jobs