

Some issues in use of social relations for well-being assessment

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- Development and measures
 - GDP, economic indicators, and social indicators have been utilized to assess people's livelihood and living conditions.
 - However, recently, subjective well-beings have received much attention by both academia and policy makers, partly because some doubt has arisen over an assumption, income is the foundation for well-beings, we have had for a long time needs to be changed to grasp people's well-beings.
 - In this context, measures of well-beings are under debate, which include objective-measures or holistic/comprehensive measures.
 - Further questions and challenges are on elements of well-beings, if we use comprehensive well-beings approach to assess people's well-beings. This does apply to social relations as its key element.
 - In this presentation, I would like to discuss issues when we use social relations data in assessment of life satisfaction.

Social relations: social network and social capital

- Social network and ties -- weak ties (similar to bridging social capital) and job search outcomes (Granovetter 1973)
- Social capital -- broadened and deepened the importance of social relationships for people's well-beings outcomes. (Putnam 2000; Halpern 2005)
 - Health and social capital -- examined relationships between trust, norms, and reciprocity exchanges and health. (Kawachi, et al 2008)
 - Social capital and suicide outcomes – examined social capital as counter to suicide occurrence by international comparisons (Helliwell 2007)

Social relations as a well-being component

- GNH by Bhutan: community viability (2008)
- OECD's Better Life Index: quality of social supports (2011)
- Japan – Happiness survey and committee on measures of happiness (report): three key domains, including “human relationships” (2010-2011)

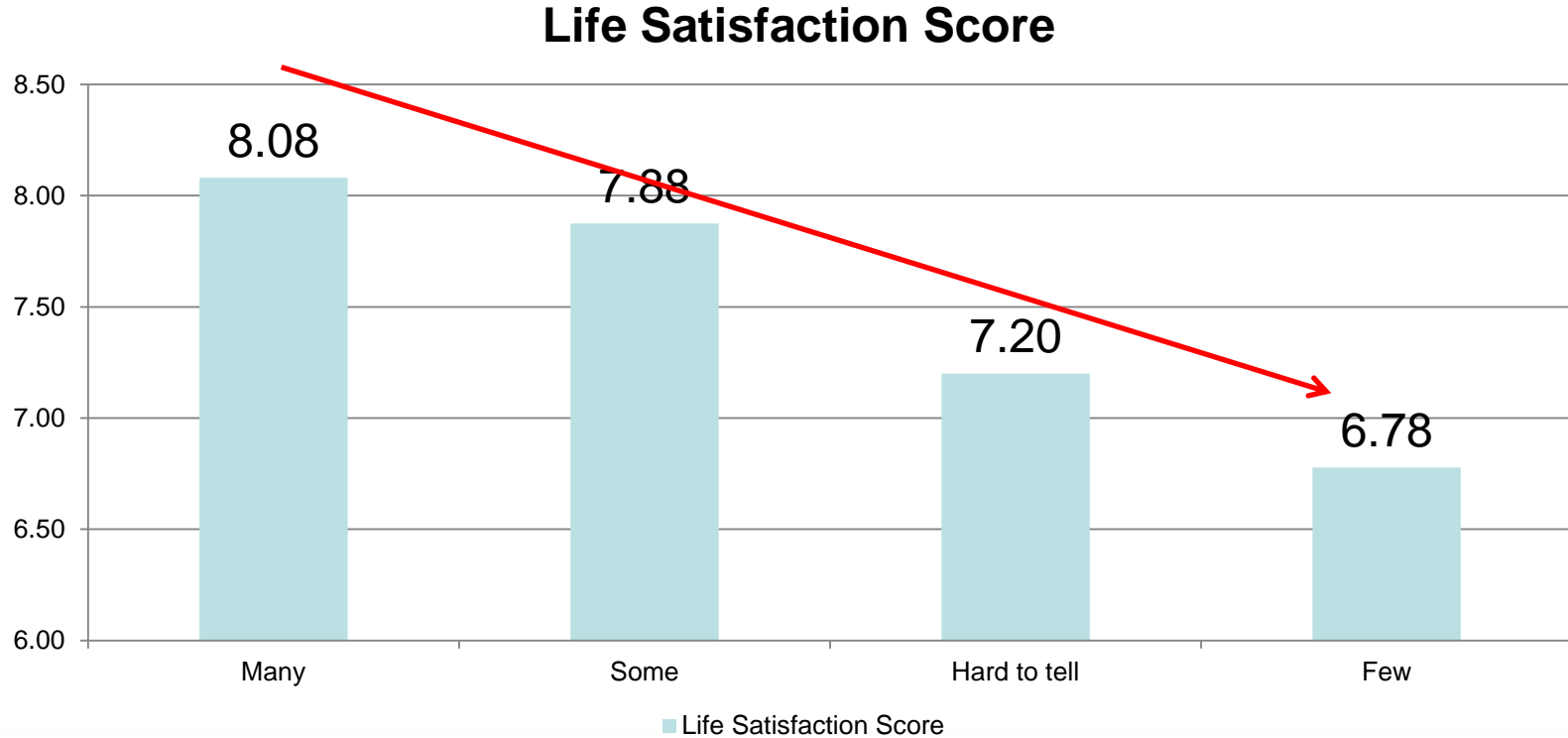
Social relations and well-being at the local level

- Examine if roles of social relations differ by area
- Conducted a mini-survey work, contrasting rural and urban residents in Hyogo, by a questionnaire on local life feeling (quality of life) based on “Beautiful Hyogo” survey.

Beautiful Hyogo Vision Project

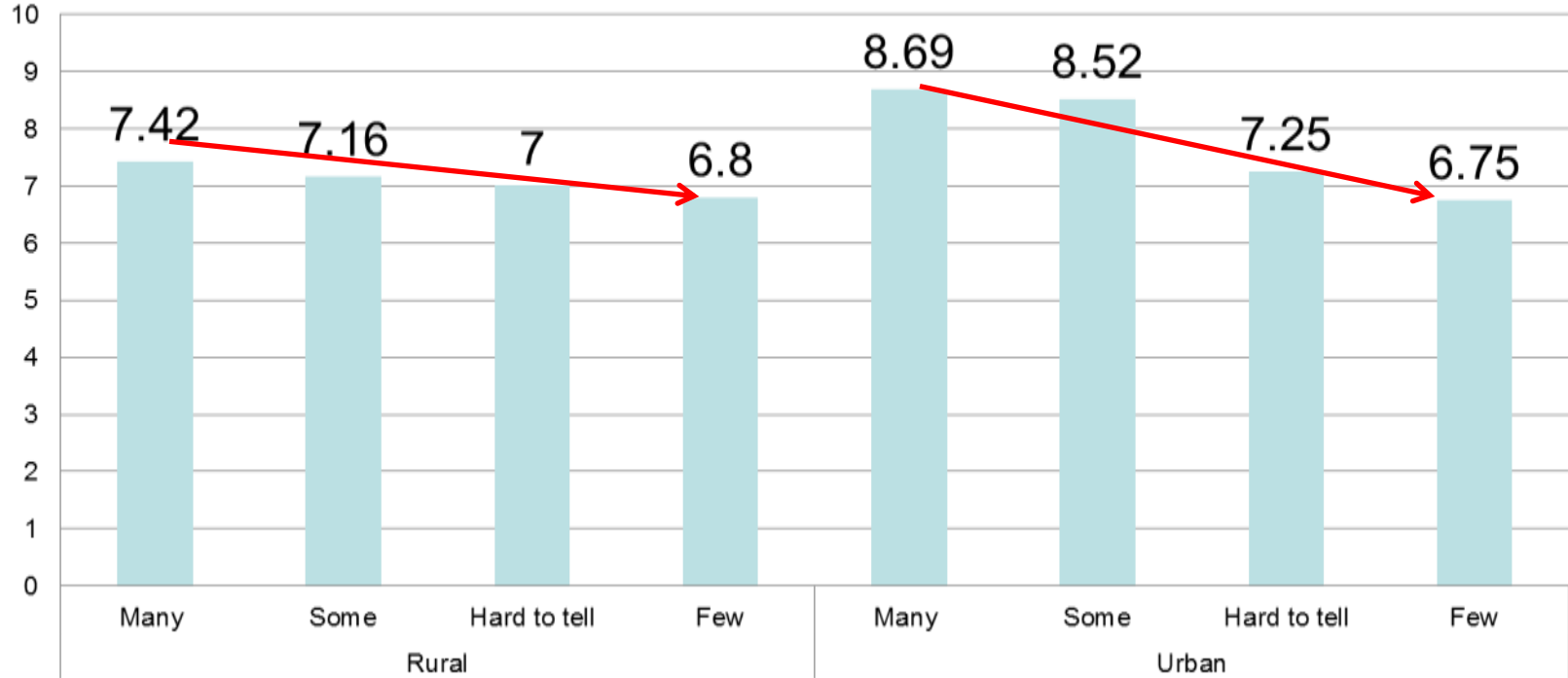
- Hyogo has started a project called “Beautiful Hyogo,” in 2004.
- This project started from:
 - Local people’s vision formulation through vision committees
 - Use of indicators to monitor and evaluate its progress
 - Objective measures from the national database
 - Subjective measures by its unique survey (Beautiful Hyogo survey, annual)

Life satisfaction and number of friends

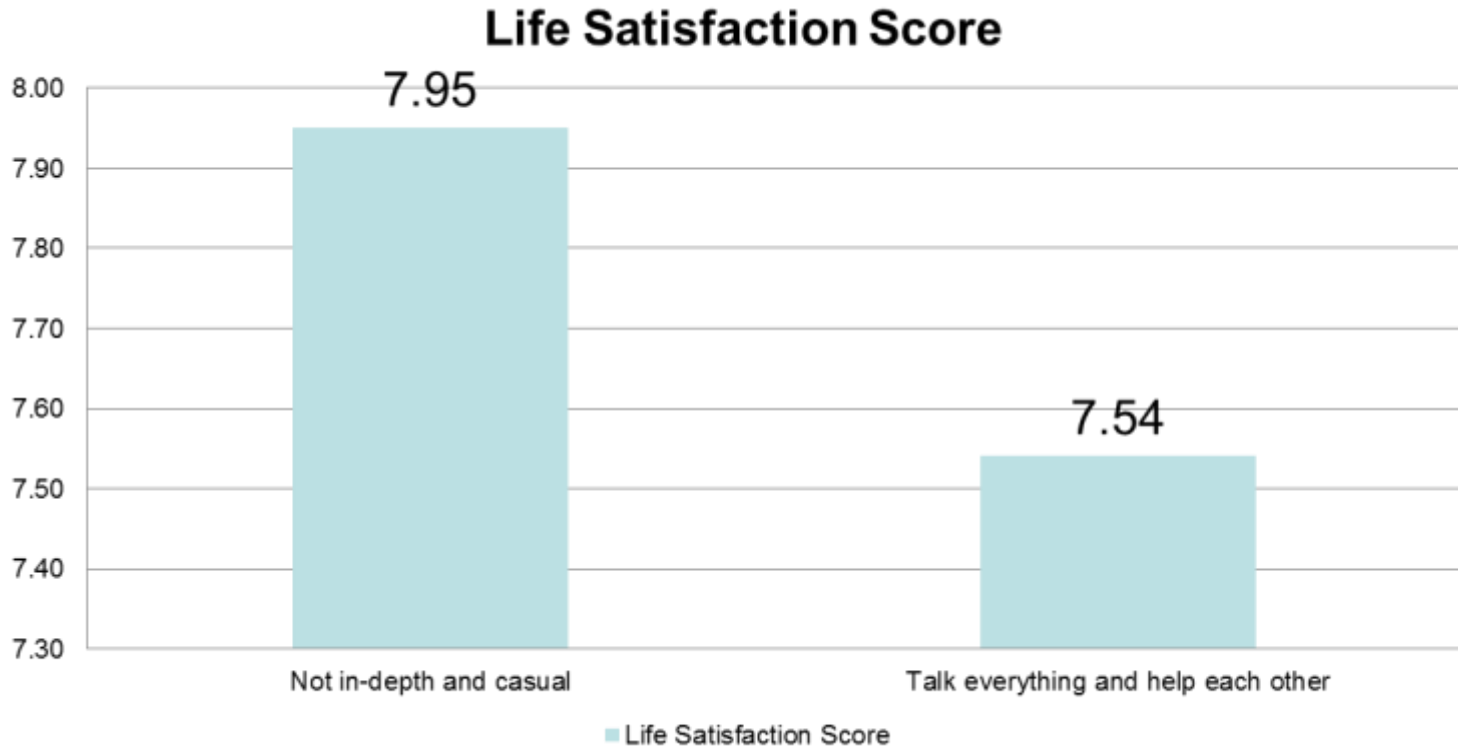


Life satisfaction and number of friends by area

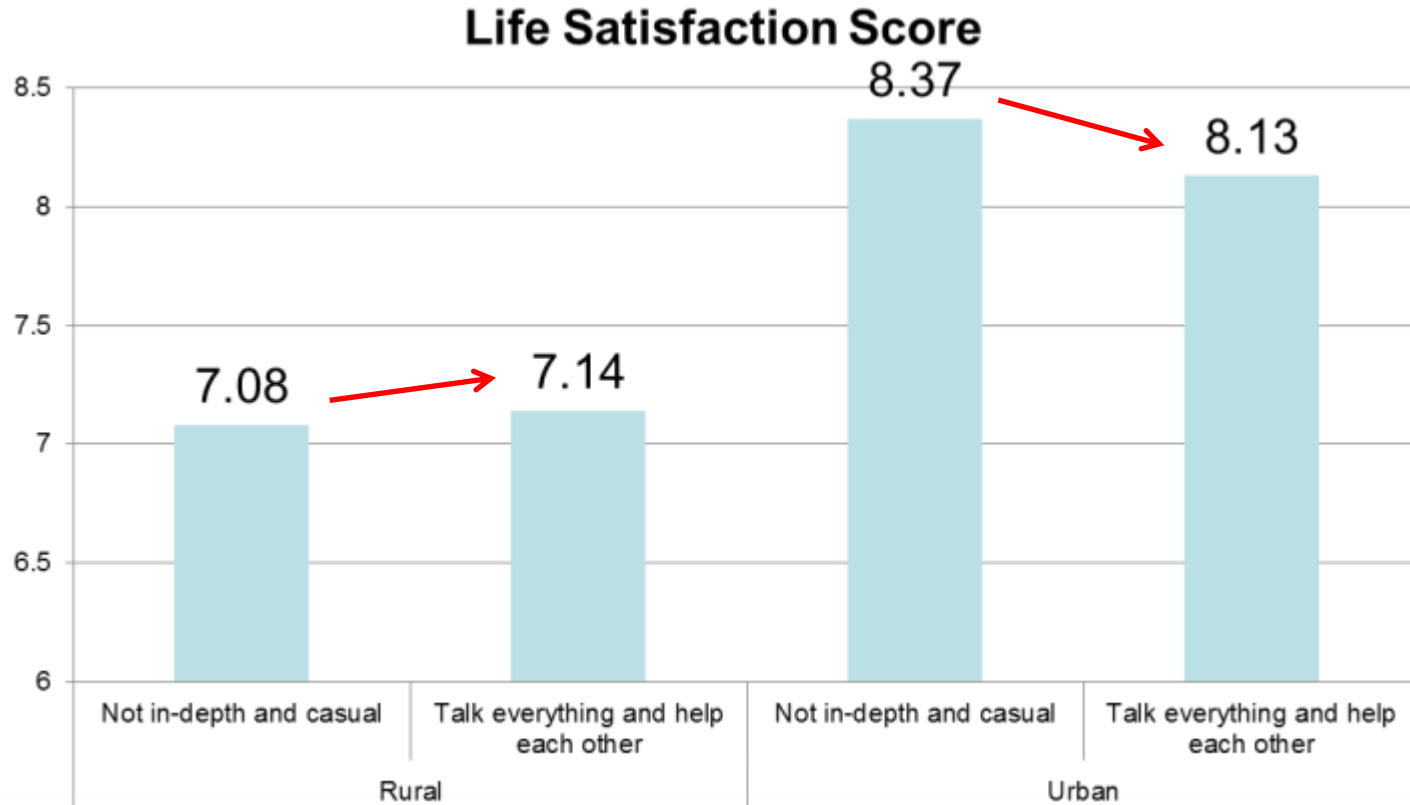
Life Satisfaction Score



Life satisfaction and ways of friendships



Life satisfaction and ways of friendships by area



Number of friends and life satisfaction

Correlations				
		Life Satisfaction	Number of Friends	Number of Trusty Friends
Life Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.269*	.202
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017	.077
	N	82	79	78
Number of Friends	Pearson Correlation	.269*	1	.512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017		.000
	N	79	82	81
Number of Trusty Friends	Pearson Correlation	.202	.512**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.000	
	N	78	81	81

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Number of friends and life satisfaction (by area)

1. Urban

Correlations				
		Life Satisfaction	Number of Friends	Number of Trusty Friends
Life Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.402**	.408**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.007
	N	43	42	42
Number of Friends	Pearson Correlation	.402**	1	.550**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		.000
	N	42	44	44
Number of Trusty Friends	Pearson Correlation	.408**	.550**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	
	N	42	44	44

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2. Rural

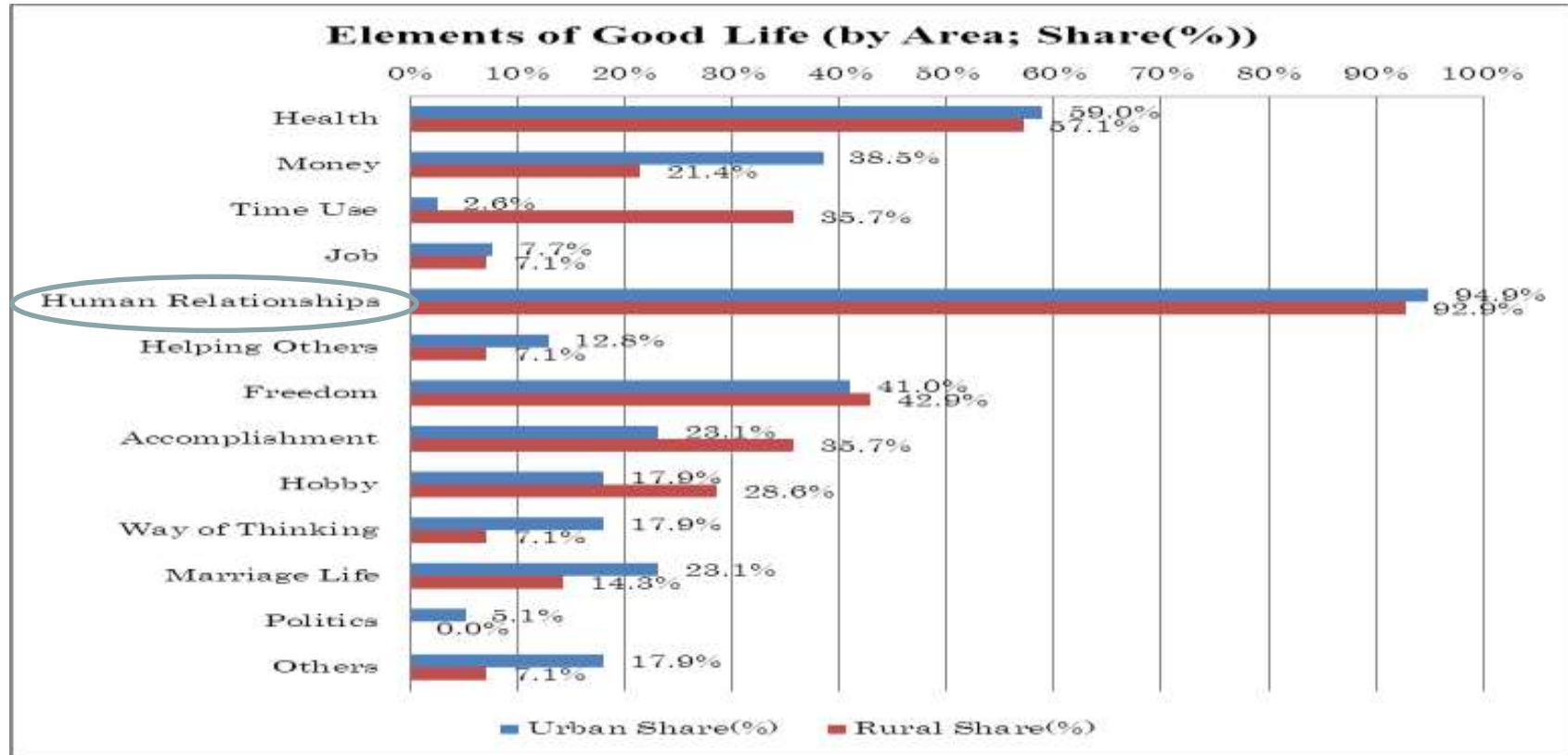
Correlations				
		Life Satisfaction	Number of Friends	Number of Trusty Friends
Life Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.156	.180
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.356	.294
	N	39	37	36
Number of Friends	Pearson Correlation	.156	1	.496**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.356		.002
	N	37	38	37
Number of Trusty Friends	Pearson Correlation	.180	.496**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.294	.002	
	N	36	37	37

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

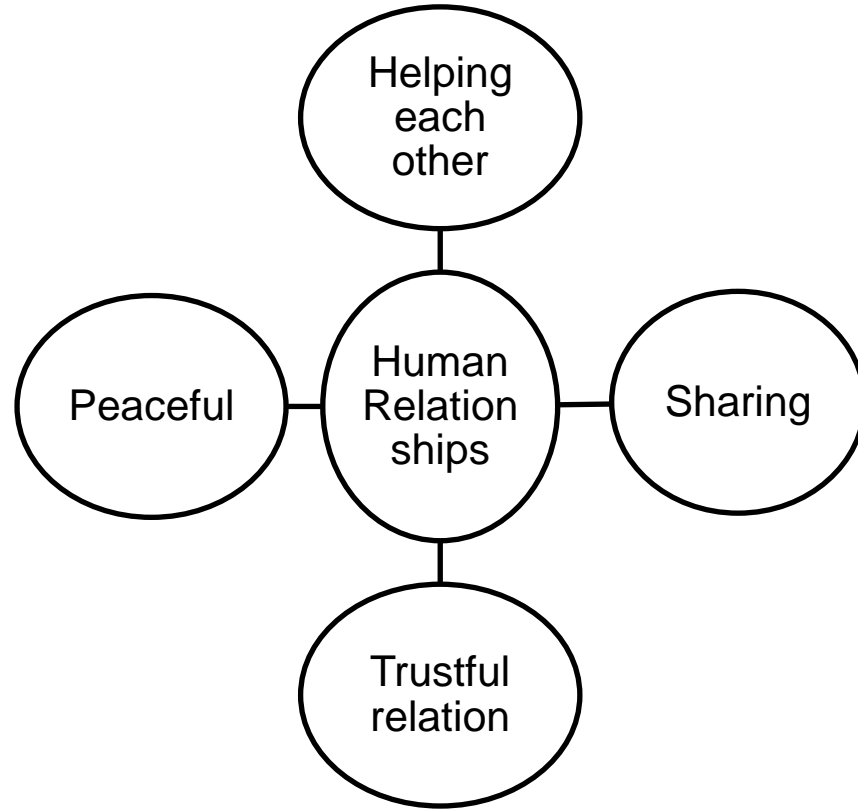
Heterogeneity in social relations

- Objective measures explain the degree of social relations by the number of friends, neighbors, and degree of associations (by level of trust).
- However, it does not tell us over meanings of social relations in one's subjective feeling of well-being.
- Conducted interviews more than fifty individuals from rural and urban areas in Hyogo prefecture and analyzed them by key issues.

Key elements of good life



4 types of human relationships (local life feeling survey)



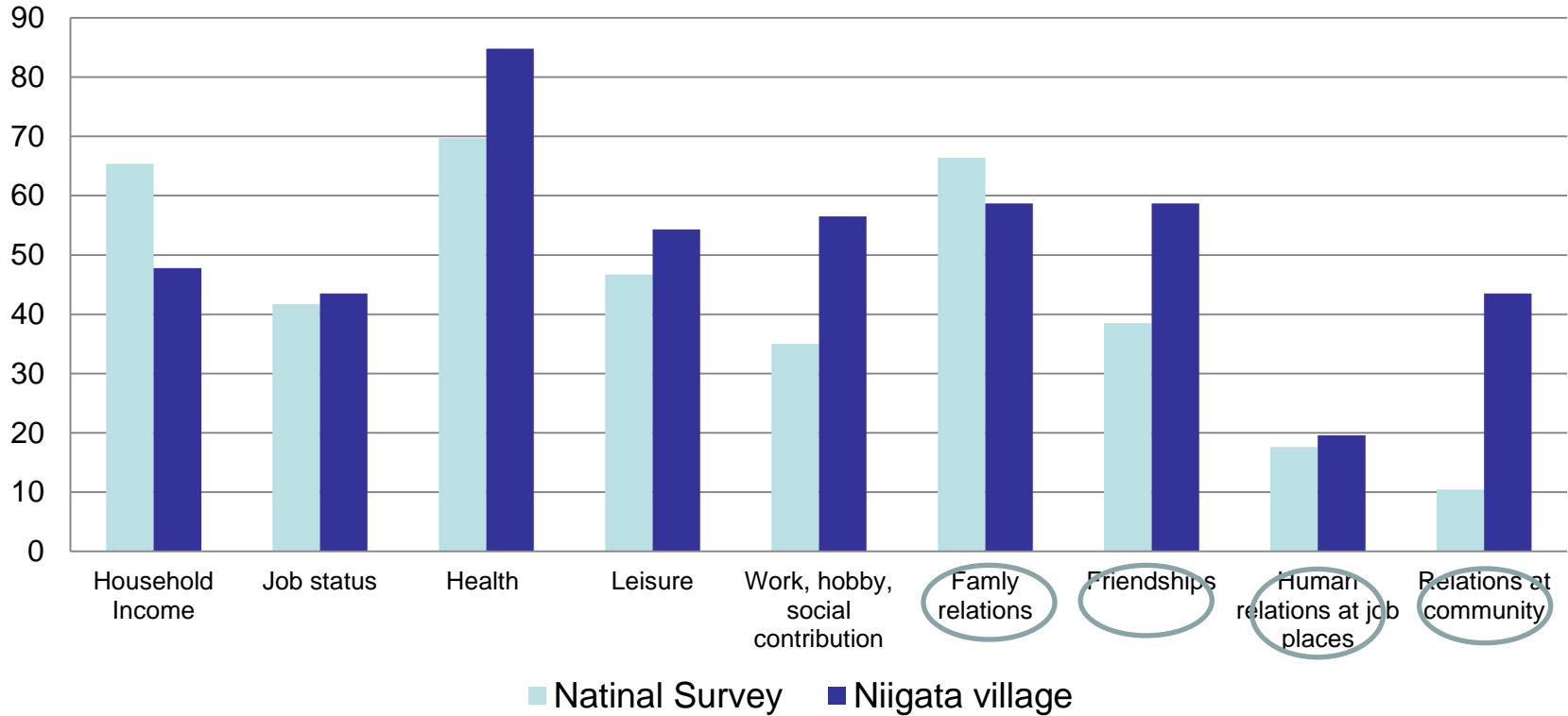
Social relations in community recovery

- Social relations could be used as a good proxy to grasp community revival.
- In Niigata Prefecture, one big earth quake occurred in October 2004, and damaged many places.
- After six years have passed, I conducted a survey in one village hard hit by the earthquake using the same questions (happiness and its elements) which the CAO's national survey used in 2010.

Happiness and social relations (a village in Niigata)

- Examined the level of life satisfaction of this village against the national average and elements of happiness.
- Average happiness score:
 - National -- 6.5 points
 - Village -- 7.1 points

Elements of Happiness



In sum

- Importance of social relations for people's well-beings.
- It is important to breakdown social relations by area (especially rural/urban, since its economic and social base might be very different).
- Roles and importance of social relations are sometimes context specific – like rural vs. urban.
- Qualitative approach could help us to know how diverse meanings of social relations are.
- Social relations data could be used to trace change of community cohesion after man-made/natural crises if the data were taken at the beginning of the recovery.