

21



Happiness Report Card

**PART
ONE¹**

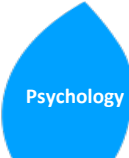
Table of Contents

About this Report.....4

The Year 2020.....6

Happiness Scores Across the Years.....8








 Satisfaction with Life.....10

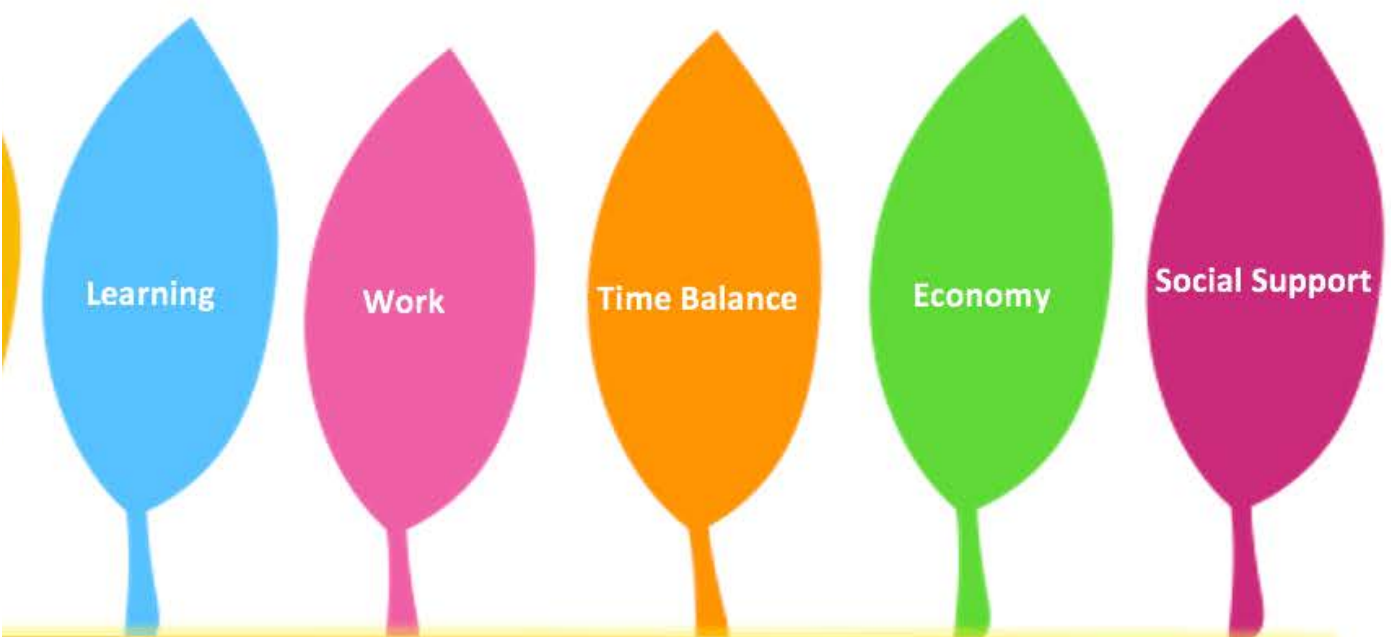
 Psychological Well-being.....12

 Health.....14

 Time Balance.....16



| | | |
|---|--|----|
|  | Community..... | 18 |
|  | Social Support..... | 20 |
|  | Learning & Culture..... | 22 |
|  | Environment..... | 24 |
|  | Government..... | 26 |
|  | Economy..... | 28 |
|  | Work..... | 30 |
| | Happiness Contemplations for 2021..... | 32 |



About the Happiness Report Card 2021

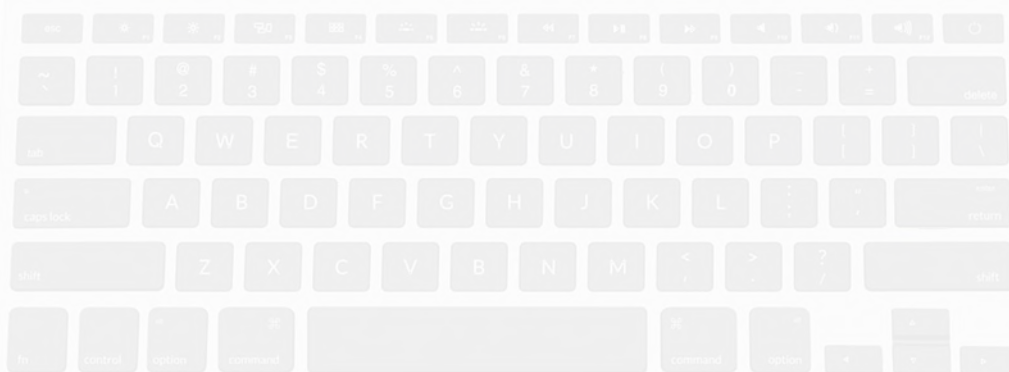
The Happiness Index scores **reflect the well-being of those who took the survey**. They do not necessarily reflect the well-being of everyone in the US or the world.

One way we can check to see if the people who took the survey feel similarly about their well-being to the general population is to look at the same or similar data collected with a random sampling. This is called ground-truthing. It turns out that indeed, 2020 was a hard year, and people are suffering.*

The Happiness Index is a scientifically validated survey.** This means that the data tells us valuable information about happiness and well-being.

We gather our data from a convenience sampling. This means everyone who took the survey chose to take it.

A random sampling should reflect the population because people who participate are chosen randomly – which takes out the risk of bias. When a sample is not random, it is possible that predominantly certain kinds of people participated, like liberals or conservatives, carefree or anxious, or- the kind of people who like to take online surveys!



*Jones, J. (2021, Feb. 3) Personal Satisfaction Drops from 2020 High) Gallup https://news.gallup.com/poll/329213/personal-satisfaction-drops-2020-record-high.aspx?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_content=morelink&utm_campaign=syndication 4

**Musikanski et al. (2017). Happiness Index Methodology. Journal of Social Change. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/jsc/vol9/iss1/2/>

There are different ways to gather random samplings: cell phones, online surveys, mailed ballots, person-to-person interviews. In years gone by, everyone had a big clunky telephone and in general, when someone called, you answered. Back in those days, you could not tell who was calling you. These days we can tell who is calling and most of us let a call go to voice mail if we don't recognize the number. We are inundated by junk mail and do not bother to open mail that does not look like a bill or personal letter but toss it in the recycle bin. It is not clear that online random samplings would not reflect the bias of those who like to take online surveys, and person-to-person interviews are no longer viable until we beat COVID-19.

These are rarely discussed issues with random sampling.

One way to get past these problems would be to gather data from everybody, as with a census.

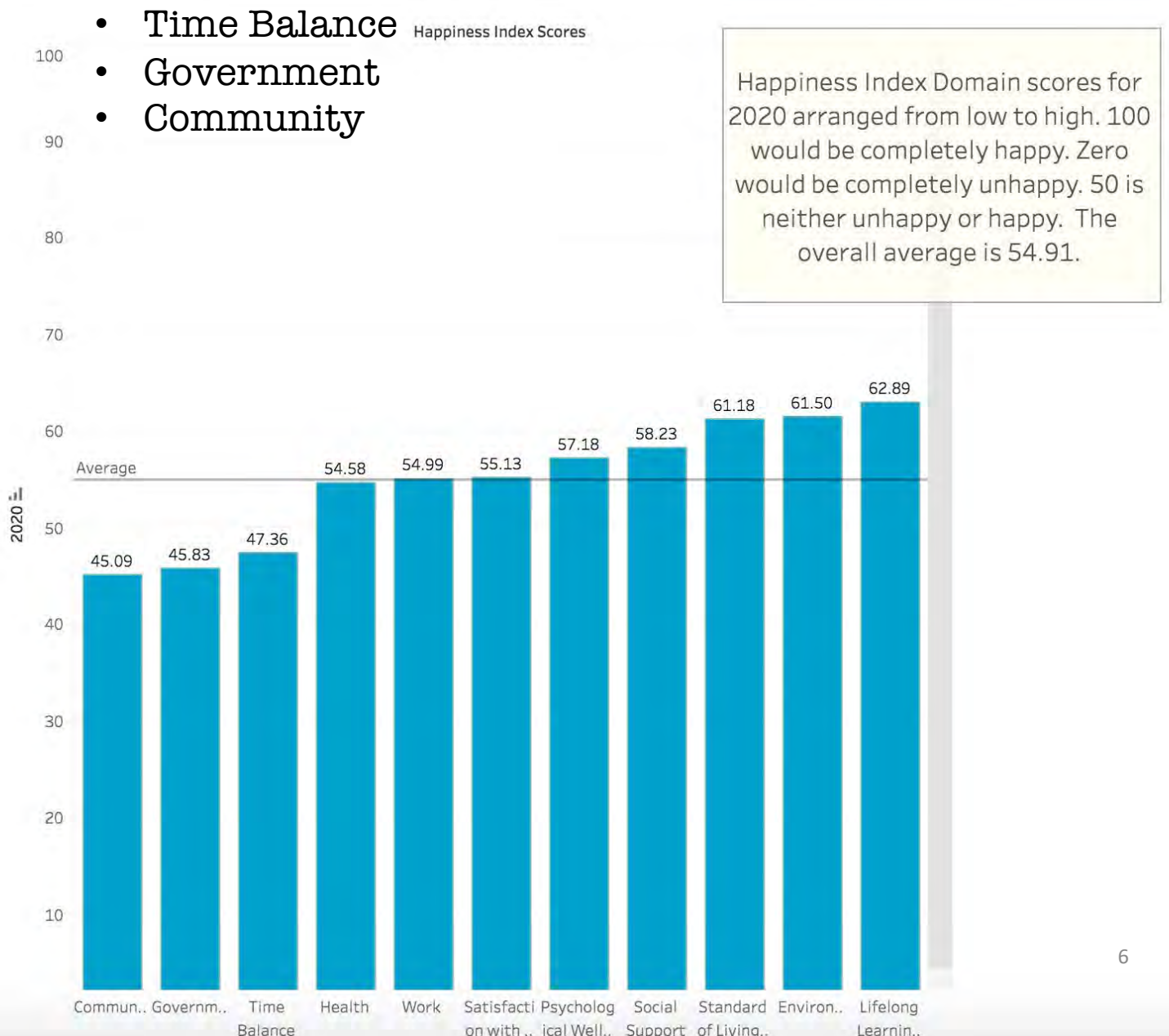
We noticed that, in recent years, we are not the only ones gathering data with convenience samplings. In the US, the city of Santa Monica gathered happiness and well-being data by inviting residents to take their survey, and other communities in the UK and elsewhere have done the same. Big data efforts like the Hedonometer* and others also use convenience samplings.

The only constant is change. It will take a while for the scientific field to catch up to the changed circumstances in how data is gathered. In the meantime, we will continue gathering data and empowering communities to do the same.

*Hedonometer project <http://hedonometer.org/about.html>

The **Happiness Index** measures happiness and well-being in ten specific areas plus a more general category denoted **satisfaction with life** on a scale of 0 (worst possible score) to 100 (best possible score). The happiness areas are listed in the order from highest to lowest scores:

- Lifelong Learning and Culture
- Environment
- Standard of Living
- Social Support
- Psychological Well-being
- Satisfaction with Life
- Work
- Health
- Time Balance
- Government
- Community



Our overall happiness score for 2020 was 54.91, and a little lower for the US at 54.12. The overall scores are the averages of every question in the Happiness Index.

Our happiness scores are lowest in two areas that are quite important to happiness: community and government.

Community measures our sense of belonging, safety, and trust in each other and the businesses in our community. Research* and common sense tell us that **when you feel like you belong to a community, feel safe in your town, trust your neighbors and the businesses where you shop, your life will be better.**

When you do not feel safe, do not trust your neighbor or local businesses, or don't feel like you belong, you are not as happy as you could be. Life just is not as good.

The same things are true for trusting your government. ** This applies **no matter whether you call yourself a right or left, conservative or liberal, progressive or nationalist, or anything else.**

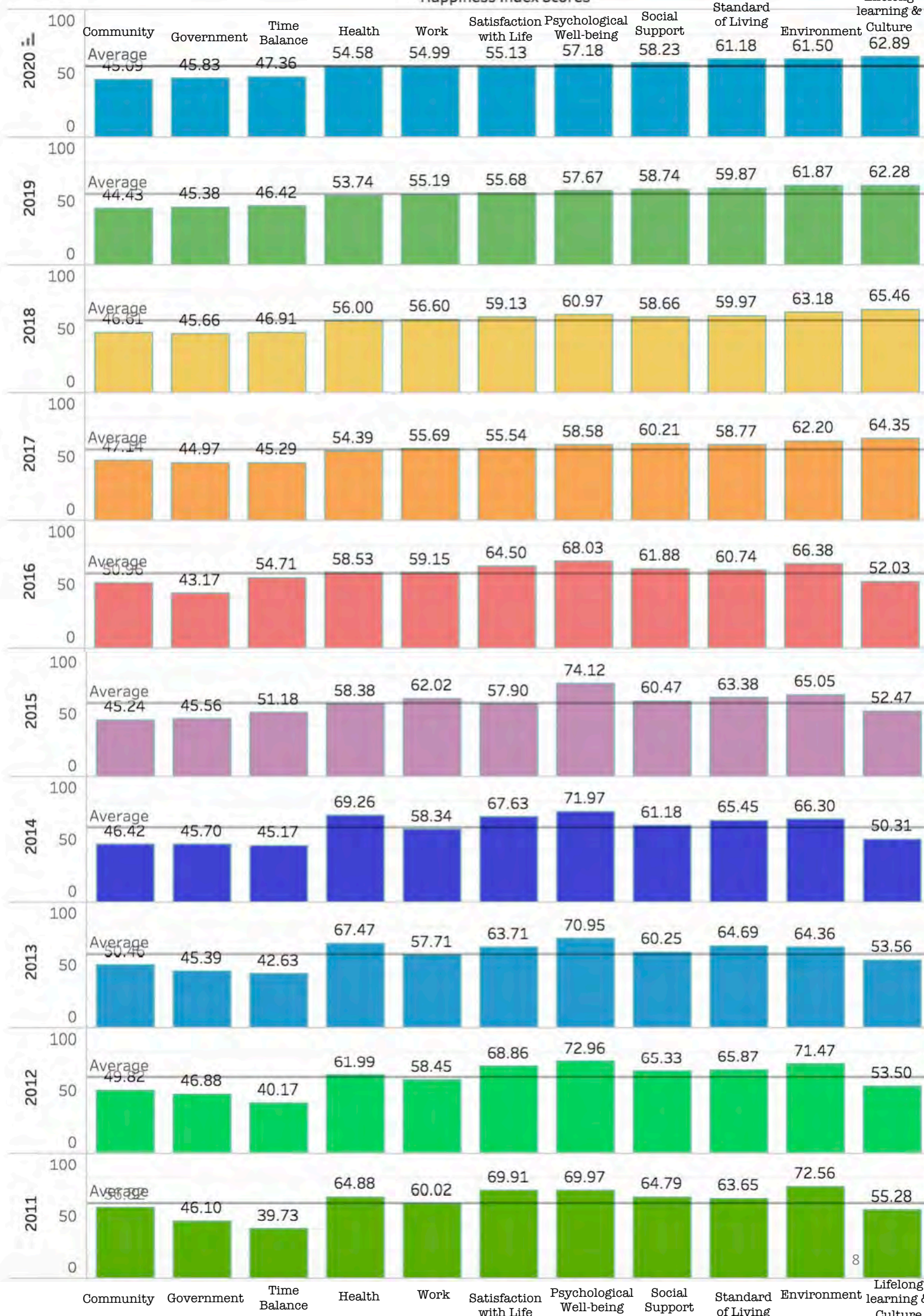
Community and Government are not the only areas in the Happiness Index in which we are suffering and could improve for our happiness. In fact, in all of our areas, we are not particularly happy. A score of 50 means we are neither happy nor unhappy, neither satisfied nor unsatisfied.

Life could be better.

*Ross, A., Talmage, C.A. & Searle, M. Toward a Flourishing Neighborhood: the Association of Happiness and Sense of Community. *Applied Research Quality Life* **14**, 1333-1352 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-018-9656-6>; Ruggeri, K., Garcia-Garzon, E., Maguire, A. *et al.* Well-being is more than happiness and life satisfaction: a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries. *Health Qual Life Outcomes* **18**, 192 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-020-01423-y>

**Ott J. C. (2011). Government and Happiness in 130 Nations: Good Governance Fosters Higher Level and More Equality of Happiness. *Social indicators research*, *102*(1), 3-22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9719-z>

Happiness Index Scores



There are two approaches to improving happiness:

The Bootstrapping & Self-Determination Approach:

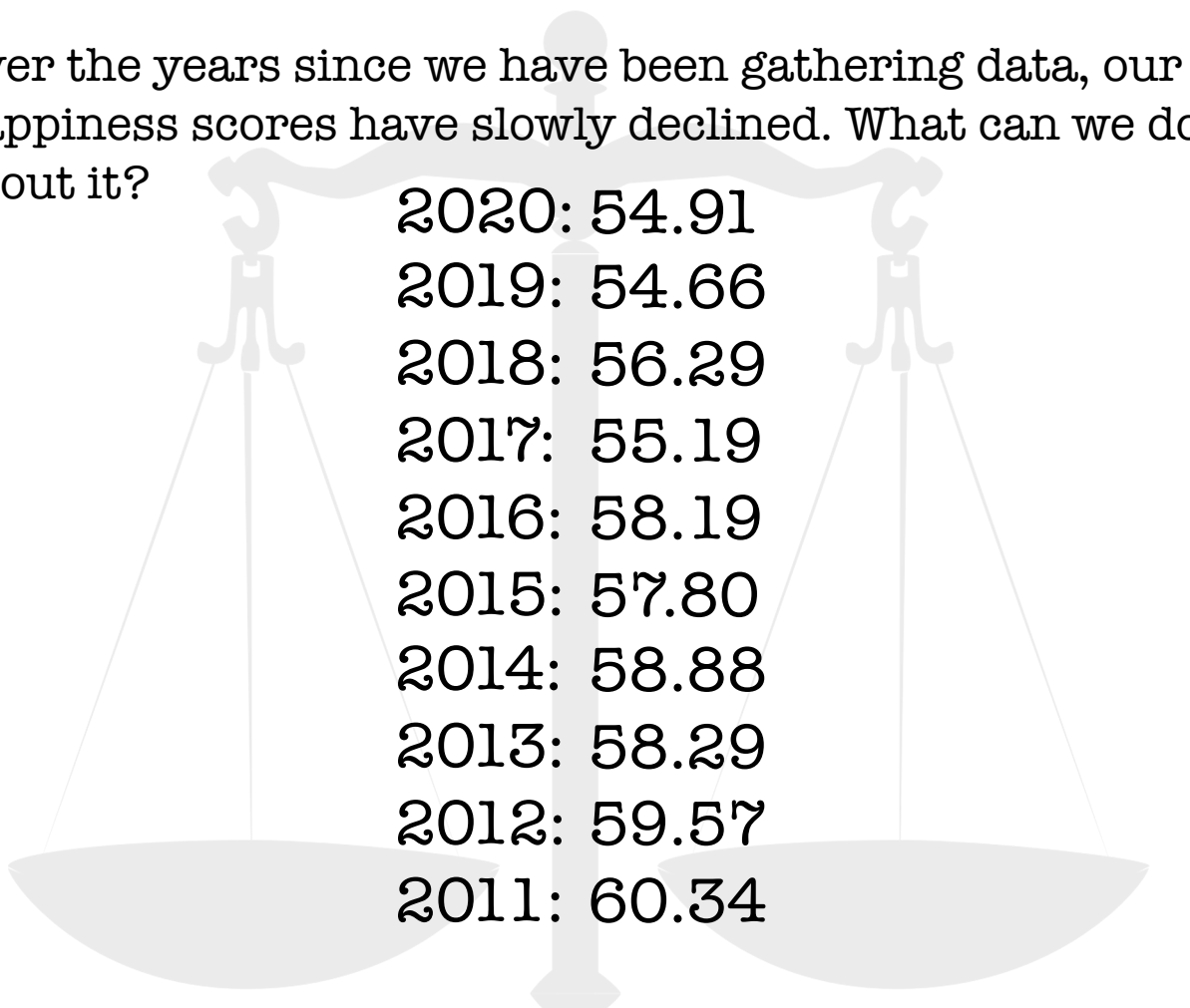
Your happiness is up to you. Your situation in life is determined by you. **If you want to better yourself, you just need to figure out how to do it and if you can't, it's your fault.** If your approach to happiness is based on self-determination, you probably value autonomy and competence.

The Protection & External-Forces Approach:

Your happiness is determined by your life circumstances, over which you have little or no control, but the government does. **If you want to be happy, the system needs to change so you can be happy.** If your approach to happiness is based on external forces, you probably value empathy and compassion.

In the real world there is a balance or mixture between these two approaches.

Over the years since we have been gathering data, our happiness scores have slowly declined. What can we do about it?

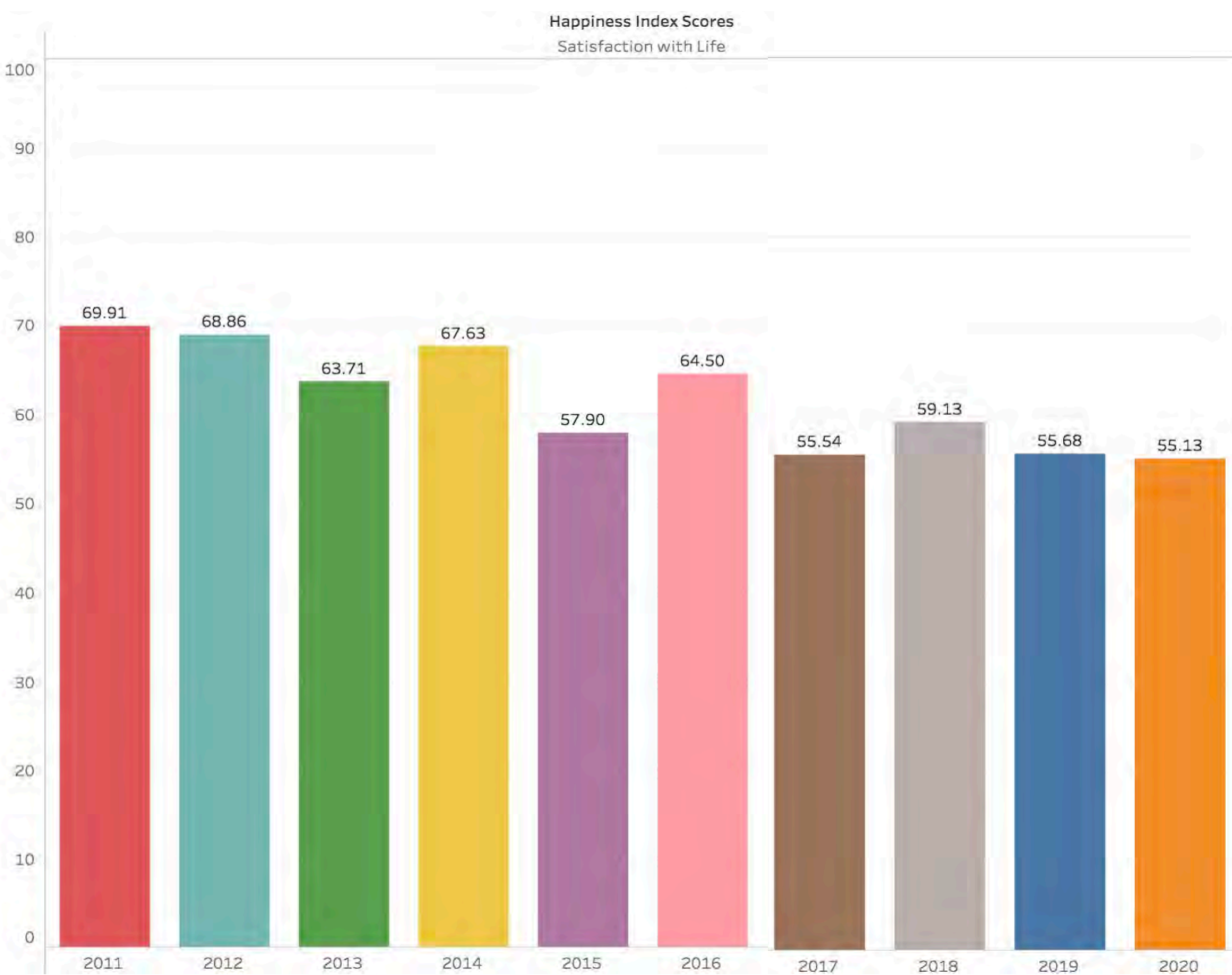


| | |
|-------|-------|
| 2020: | 54.91 |
| 2019: | 54.66 |
| 2018: | 56.29 |
| 2017: | 55.19 |
| 2016: | 58.19 |
| 2015: | 57.80 |
| 2014: | 58.88 |
| 2013: | 58.29 |
| 2012: | 59.57 |
| 2011: | 60.34 |

Satisfaction with life is likely the most important measure of well-being. It is the one which we use to determine whether all the other areas matter or not. In other words, **if your scores go up in another area of happiness, then your satisfaction with life should improve.**

It is also the score that some policy makers and scholars use as a single indicator to be coupled with the predominant economic indicator in use today to measure and guide our lives and country, the gross domestic product. The GDP is the total monetary value of all goods and services produced in a given year.

In 2011, we started with a score of almost 70 out of 100 in satisfaction with life and dropped about 15 points to 55.



Bootstrap Happiness

When you have both the ability to make choices about your own life and you have the opportunity to act on your choices, you can bootstrap your happiness.

How?

The first step is to take the [Happiness Index](#). If you have already taken it sometime in the past, hopefully you saved your results so you can see where your scores have changed – or not. **Look for where your scores are low, and make a plan to take actions to improve your happiness** in these areas. The rest of this report has ideas for how you can do that.

Protect Happiness

The most important thing that governments, business, and people can do to improve satisfaction with life is to use the metrics of happiness and well-being to guide policy and decisions and as the basis of determining “success” of their actions.

Why do metrics matter so much?

Because **the metrics we use at a societal level to measure success determine our individual values, which in turn determine individual and collective attitudes and behavior.***

What can you do about it?

Bring the Happiness Index to your community, town or place of work. Tips for doing this are in our [Happy Community Toolkit](#) and our book, [The Happiness Policy Handbook](#), lays out the steps for making happiness the purpose of government.

For psychological well-being, the Happiness Index measures your sense of purpose and meaning in life, achievement and optimism. It also measures how positive you feel about yourself.

Psychological well-being could also be called flourishing. When we have high scores in psychological well-being, we are more apt to be **resilient in the face of adversity, creative as problem solvers in the face of challenge, make healthy choices in our lives, have happier relationships, and handle stress better**. A person and a population that is psychologically healthy is more stable, productive, healthy, and happy.



Bootstrap Happiness

There are three ways to bootstrap your psychological wellbeing.

Mindfulness: spend a little time each day practicing awareness - of your breath, of sounds, of how your body feels, of the thoughts in your mind...anything at all.

Gratitude: take every opportunity you can to express gratitude - say thank you, praise the praiseworthy, write a note of appreciation, make a list of the things for which you are grateful, keep a gratitude journal.

Generosity: give something everyday - your undivided attention, a hug, a small act of service and don't forget yourself - a few moments of silence or self-care.

There are a myriad ways to practice these three ways. Find ones that work for you and make them a habit.

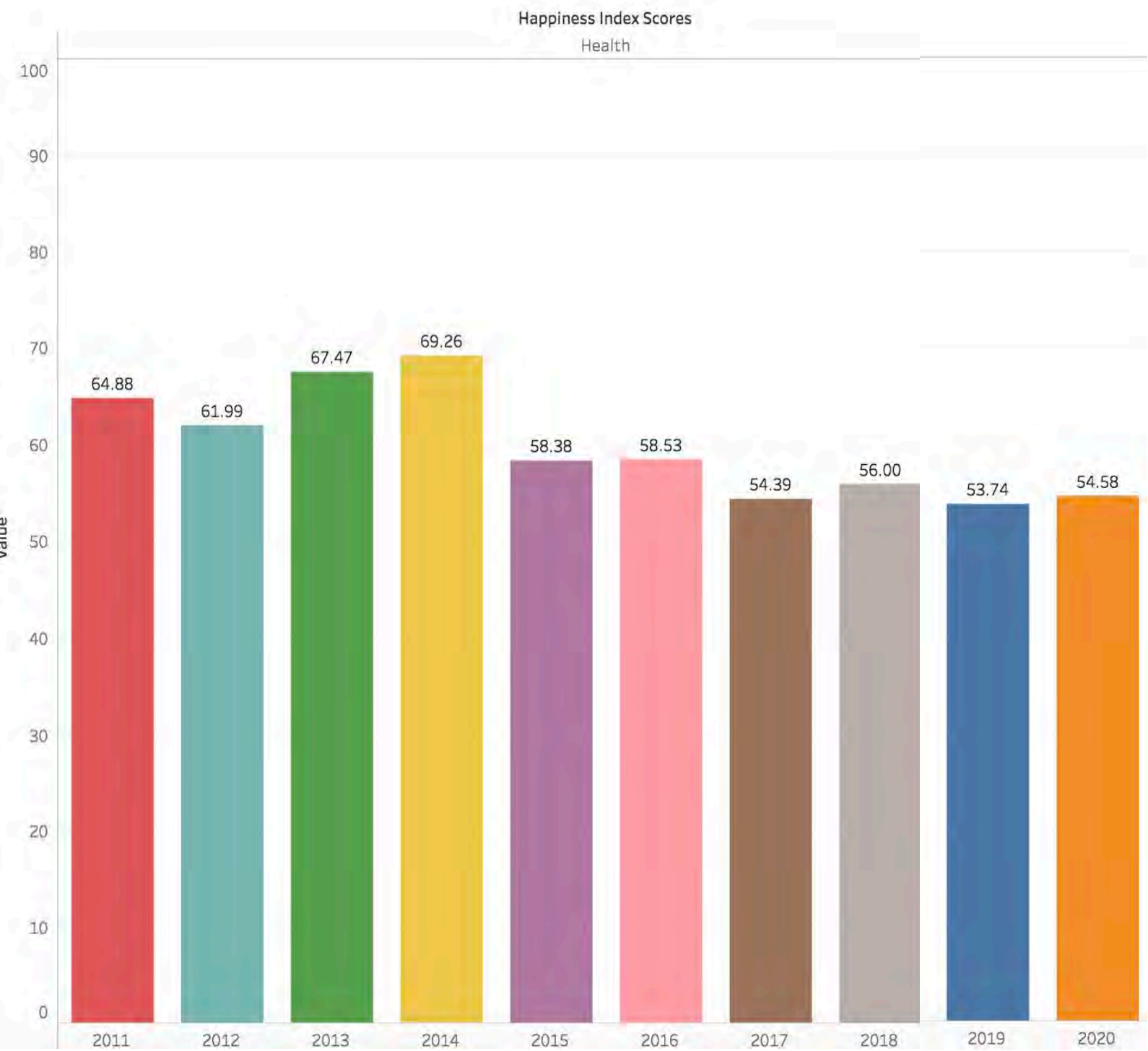
Protect Happiness

One of the best ways to create the conditions that foster psychological well-being is early education - birth to age 8- that teaches babies and children life skills.* An important aspect of this kind of education is the experience of **unconditional love and nurturing**. This is why some education programs involve the parents and caregivers. Another word for this is attachment. Other important aspects are **positive reinforcement and encouragement when undertaking learning activities**. Early education lessons for small children come in the form of play. Early education programs are often provided to at-risk families.

Almost every person will be a parent, aunt, uncle or in some way play the role of caregiver to young children in their life. Here is a revolutionary idea: what if early educational lessons were routinely given to small children and taught to teenagers as part of their education?

Durring 2020 we experienced a global health crisis unparalleled in the memory of anyone alive today. **Suddenly most of us stopped taking our health for granted.** Suddenly all of us experienced just how much a threat to our health changes our lives.

With 2021 and a vaccine in hand, we have some hope, but also hopefully we won't forget how important health is to our well-being.



Bootstrap Happiness

Healthy eating, exercise and good hygiene are the tips often given for bootstrapping your health. What you might not know is the importance of sleep. Not getting enough sleep can also be one of the reasons it can be so hard to resist unhealthy food, get exercise or take good care of yourself.

Simply put, **sleep is really important for health.**

If you do not have an exercise routine, or are too busy, try taking **exercise snacks**. Five minutes on the exercise machine, three jumping jacks, or a five minute you-tube yoga break here and there can do you a world of good. Last, even with the hope that we will get over the pandemic, it is still important to **take your vitamins & stay hydrated.**

Protect Happiness

One of the key lessons from the Happiness Movement has to do with protecting our health. The lesson is this: **investing in mental health care results in better physical health, and reduced physical health care costs.** An investment in the first year pays off and in the coming year results in a net financial gain.*

Investment in mental health care entails **destigmatizing mental health care** so that doctors and patients are able to recognize the signs of mental illness, just like with physical illness, and not feel ashamed about getting treatment. Just as health care plans encourage a preventative physical health care visit each year, preventative mental health care visits would be encouraged. And mental health care would be part and parcel of physical health care.

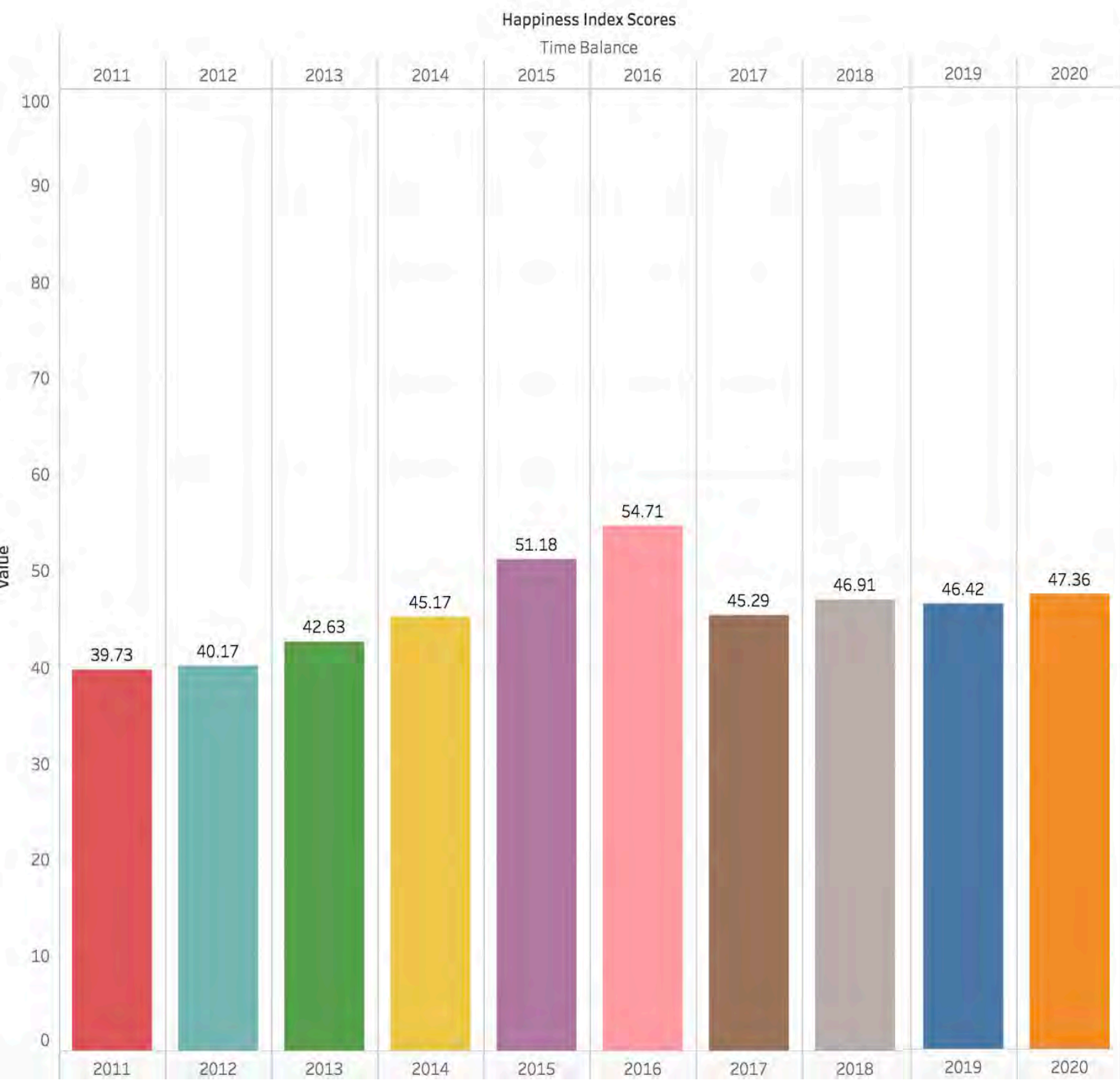
A caveat for health care in the US: While the US has some of the best health care in the world, it is among those with the worst access to health care among developed nations and lowest life expectancy.** This needs to change.

* Peasgood et al. (2019). Priority Setting in Healthcare Through the Lens of Happiness, Global Happiness Policy Report https://s3.amazonaws.com/ghwbpr-2019/UAE/GH19_Ch3.pdf

** Tikkannen, R. & Abrams, M. (2020). US Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2019: Higher Spending, Worse Outcomes? The Commonwealth Fund. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2020/jan/us-health-care-global-perspective-2019>; Hellman, M. (2014). U.S. Health Care Ranked Worst in the Developed World. Time <https://time.com/2888403/u-s-health-care-ranked-worst-in-the-developed-world/>

Time balance is the area of happiness where we consistently score the lowest. Time balance has three components: feeling rushed, having enough time to do the things you want to do, and enjoying the things you are doing.

Today, even young people do not feel like they have enough time.



Bootstrap Happiness

With the technological revolution (which some will remember promised a plethora of leisure time), we are more busy than ever. “Always connected” has its toll. Bootstrapping time balance can be difficult when, for most of us, our devices – our cell phones – are a combination of avatars and security blankets. We feel at loss without them, but are always busy with them.

If you have never taken a device break or completely unplugged, **try unplugging for five minutes today**, then work your way up to ten minutes. Explore what your life is like without your cell phone, laptop or any other device. See if you get a sense of ease when you unplug.

Protect Happiness

Protecting time balance can be hard -for areas without these simple policies:

Vacation leave laws: national vacation leave laws are the norm in most nations, but not in the US, where allowing vacation leave is up to the employer.* In the US it is not uncommon for people to not take their vacation leave if it is not paid or if they can trade it for money. Some countries recognize the importance of vacations for worker productivity and quality of life, and so it is required that people take their vacation.

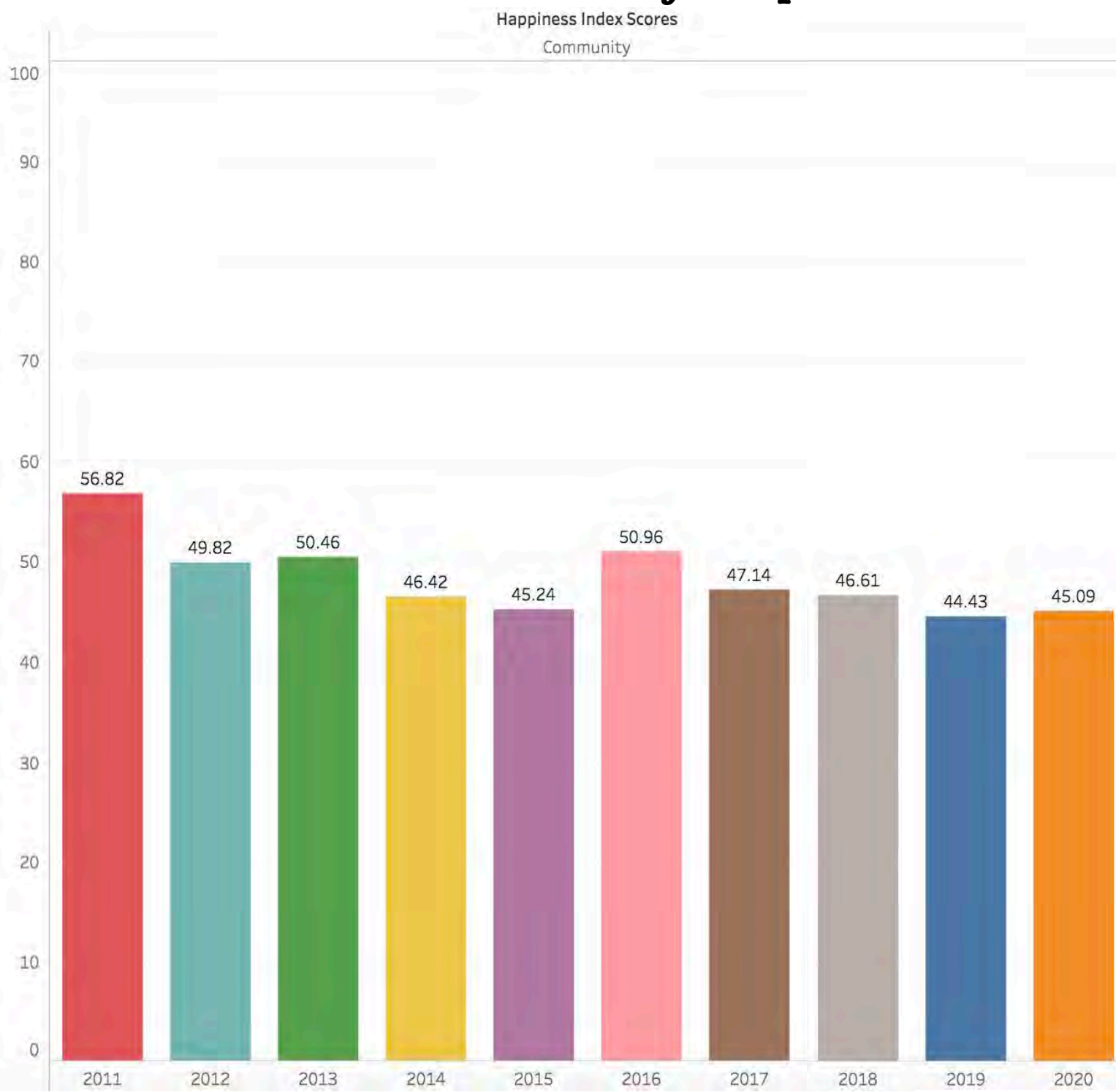
Sick leave laws: as with vacation leave, sick laws are in place in most nations, but not in the US.** Some municipalities do have laws, and people are allowed to take sick leave even when not sick with use it or lose it policies. These laws do not protect people who get sick for longer periods than the allotted sick leave.

* Vacation Pay State Laws Chart <http://ask.legalsolutions.thomsonreuters.info/cc-nto-vacation-rolling-pl>

** Sick Leave. US Department of Labor <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/sickleave>

Community comes in many forms. **Community can be place based.** A neighborhood, town or region may be your community. **Community can be interest based.** Salsa dancers, Trump supporters, union workers are all communities to which people have strong feelings of belonging. **Communities can be action based.** A group of people working together to get something done - a team in the workplace, a group working towards a shared , a church group. **Circumstances can define communities** too -a family, friends or a group coming together in the face of a disaster.

By evolutionary nature, humans form communities. Our communities help define who we are. They impact our values, world view and behaviors. **Community is important.**



Bootstrap Happiness

Once a person is able to meet their basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, some leisure activities), **community is a very important area of happiness.*** For many people who are not able to meet their basic needs, community can help them to meet their needs.

In scientific terms, for people who are not suffering financially, community is the area of well-being most highly correlated to happiness. What this means is that investing your time and effort in your community gives you the biggest bang for your “buck.” Spending your time with your loved ones, volunteering, getting to know your neighbors...these are ways to bootstrap your happiness in the area of community.

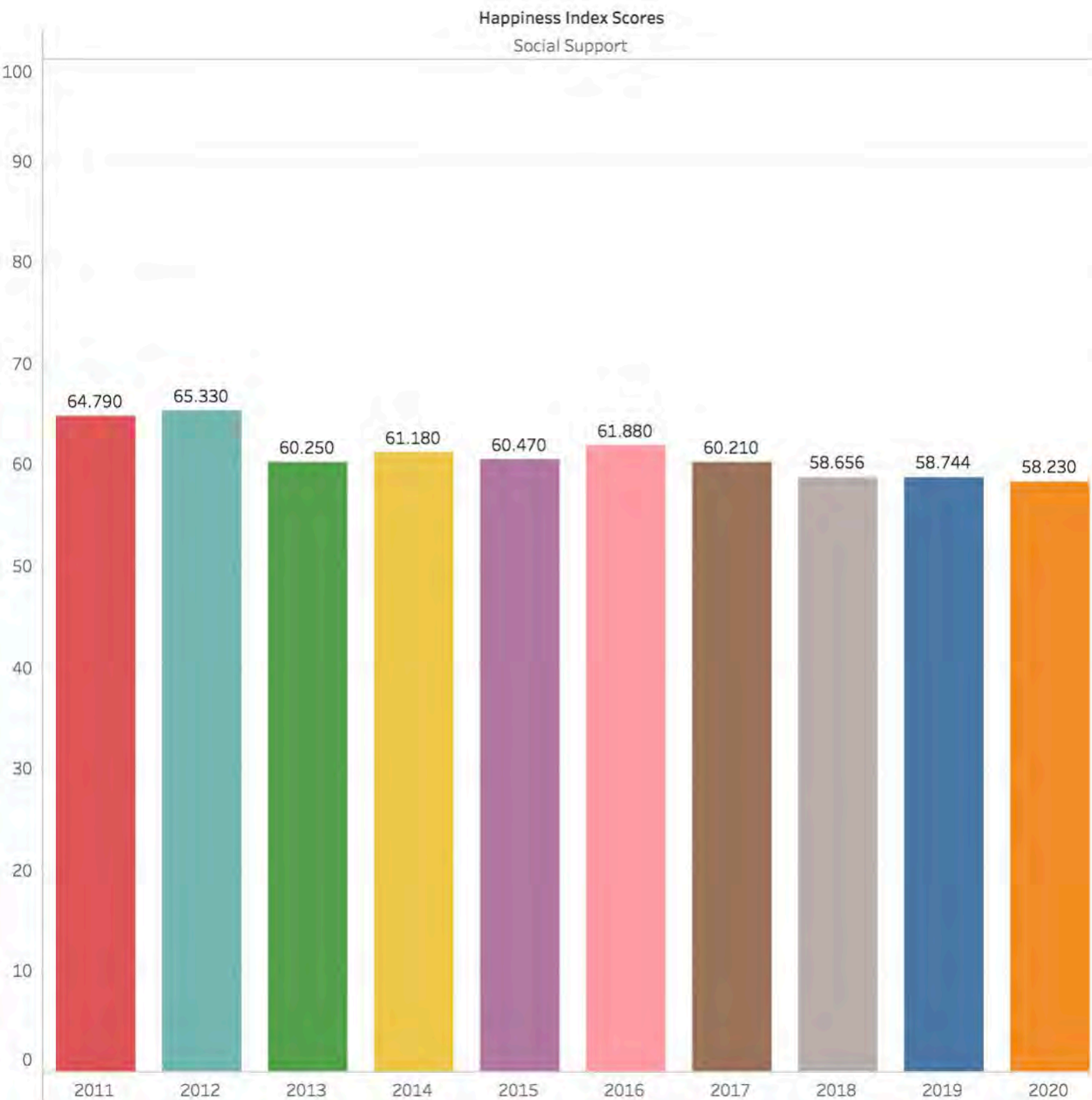
Protect Happiness

2020 opened our eyes to more than the fragility of our health. The death of George Floyd and the ensuing Black Lives Matter peeled back the failures of the Civil Rights Movement and our collective blind eye to the plight of Black Americans and systemic breakdowns in many police forces in the US.

Safety is key to happiness. The role of the police is to keep the peace – and keep us safe. Policing is a necessary function of a civilized society. Today, many police do a great job, and, as was made painfully clear in 2020, some fail miserably. Protecting happiness in the area of community requires taking the approach of *build back better* for our police force in ways that foster trust and accountability. States and cities across the US are trying different approaches – some of which are leaving populations feeling less safe such as rapid de-funding. Other approaches focus on accountability through data collection, monitoring, and peace keeping training. These latter approaches may be more successful in protecting our happiness.

Social support focuses on relationships:
Being happy with personal relationships.
Feeling cared about.
Feeling loved.
Not feeling lonely.

Social support is really a subset of community, because one of the ways to define community is by circumstances: family and friends. It is its own area in the Happiness Index because **relationships are so important to happiness.**



Bootstrap Happiness

Researchers find that people in relationships are happier than people who are not, but it is not clear if the reason for this is that people who are naturally happy are more likely to be in a relationship than people not naturally happy.* We may never know, but we do know that there is a connection between being happy and being in relationship. We also know some important skills that can be developed to be in a happy relationship. Relationship experts offer four ways you can bootstrap your happiness by improving how you relate to your loved ones: * *

Replace defensiveness with curiosity

Replace contempt with empathy

Replace criticism with appreciation

Replace stonewalling with generosity and gratitude.

Our Family Happiness Handbook has more information. * * *

Protect Happiness

Protecting families is a policy priority that almost everybody, no matter what belief system, agrees upon. Research indicates that a key factor for a strong family is being able to meet financial needs and that raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour would greatly benefit families. * * * *

Other policies include paid parental leave, universal childcare and strengthening unions. These policies that would bolster families are considered progressive by some. * * * * * However, most people would agree that families do need to be able to meet their financial needs and have time to take care of babies and sick children if they are going to be strong.

* Stutzer, A. & Frey, B. (2006) Does marriage make people happy, or do happy people get married? *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 35(2) 326-347, doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2005.11.043.

* * Lisitsa, EE. (2013). *The Four Horsemen: Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness and Stonewalling*. The Gottman Institute. <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-recognizing-criticism-contempt-defensiveness-and-stonewalling/>

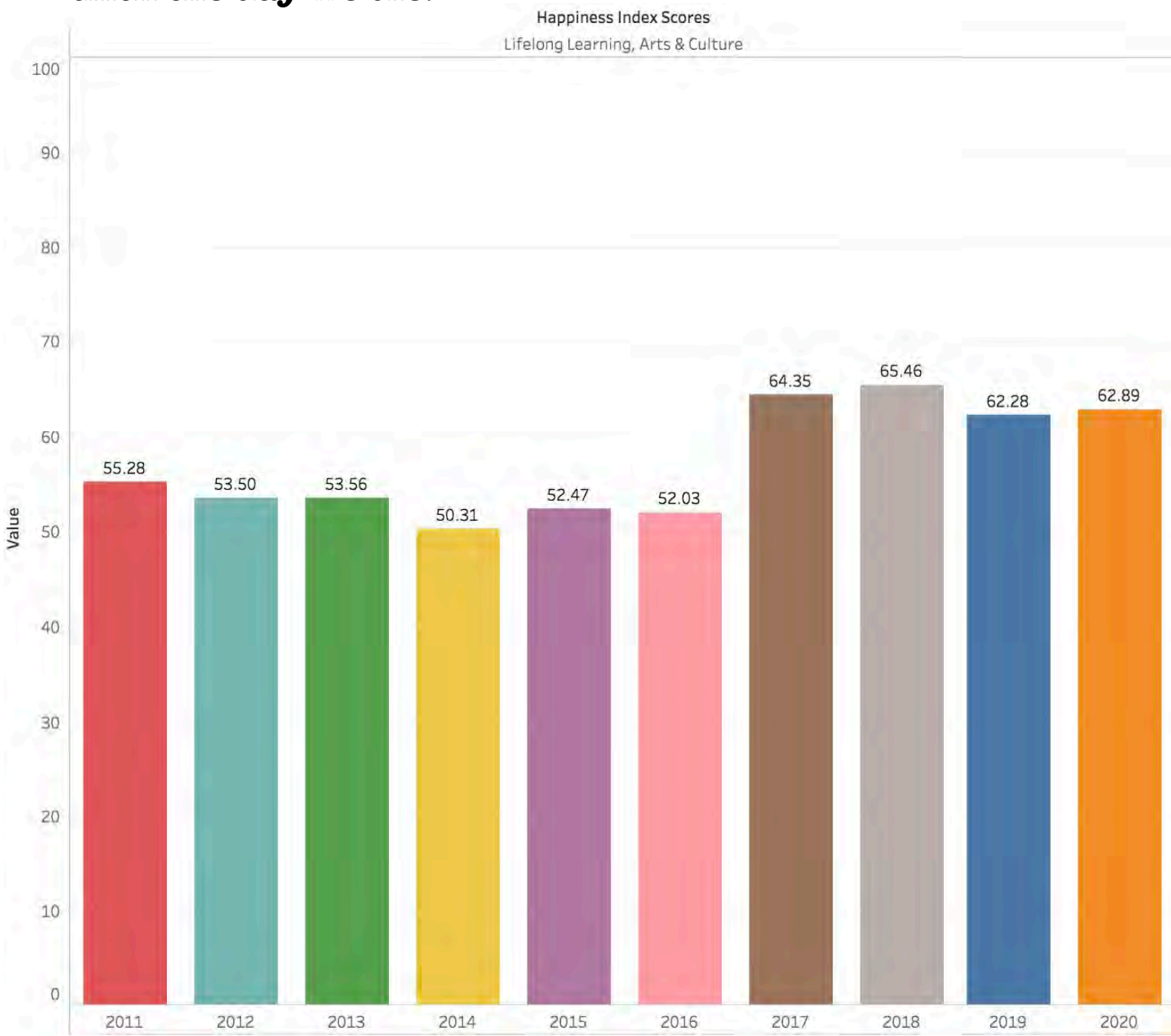
* * * Family Happiness Handbook https://issuu.com/happycounts/docs/family_happiness_handbook?fr=sMjg1MTIwNDUxMDE

* * * * David Cooper, "Raising the Minimum Wage to \$12 by 2020 Would Lift Wages for 35 Million American Workers" (Washington: Economic Policy Institute, 2015), available at <http://www.epi.org/publication/raising-the-minimum-wage-to-12-by-2020-would-lift-wages-for-35-million-american-workers/#epi-toc-18>.

* * * * Robbins, K. & Fremstad, S. (2016) *4 Progressive Policies that Make Families Stronger*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2016/10/25/225731/4-progressive-policies-that-make-families-stronger/>

Lifelong Learning and Culture are combined for the Happiness Index because the two are deeply interlinked in our view. Data for education level is gathered in the demographics section. This area gathers data for satisfaction with respect to access to cultural, learning and recreational activities. We believe that the openness or closedness of a society is an important element of culture, and so include a question for discrimination in this area.

Throughout our life we are learning – learning from formal education, vocational and professional development, life experiences, hobbies, new interests... **We learn about the world around us, about other people and about ourselves until the day we die.**



Bootstrap Happiness

Lifelong learning and culture are interlinked. One way they are linked is that by learning about one's culture. One way to Bootstrap happiness in the area of lifelong learning and culture is to develop your capacity to listen and communicate. Listening is a fine art that can be learned. * **Listening is also something that does not come naturally for most.**

Active listening is when you non-judgmentally pay undivided attention when someone is speaking, reflect on what you understood and ask questions to ensure you do understand before responding. **Listening is a difficult but powerful skill.**

Communicating skills also do not come naturally for most of us. A method developed by Rosenberg, it entails stating – without judgement or demands – your observations, feelings, needs and requests. * *

Protect Happiness

Culture helps define who we are –from foods, music and dance to what our buildings look like and how our government is formed. How different people in a society are treated is also a part of culture. **Discrimination negatively impacts opportunities, attitudes, beliefs and outcomes.** In 2020, the outcomes of long held institutional racism in the US came to light for many who have not been directly impacted by it. Many changes are needed in a society to end discrimination and transition a culture to inclusion and openness.

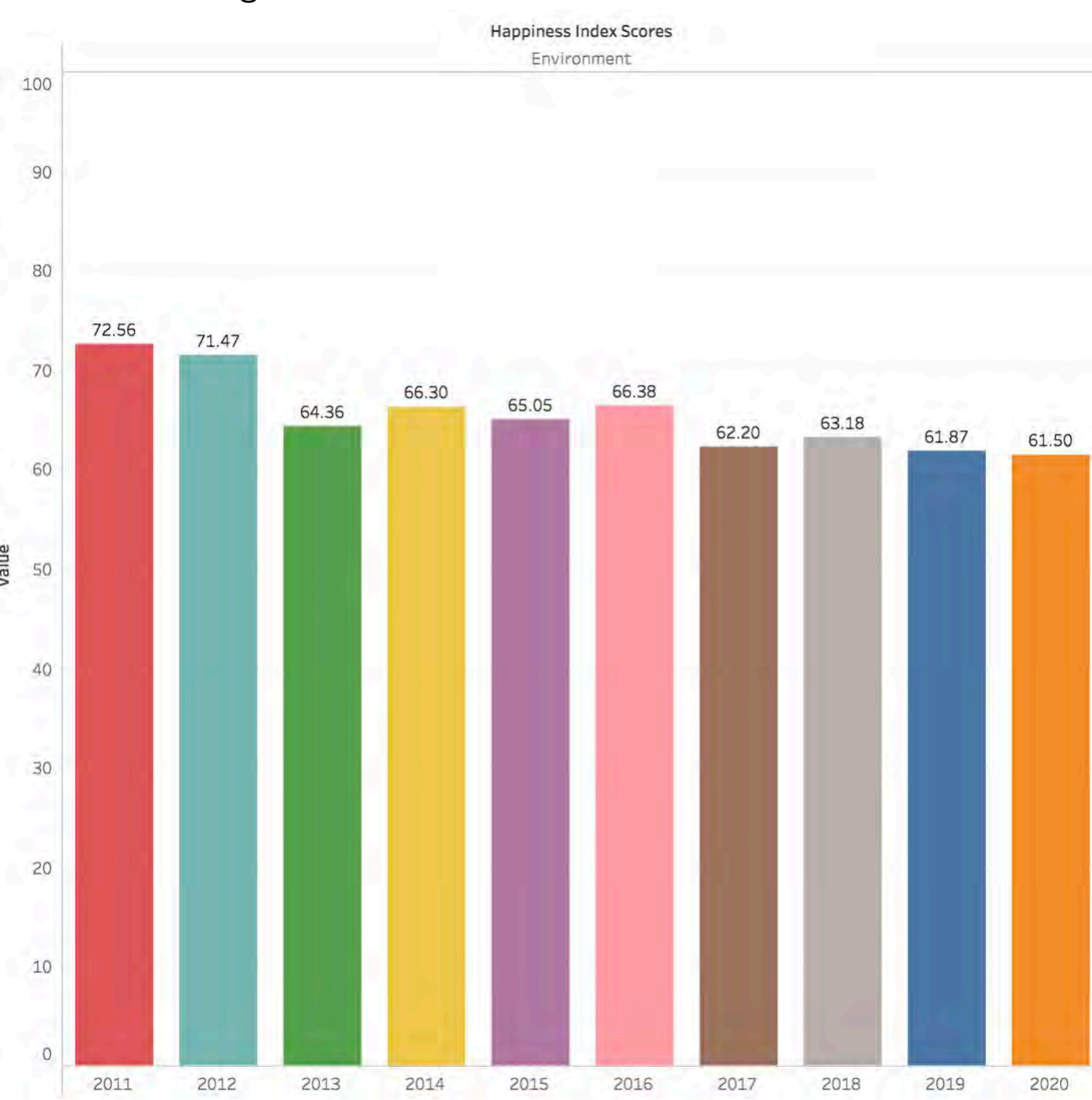
In the US, the effect of redlining and other practices continue today in terms of black people's ownership of homes. * * * This could be fixed so that banks and federal institutions that **foster home ownership** are not allowed to continue “standards’ and practices that “justify” discriminatory lending and credit practices.

*Cuncic, A. (2020). How to Practice Active Listening. Very Well Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-active-listening-3024343>

** Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, The Center for NVD. <https://www.cnvc.org/training/resource/book-chapter-1>

*** Lerner, M. (2020, July 23). One home, a lifetime of impact. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/23/black-homeownership-gap/?arc404=true>

The Happiness Movement has its roots in the sustainability movement. **Sustainable human happiness and well-being is dependent upon the sustainability of nature.** Yet, we measure our happiness and well-being by how much stuff we can buy- a common measure for standard of living, and how productive we are -a common measure for government and business. We do this at the expense of the sustainability of nature and, eventually, ourselves. It's easy - albeit hard- to change this. We just change our measures to wider measures of well-being.



Bootstrap Happiness

Bootstrapping your happiness in the area of the environment can be overwhelming because all alone you can't change in the environment, like ending species extinction, cooling down global warming, or cleaning up waste lands and waters. But you can make a difference in your own life that will change others by how you behave. **One powerful thing you can do is to consume less stuff.** Consuming less stuff is hard because a consumer society is constantly giving you prompts to buy more stuff. It's not just ads and product placement in your favorite shows. It is also planned obsolescence in your cell phones, laptop, refrigerator and other things that are not built to last. Some things you can't do much about, but where you can, buy less, buy recycled or used, and buy things built to last then maintain, repair and be careful with what you have.

Protect Happiness

2020 piled it on with extreme weather and raging fires. The impacts of climate change are no longer theoretical. While there is some evidence that if we take drastic collective action now we can cool down our climate and slow the change, it's more likely inevitable that we must **adapt to the climate change coming.** Some of these adaptations can be made at the local level. They include strengthening local food systems. This could mean bringing back the family farm in rural communities and avenues like farmer's markets and community supported agriculture in cities. Another avenue is ordinances and programs to encourage urban agriculture, similar to peace gardens – back yard or parking strip vegetable gardens that spread across the US during WWII.

Other interventions by towns, cities and municipalities include protecting greenfields (places that have not been developed) and flood plains from development.

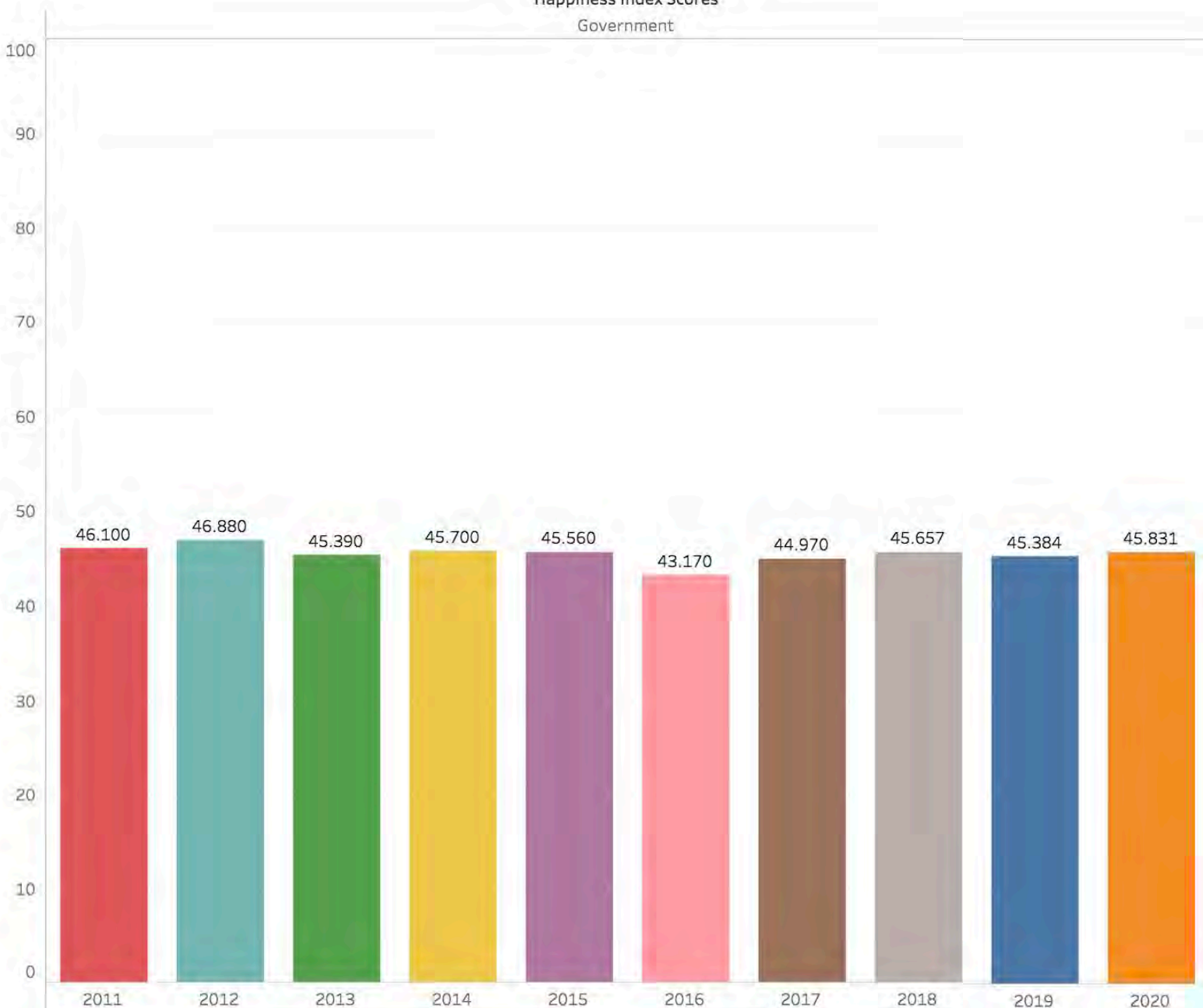
In the area of government scores are compiled from four measures: Perception of corruption in local government. Local government cares about what people think. Trust in local government. Trust in national government.

The US Declaration of Independence states:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people* are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these **are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness**. That **to secure these rights, Governments are instituted** among People, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. *We changed this to people.

In other words, the purpose of government is happiness.

Happiness Index Scores
Government



Bootstrap Happiness

We do not notice how much our government impacts our happiness when there are not problems, but when there are, we notice. A breakdown in government really affects happiness. To bootstrap your happiness in the area of government, do not buy the disempowerment story. Participate! Get informed about who represents you in your national and local government: subscribe to newsletters and write or call them. Vote. If you have friends or family members whose political views clash with yours, **talk about politics with them calmly with an open mind** (see the tips on listening in the Social Support section), ask questions to understand and encourage critical thinking.

Protect Happiness

Protecting our happiness in the area of government in the US goes to the foundation of democracy: **a government of the people, by the people and for the people**. Two US Supreme Court decisions,* provided that the voice of the people can be heard in the form of financial contributions (money) by big business. Supreme court decision are interpretations of the law. An interpretation that the people do not like is supposed to send a signal to law makers to go back to the drawing board.

Campaign finance reform laws do not allow or set limits on the amount of money that can be spent on a campaign, the amount of money a candidate can accept, and other forms of support like ads, formation of committees, special events.

You can see if your state** has campaign finance reform laws and search online to see what your town is doing to maintain a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

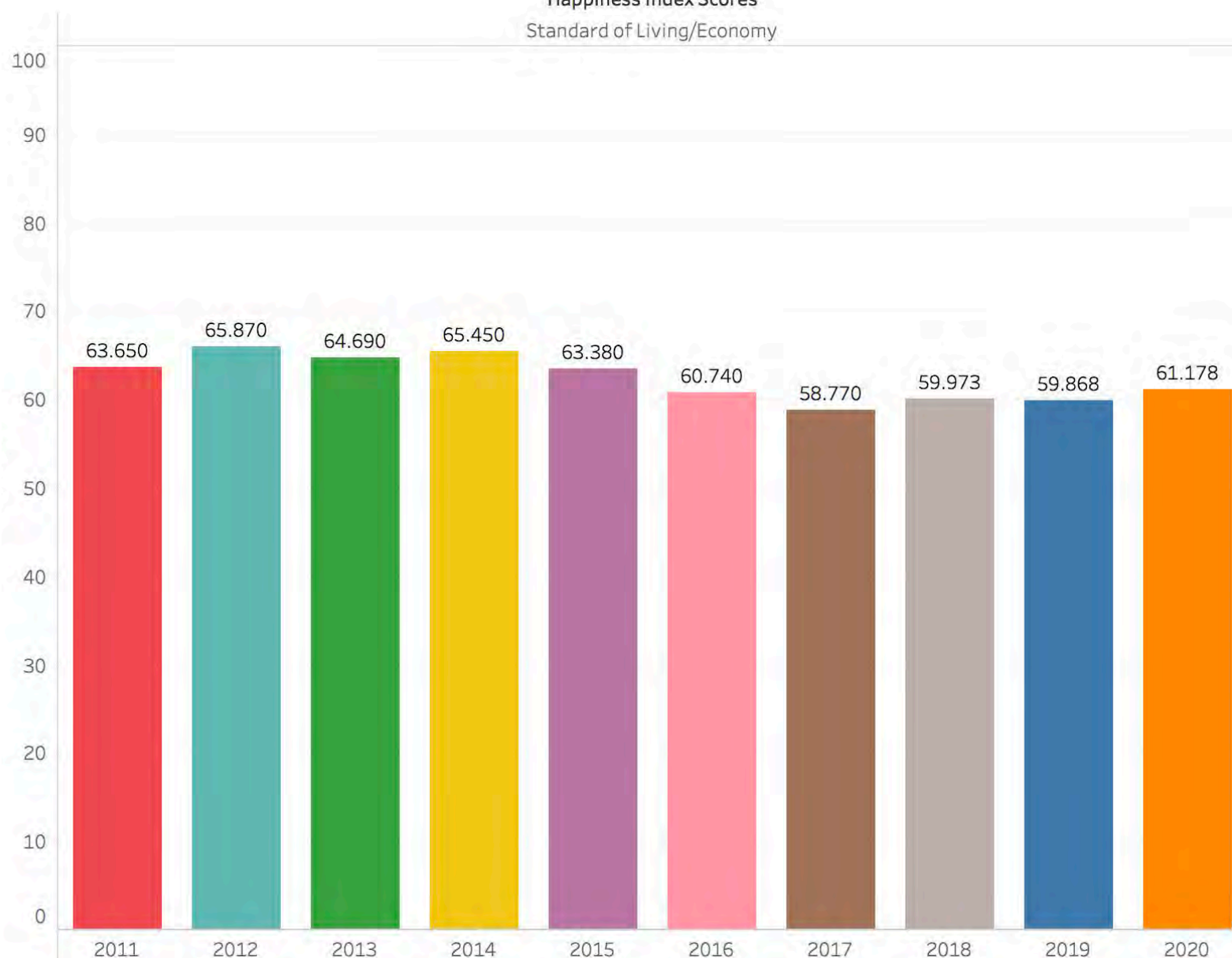
*Southern Pacific Railroad Company, 118 U.S. 394 (1886); Citizens United v the Federal Election Commission 558 U.S. 310 (2010)

**State by State comparison of campaign finance requirements by BallotPedia https://ballotpedia.org/State-by-state_comparison_of_campaign_finance_requirements

The word economy comes from οἶκος, meaning home or house hold, and ομῖα meaning management. For an economy today, **the home we are managing is our nation, region or town.**

The Happiness Movement was initiated by economists because they saw that our current understanding of economy is unhealthy. It is too limited. Managing an economy should not be just about the amount we produce – our GDP- and our financial state. **Managing an economy should include all of the areas of our well-being.** It should focus on our happiness. This is the message economists have about the Happiness Movement for the world.

Happiness Index Scores
Standard of Living/Economy



Bootstrap Happiness

Can money buy happiness? Up to a certain point, you do require money so you can meet your needs. If you find that you are not able to meet your needs financially, then you will be happier if you invest your time in increasing your income. After that point, bootstrapping your happiness means you are better off directly investing your time in doing the things that make you happy.

Researchers find that economic inequality that is unfair makes everybody unhappy and takes a big toll on the health of the poor.* What this indicates is **that if you are financially well-off, investing your time in helping others who are not able to meet their need may give you lots of happiness dividends.**

Protect Happiness

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** are set by the United Nations for all countries but are also relevant to states and municipalities. They begin with no poverty or hunger. Goal 10 is to reduce inequality.

Other goals call for changes in our health, education, energy, business and ecological systems. Goal 5 is for gender equality, which may be a key

leverage point in terms of educating girls and women.***

Researchers have found a negative relationship between two of the goals and wellbeing: Responsible Consumption and Production & Climate Change.**** Common sense tells us **we must reframe our understanding of our well-being and our consumption behaviors that contribute to climate change.**

Sustainable Development Goals

- 1: No Poverty
- 2: Zero Hunger
- 3: Good Health and Well-being
- 4: Quality Education
- 5: Gender Equality
- 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- 10: Reduced Inequality
- 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- 12: Responsible Consumption & Production
- 13: Climate Action
- 14: Life Below Water
- 15: Life on Land
- 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
- 17: Partnerships to achieve the

*Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. (2020). The inner level: How more equal societies reduce stress, restore sanity and improve everyone's well-being. Penguin Books,

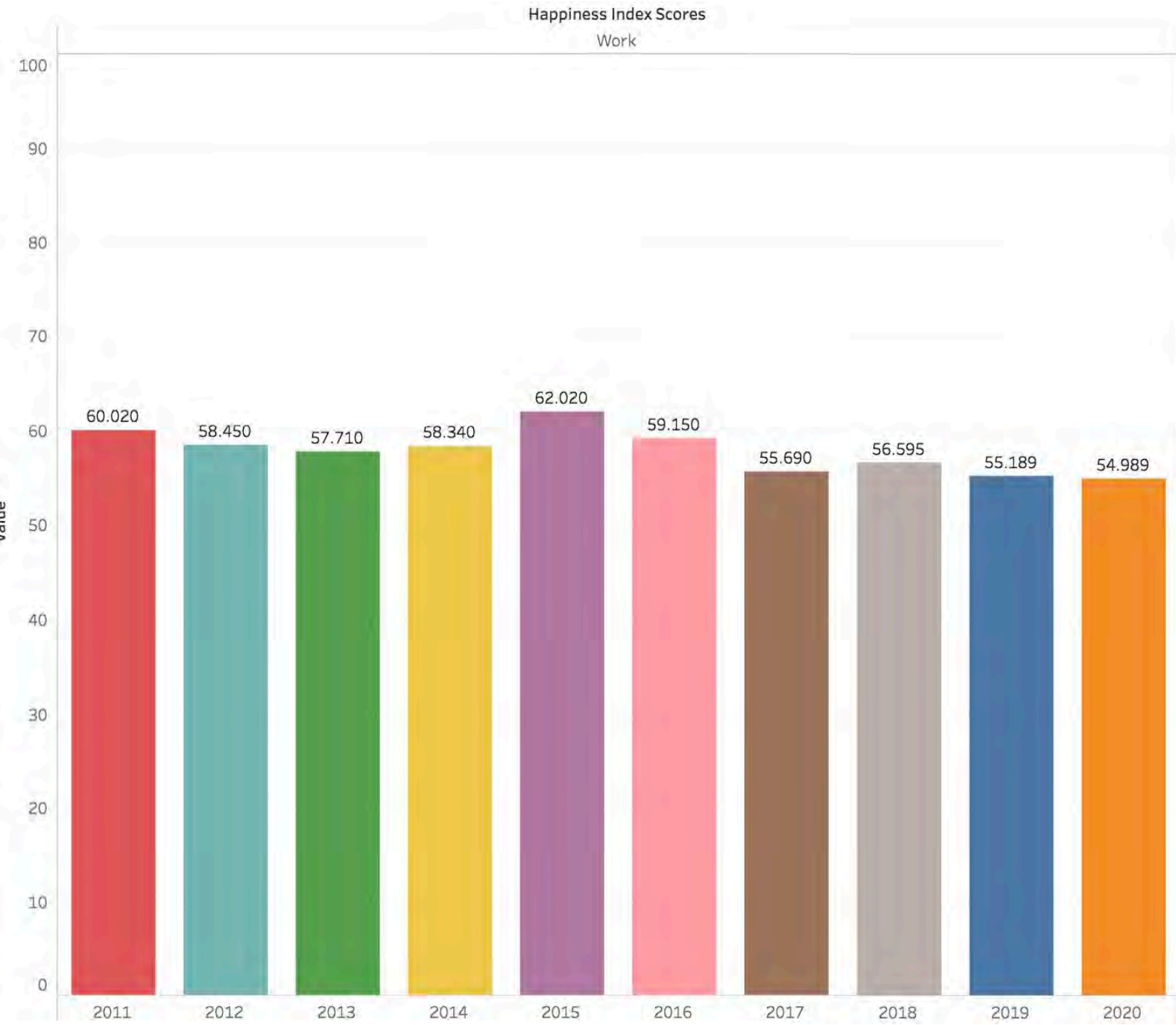
** Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>

***Sen A. (1999) Development as Freedom. New York: Alfred Knopf;

****De Neve & Sacks, (2020) Sustainable Development an Human Well-being World Happiness Report. <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2020/sustainable-development-and-human-well-being/>

When some people hear the term well-being, they think of worker satisfaction surveys. Worker satisfaction surveys go back 100 years – long before the Happiness Movement.

The Happiness Index started as a version of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index in 2010. In 2011, we worked with social scientists to construct the Happiness Index of today. And we added a worker satisfaction survey. We did this because work is such a big part of most people's lives and days. **On average, a person spends about one third of their lives working**, more than any other single activity except sleeping.



Bootstrap Happiness

Because we spend so much of our time working, doing work you love will make you happier.

If this is not something you can do, there are two other ways to bootstrap your happiness. The first is to **work with people whom you like and who like you** and for a boss who likes you and whom you like. The second is to **never gossip**. Gossiping may seem like it makes your relationship stronger with some people, but it erodes trust and in the long run makes for an unhappy work environment. Replace gossip with words of appreciation and acts of generosity (see the Satisfaction with Life section).

Protect Happiness

One of the places where the current economic paradigm and the Happiness Movement are completely aligned is the importance of jobs.*

Working age people need a job to be happy. Losing a job can have a lasting unhappiness effect, and not having a job for any sustained period after job loss can lead to addiction, health problems, anxiety and depression.

Jobs are important.

There are multiple avenues for governments to bring jobs to people: education and training programs to skill up unemployed workers combined with job placement, fostering local manufacturing and production; investment in green energy and infrastructure, and bolstering local economies.

*Clark et al, (2018). The Origins of Happiness: The Science of Well-Being over the Life Course. Princeton University Press

Happiness Contemplations

2020 was a difficult year. We learned some hard lessons. In the US and abroad, we learned how divided we are. We learned what we don't have in common and how much we are making each other unhappy. These things probably will not go away for a long time unless we work together.

Is there hope?

Happiness is something everybody wants. We all have the goals of happiness in common. We also have some other things in common – our shared values. Safety. Freedom. Security. Care.

We all interpret happiness in our own way. Most people in the world want for others to also be happy. Some do not, and the sad thing is that their voices can rise above those of others. Part of the reason for this is our human brain. Our brain is structured so that when we hear words of hatred, death and destruction, we stop thinking well with our prefrontal cortex. Our ability to think with our prefrontal cortex is the best part of being a human. We are **open and caring, creative problem solvers**, and think with discernment. This all goes away when we feel angry, fearful or full of hate. We are also liable to act quickly without contemplation. We needed this capacity of our brains to turn off **the best part of what it means to be a human** to survive in forests and plains when the tiger or snake stalked us; but today this kind of thinking when we are not under direct attack makes us all unhappy.

What can we do?

Be aware of what is happening in your own brain and body. Notice when you feel anger, fear, hate or any of their cousins. Notice how it feels in your body. Notice the thoughts that emerge.

Be aware of how other people in your life are communicating their state of mind. If you can, ask: how are you feeling? Notice also how other people affect how you are feeling.

Whenever you can, **bring the conversation back to what we all have in common.** Shared values are powerful, because values are the foundation for everything we do. Your only contact with people whose beliefs are different from you may be via the news. If this is so, use your imagination to find what you have in common with those people who hold positions and beliefs with which you deeply disagree.

Learn and practice good communication skills. Just being a good listener and listening to someone can transform a relationship.

Another hard lesson we suspect we will keep learning is **the importance of self-care in the face of the pandemic.** We are hopeful about the vaccine, but will not be surprised if it does not last long, similar to other flu vaccines. Also, it may be hard to keep up with variations of COVID-19. However, we humans are tremendously adaptable. As we go into 2021, we can all learn how to secure and safeguard our happiness in the face of hardship.

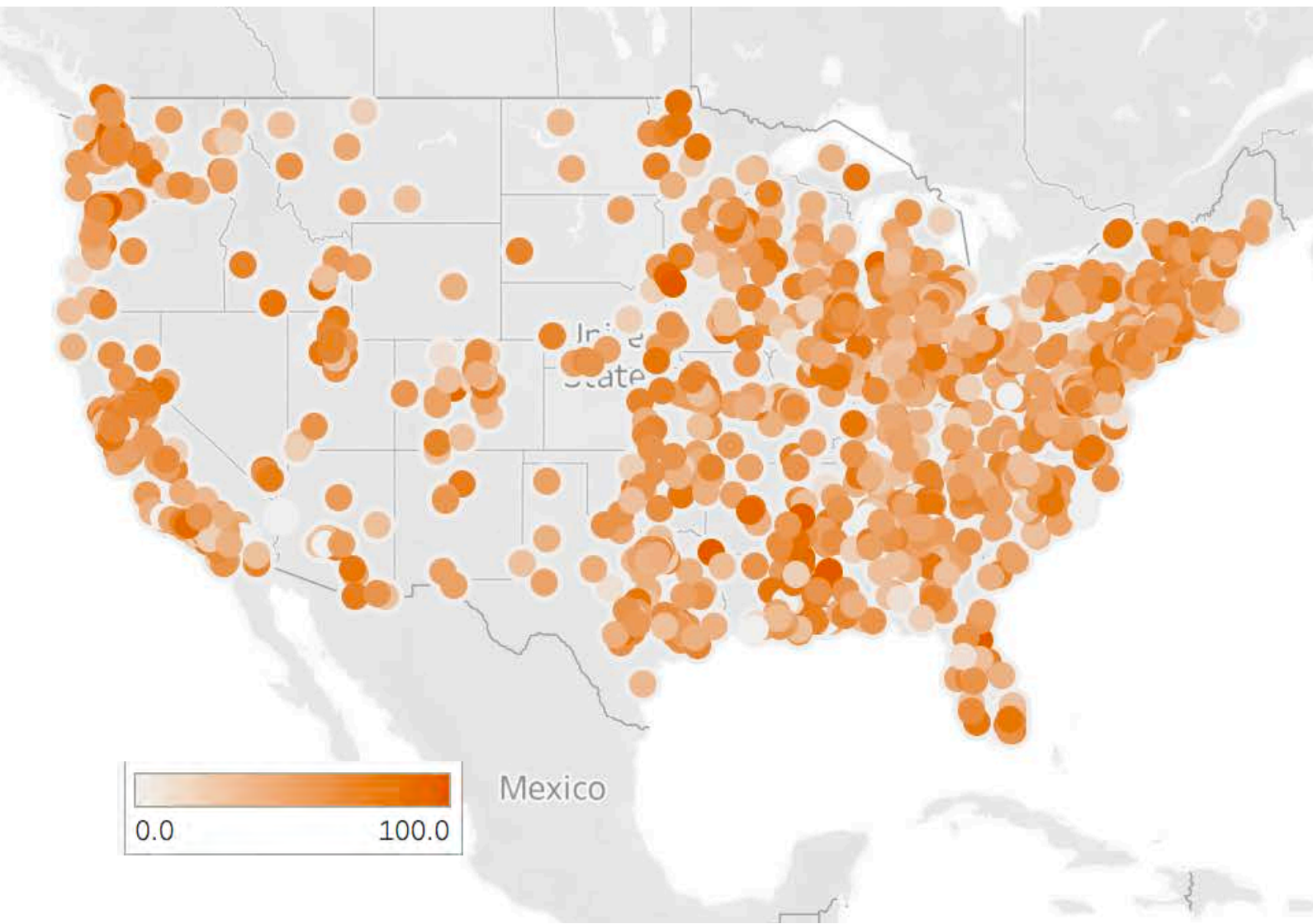
What next (Part Two)

Our Happiness Index has 51 questions in the 10 areas of well-being plus the satisfaction with life area, 11 demographic questions and 7 questions specifically related to tourism.

The **Happiness Report Card 2021 Part Two** will dive into data for the questions. We will give you infographics and reflections on the data.

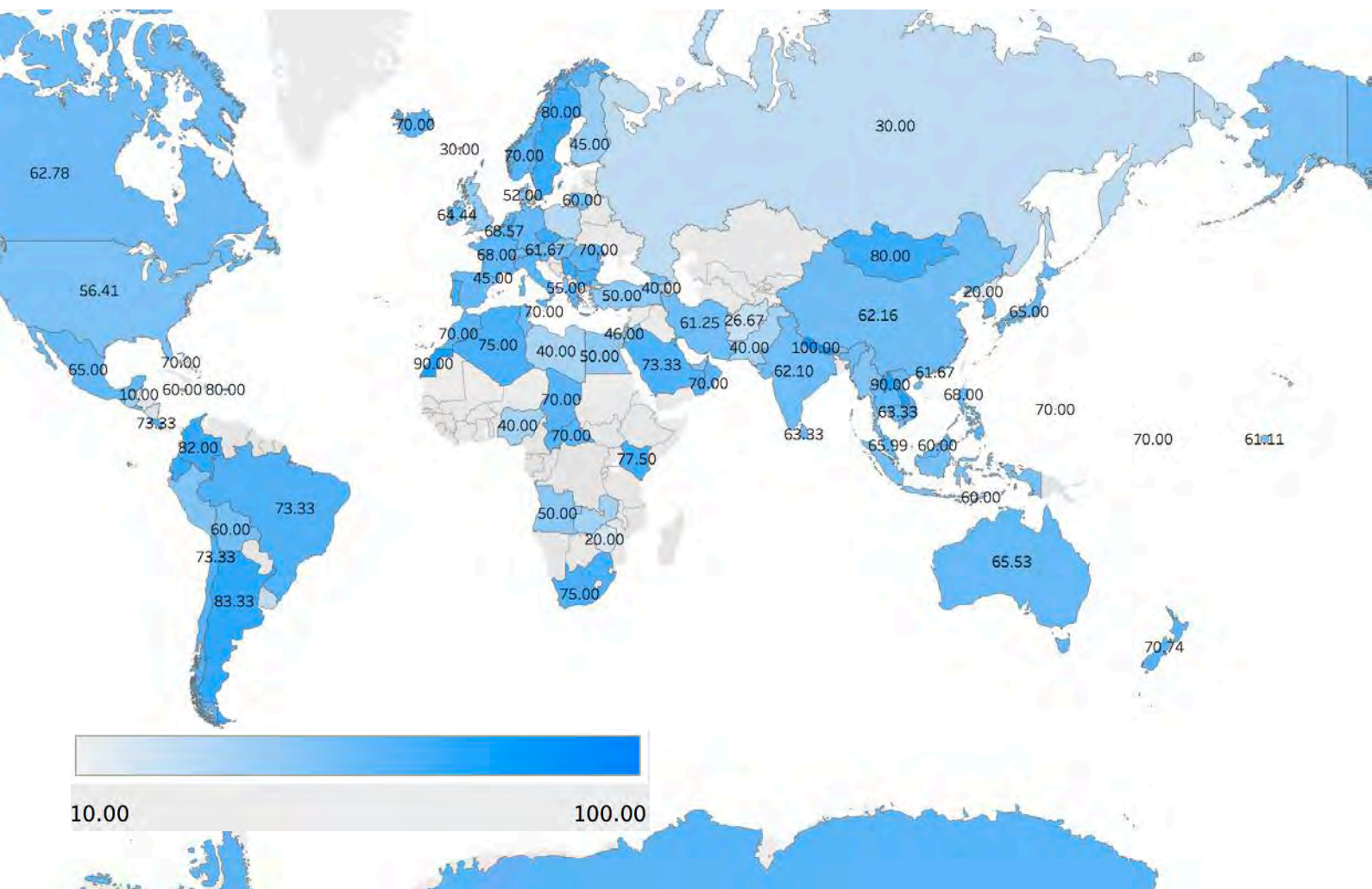
A sneak peak:

Satisfaction with Life scores by town in the USA. Darkest is completely satisfied, lightest is not at all satisfied



We have been gathering data with our Happiness Index since 2011. In 2020, approximately 11,000 people took the Happiness Index. A little less than half designated themselves as from the USA. (Not everyone answers the question about which county they live in.). With our project **Planet Happiness**, our Happiness Index is spreading to number of countries: Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and other nations. In upcoming reports you will see data stories about communities around the world.

A sneak peak:
Satisfaction with Life scores by nation. Darkest is completely satisfied, lightest is not at all satisfied





Attribution:

Musikanski, L. & Bradbury, J. (2021) The Happiness Report Card 2021 Part One. Happiness Alliance - happycounts.org