



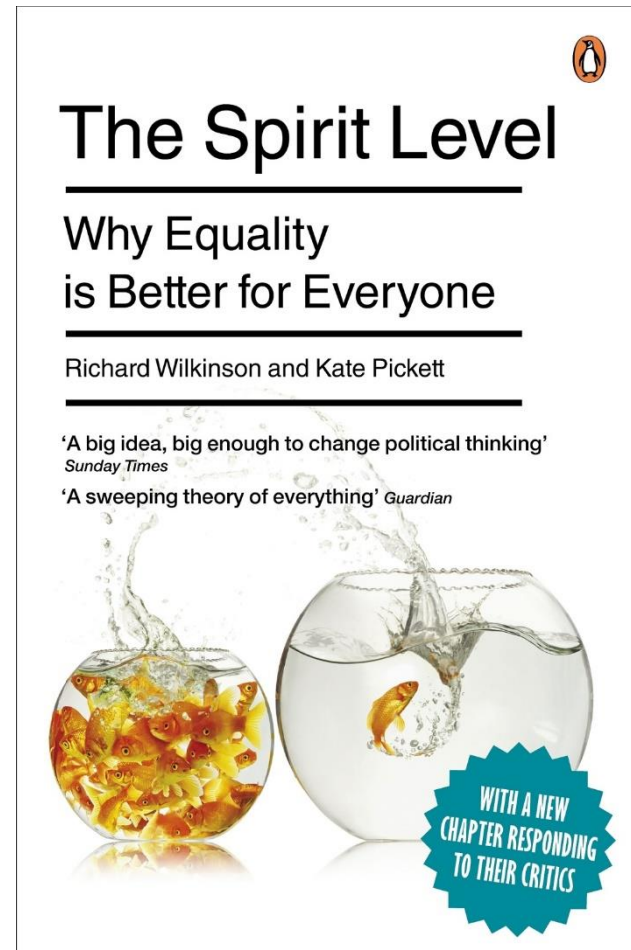
# **The Psychology of Inequality: how more equal societies reduce stress and restore sanity**

**Kate Pickett & Richard Wilkinson**  
**Professors of Social Epidemiology**

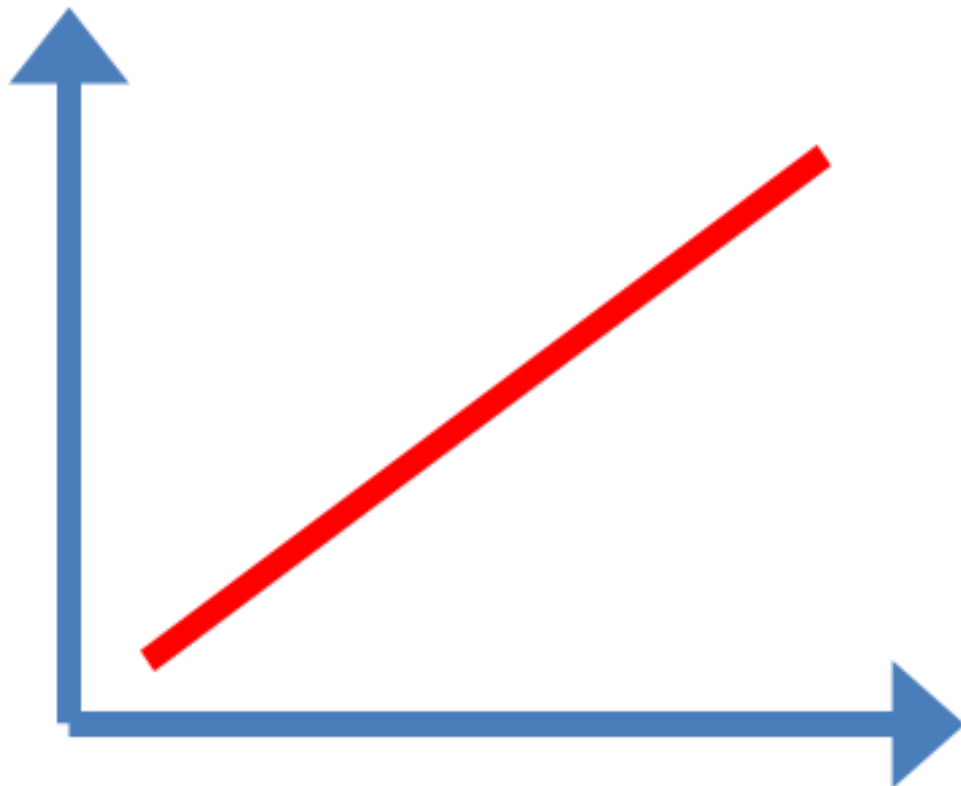


# The Spirit Level showed

- Income inequality is linked to a wide range of **health and social problems**
- The effects are large and there are **big differences** between societies
- Not only the poor are affected, inequality affects the **whole population**



**Problems**



**Income  
inequality**

# Health and social problems are worse in more unequal countries

Index of:

- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility

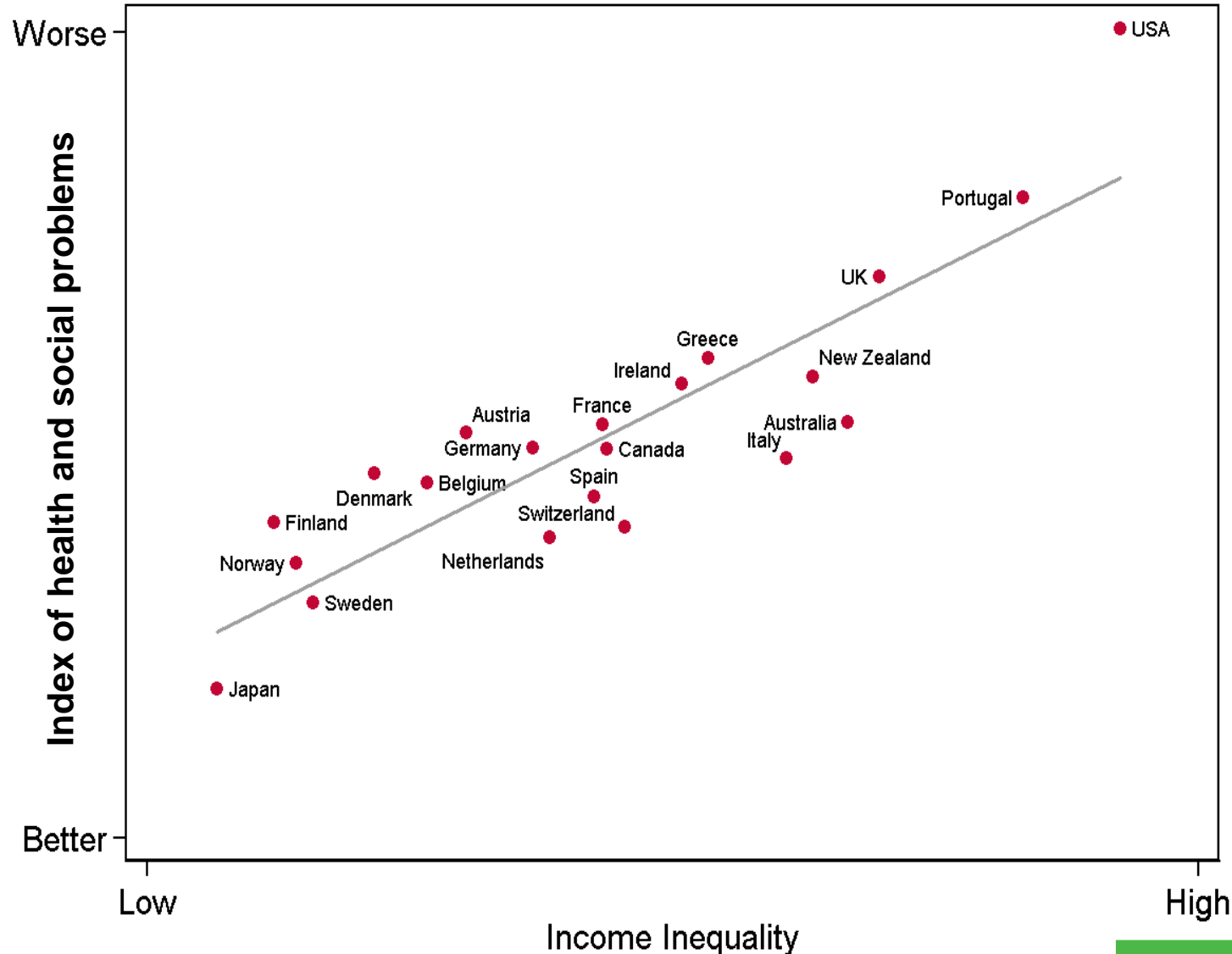








Photo by kind permission of Matt Stuart

# **Mental Health Foundation Survey, UK 2018**

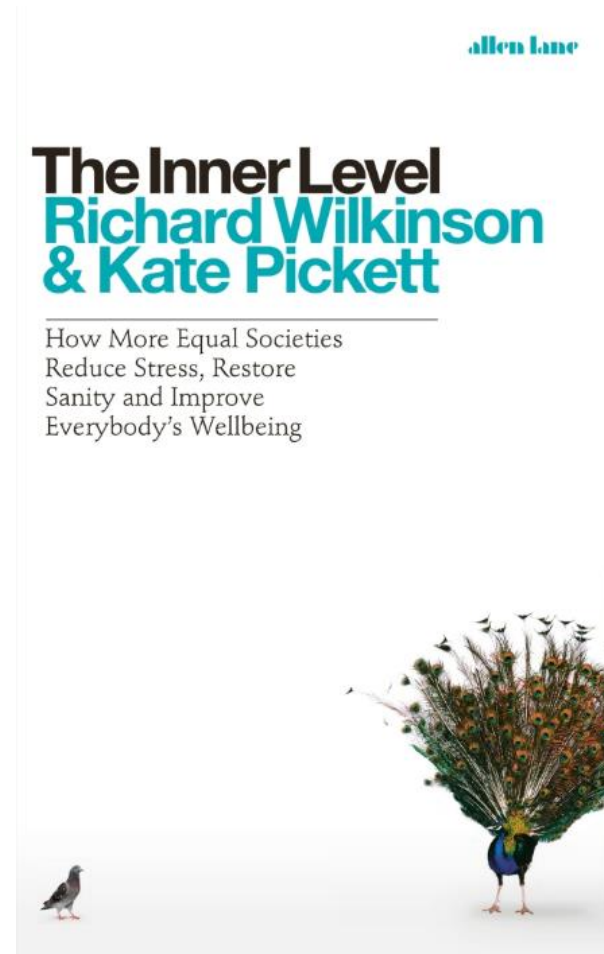
**74% of adults (83% of 18-24 year-olds)  
felt so stressed they were overwhelmed or  
unable to cope sometime in the past year.**

**32% of adults (39% of 18-24 year-olds)  
had suicidal feelings as a result of stress.**

**16% of adults (29% of 18-24 year olds)  
had self-harmed as a result of stress.**

# The Inner Level shows:

- How income inequality undermines feelings of **self-worth** and damages **mental health**
- How popular myths about **human nature** and **capabilities** are used to justify inequality
- How we can tackle inequality and why we must do so to make the **transition to sustainable wellbeing**





**Robert Walker et al.**  
**Poverty in global perspective**  
*Journal of Social Policy*  
**2013; 42, 215-233**





# Mental illness is more common in more unequal societies





**Individual differences will explain who falls, but the height of the hurdles will explain how many fall**

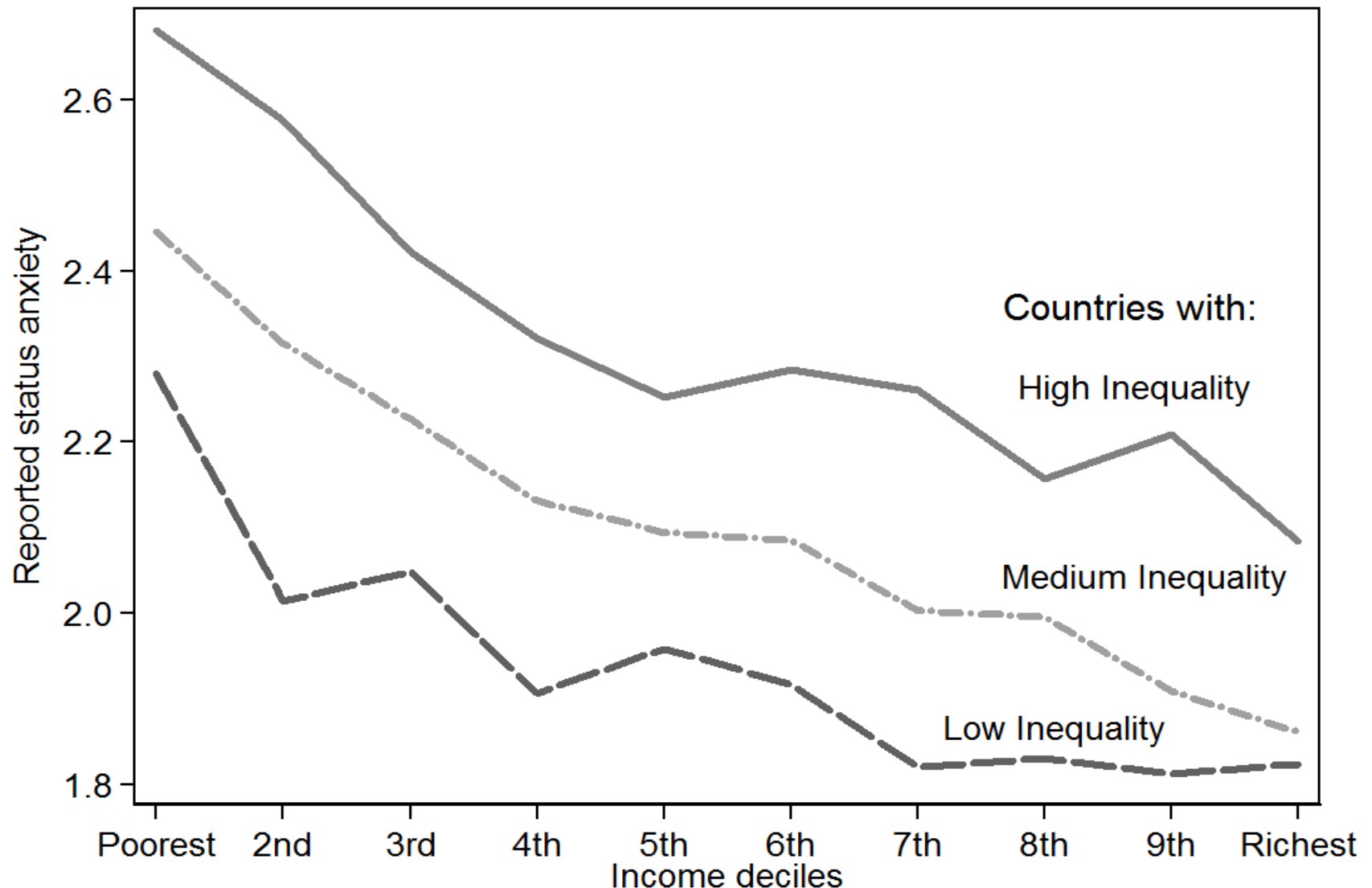




# Dominance Behavioural System



# Status anxiety is higher at all income levels in more unequal countries

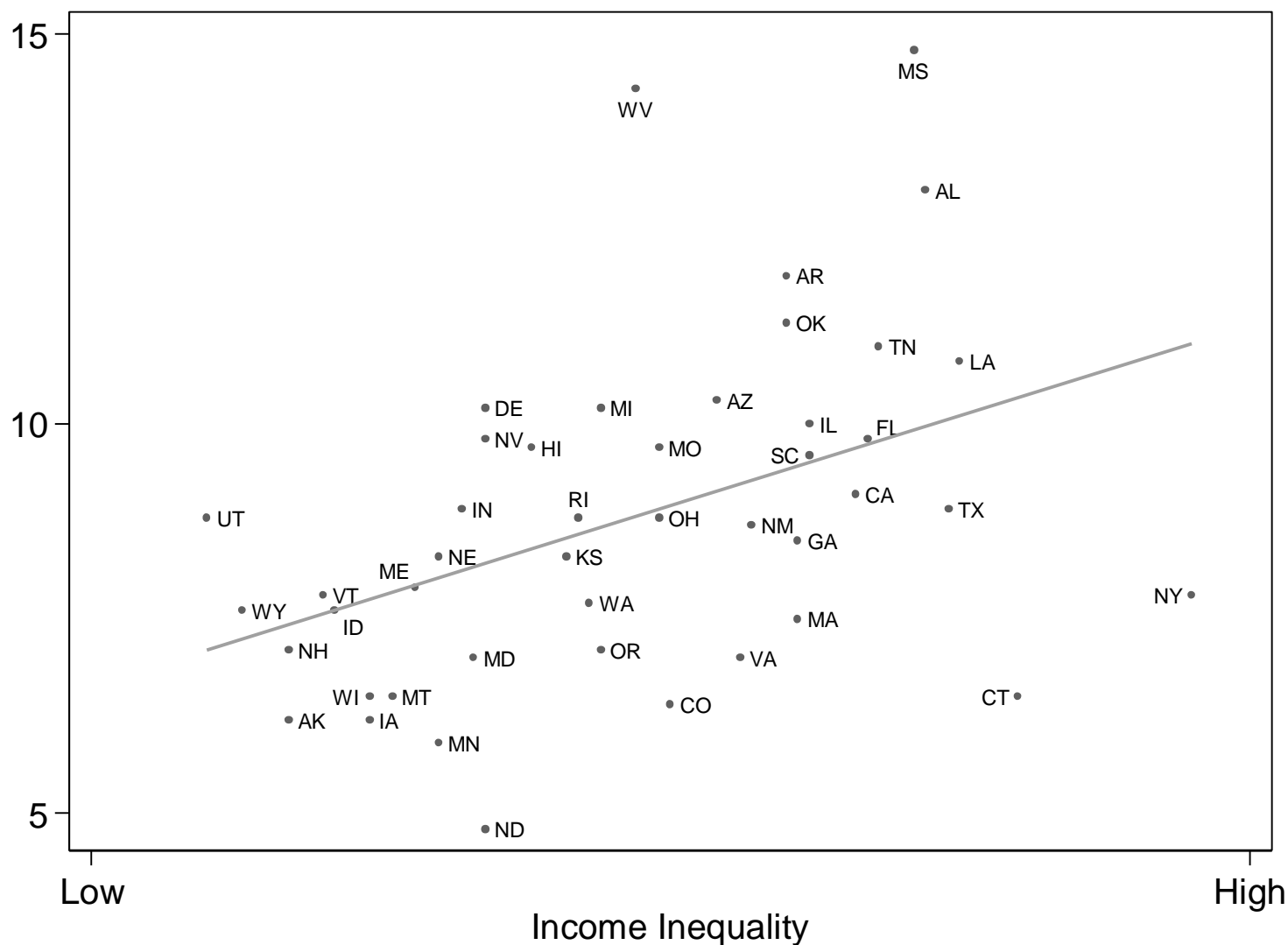


Redrawn from Layte and Whelan (2014), data kindly provided by Richard Layte





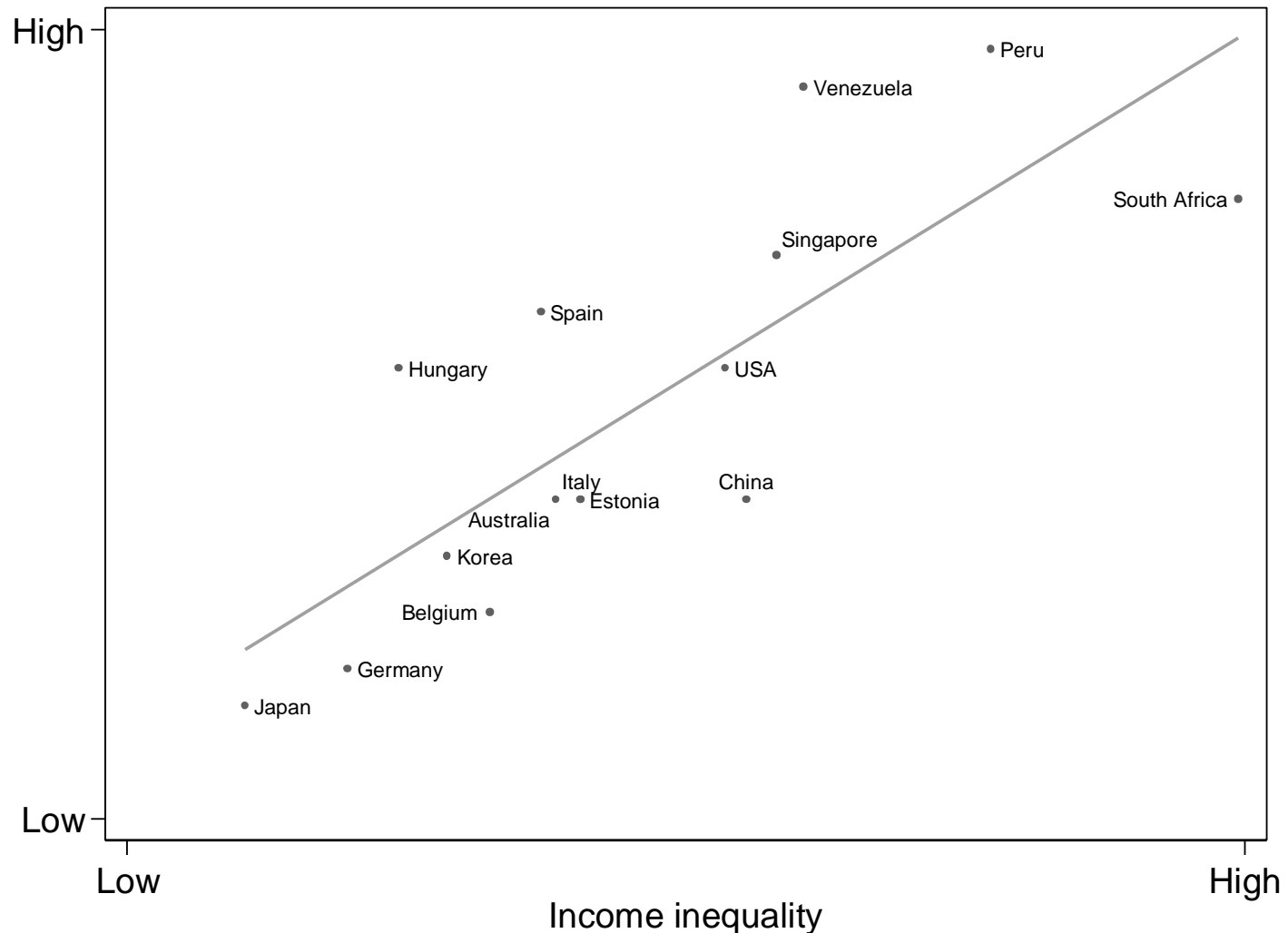
# There is more depression...



Redrawn from data in: Messias E, Eaton WW, Grooms AN. Economic grand rounds: Income inequality and depression prevalence across the United States: an ecological study. *Psychiatric Services*. 2011;62(7):710-712.

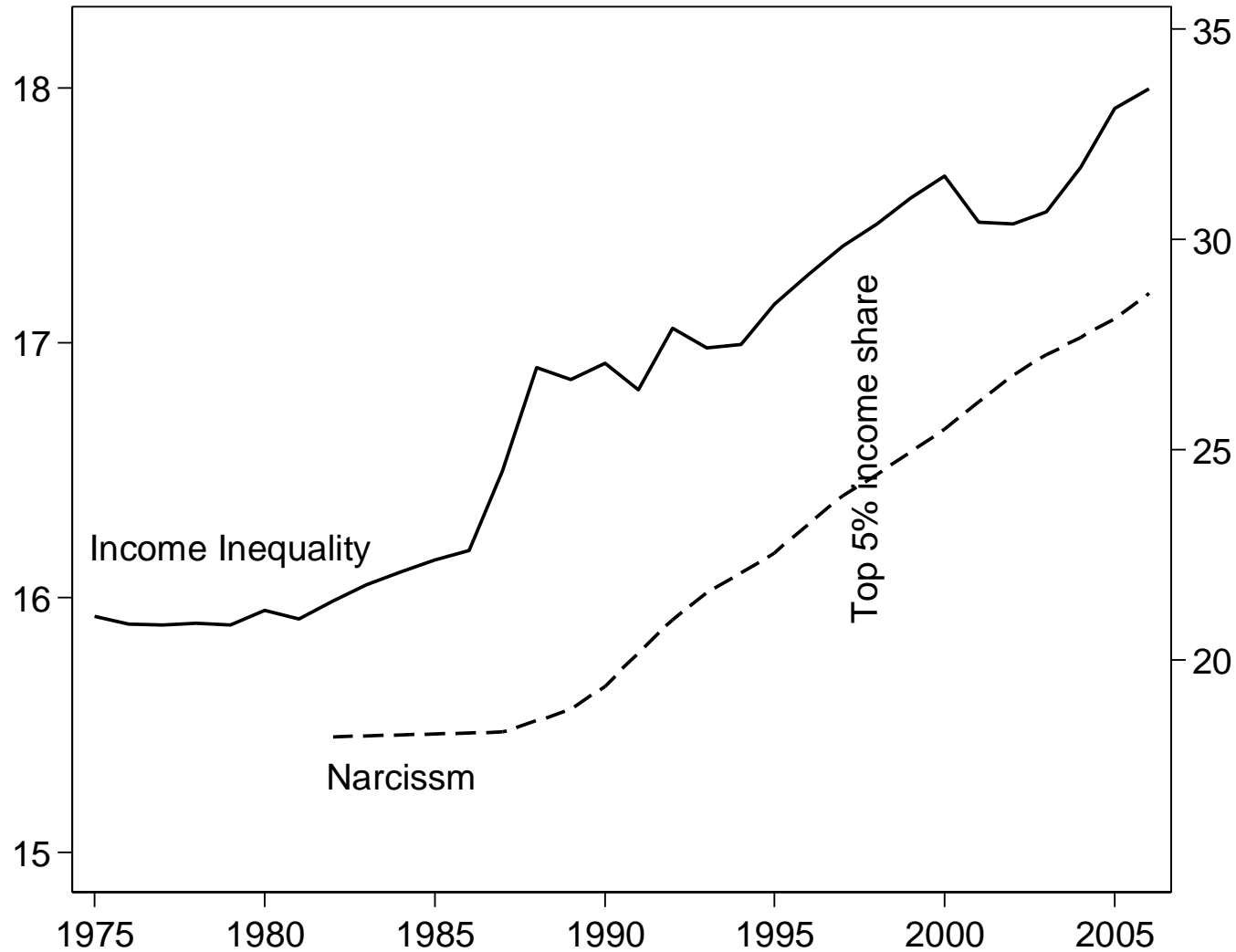


# More people exaggerate their self-importance...



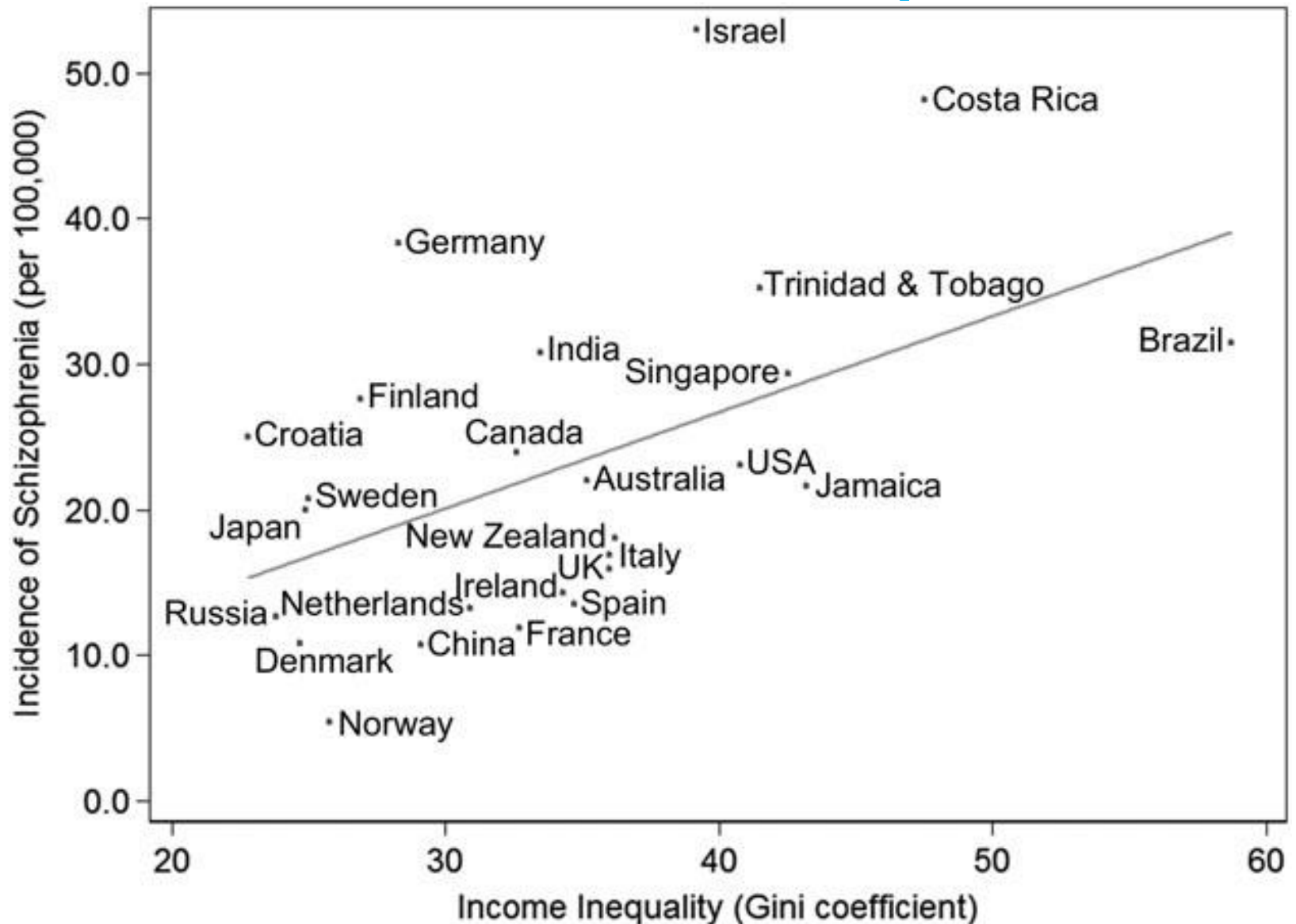
Redrawn from data kindly provided by Peter Kuppens and Steve Loughnan et al . Economic inequality is linked to biased self-perception. *Psychological science*. 2011;22(10):1254-1258.

....and become more narcissistic



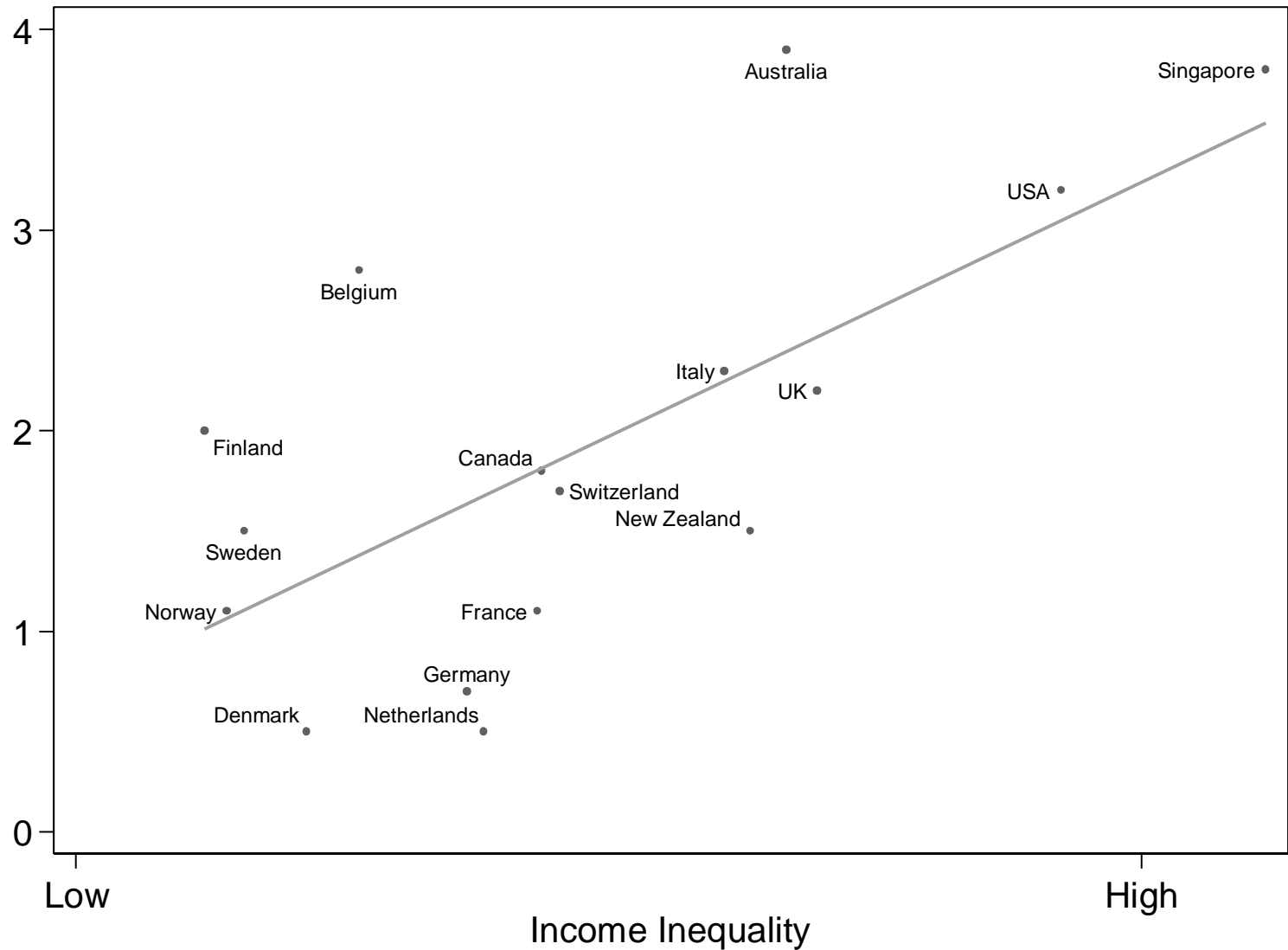
College students' Narcissistic Personality Inventory scores over time reflect the rise in US income inequality

## ...there is more schizophrenia





# Addictive behaviour increases: e.g., gambling





**WE BUY THINGS WE DON'T NEED  
WITH MONEY WE DON'T HAVE  
TO IMPRESS PEOPLE WE DON'T LIKE.**





LOUIS VUITTON

MAISON FONDÉE EN 1854  
PARIS

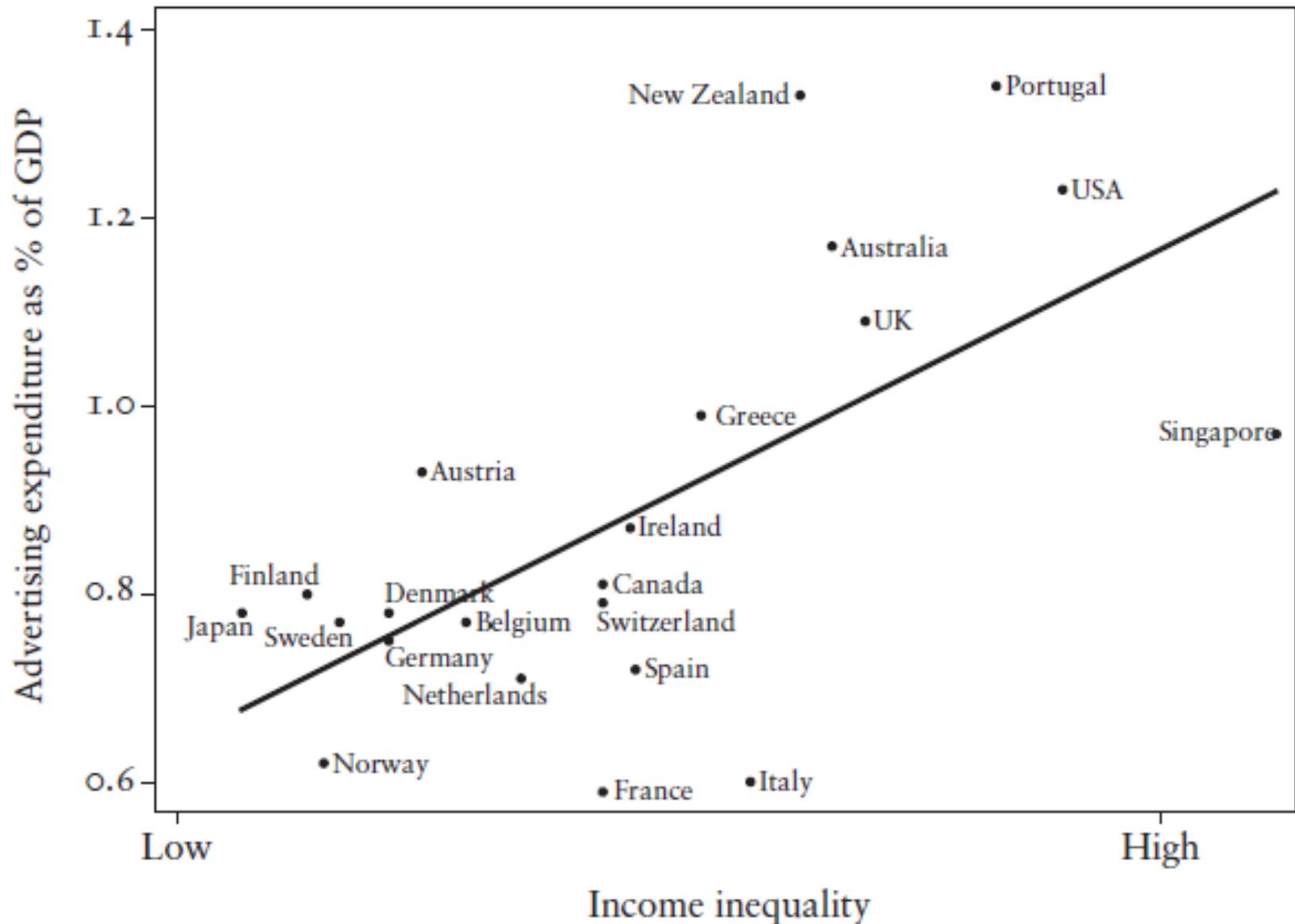


CHANEL

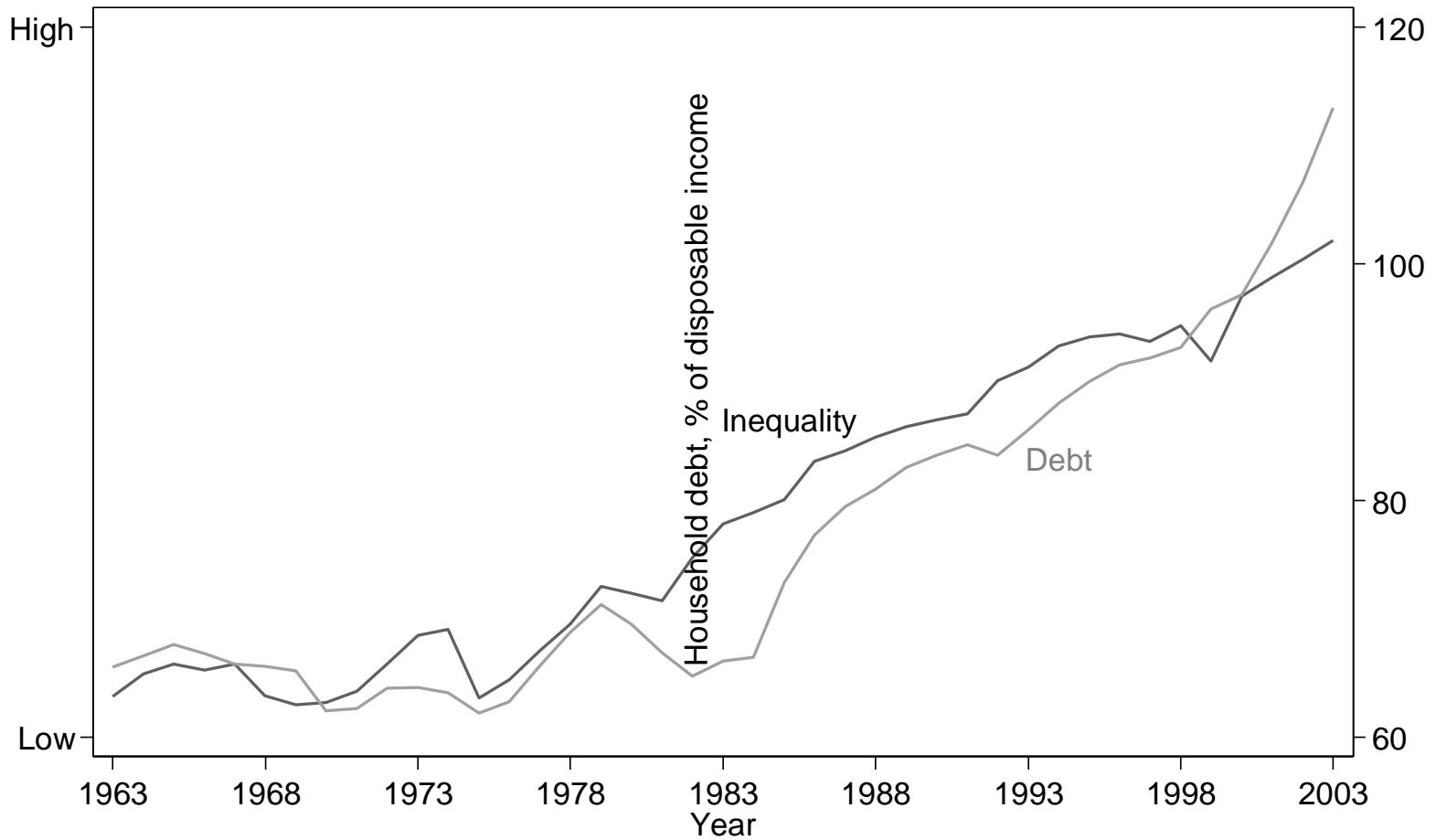
GUCCI

BROWN THOMAS

# There is more advertising in more unequal countries



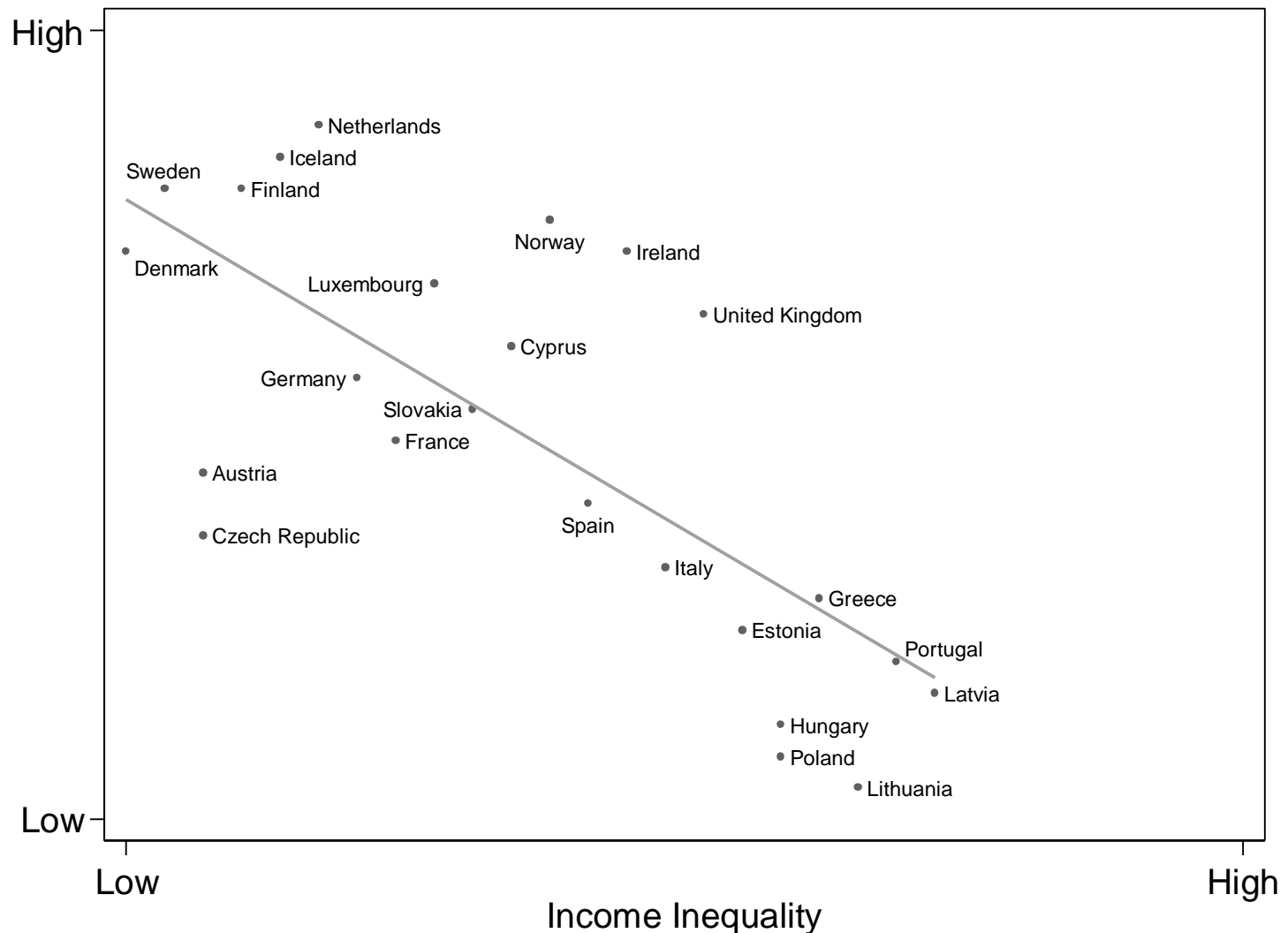
# Money and consumerism become more important



Redrawn from data kindly provided by Iacoviello M. Household Debt and Income Inequality, 1963–2003. *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking*. 2008;40(5):929-965.

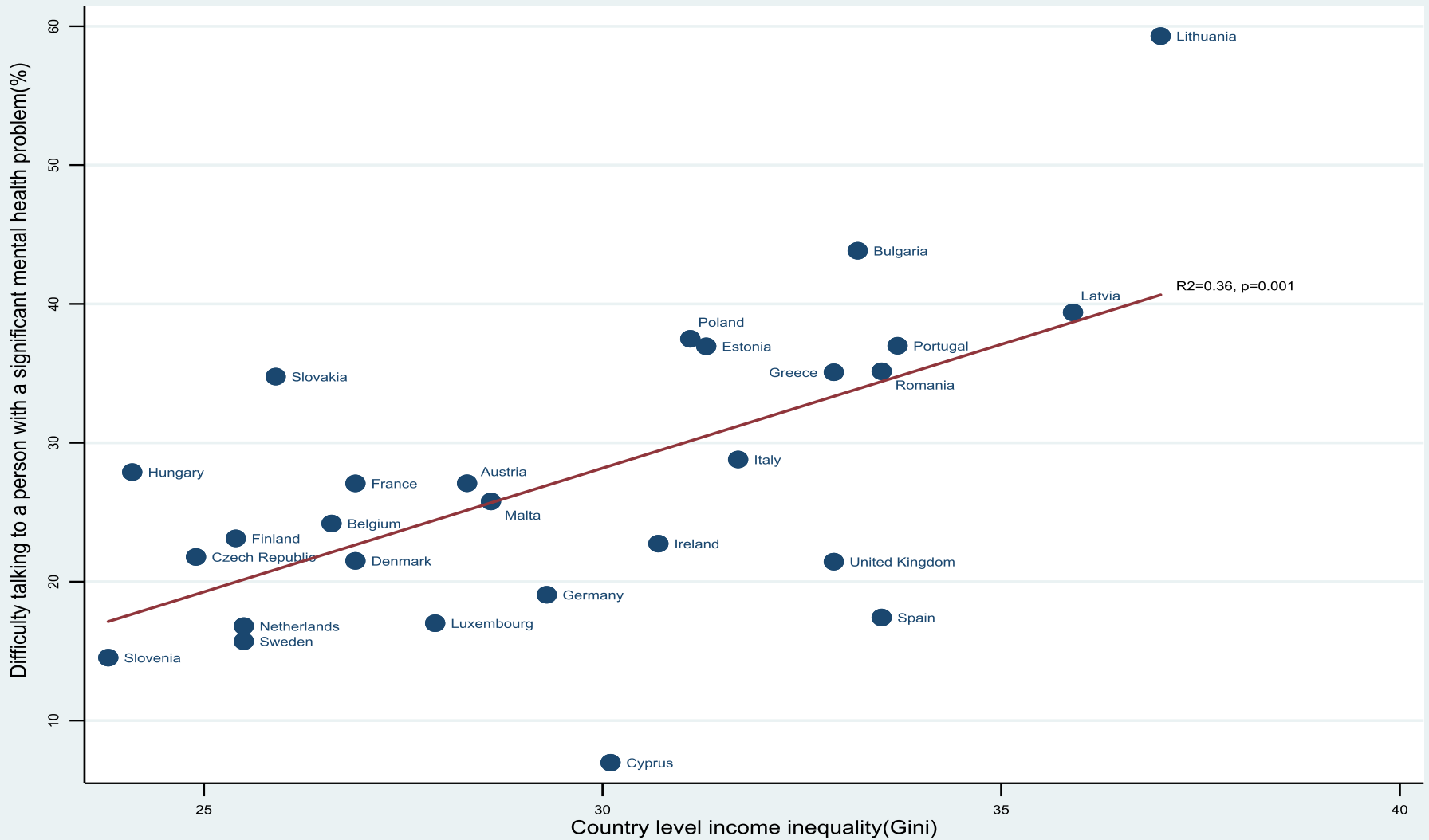


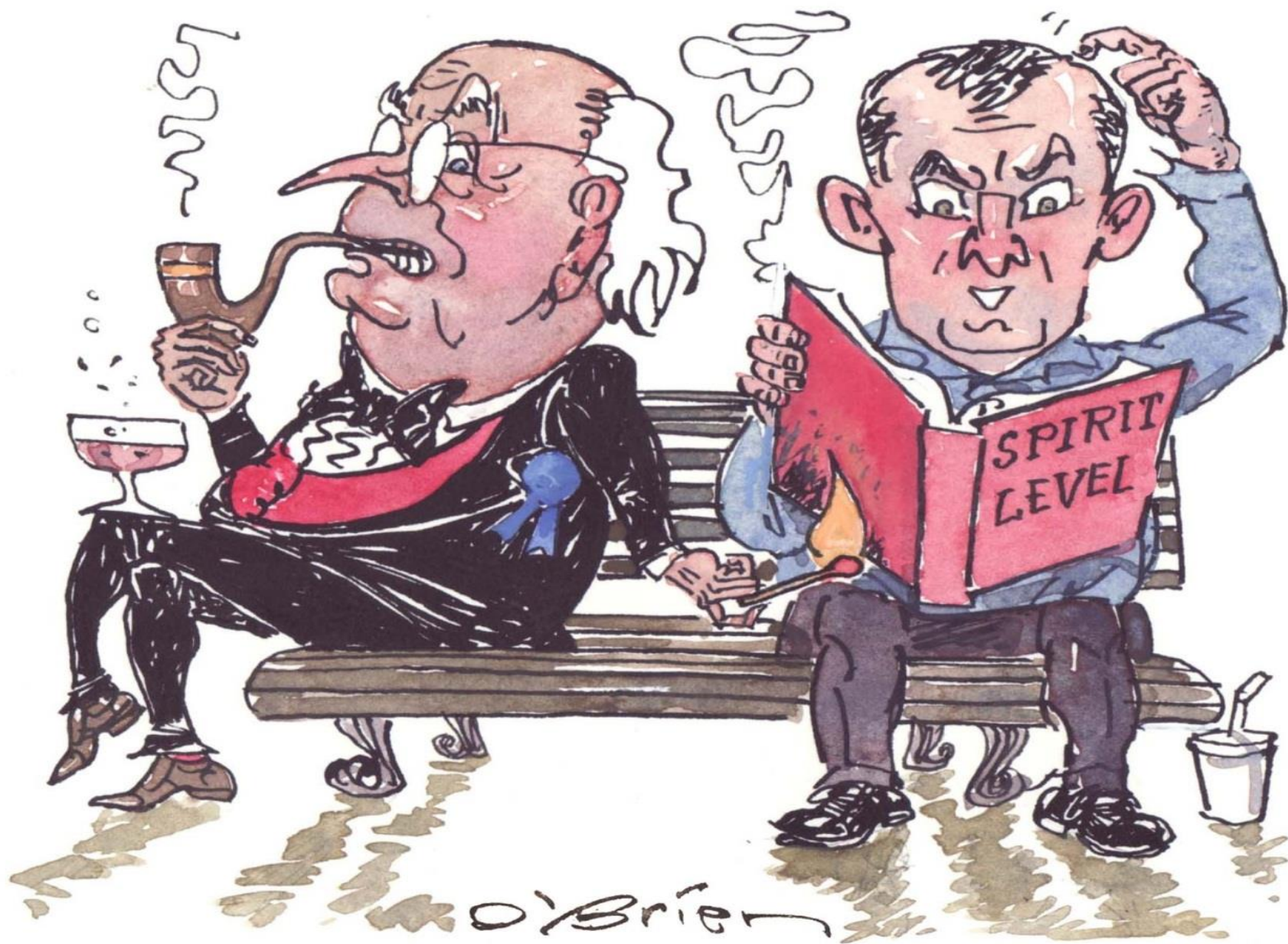
# People withdraw from social interaction



Redrawn from data in: Lancee B, Van de Werfhorst HG. Income inequality and participation: A comparison of 24 European countries. *Social science research*. 2012;41(5):1166-1178.

Attitudes towards people with mental illness by 2010 income inequality in the EU27





World's 26 richest people own as much as poorest 50%, says O



Photo: Bloomberg via Getty Images



## BRITAIN'S BIG SQUEEZE

*In Britain, Even Children Are Feeling the Effects of Austerity*

By [Patrick Kingsley](#) New York Times, Sept. 26, 2018



Waiting for lunch at Morecambe Bay Primary School in Morecambe, England. About a third of the school's 350 students would not have breakfast unless the school provided it, one teacher said. Credit: Laura Boushnak for The New York Times

Poverty

# Child poverty in Britain set to soar to new record, says thinktank

IFS forecast that 37% of children will be in relative poverty by 2022 would see all progress made in the last 20 years undone



2344  
Larry Elliott

Thursday 2 November  
2017 00.01 GMT



A young girl walking through a housing estate in Skelmersdale, Lancashire. Photograph: Alamy

Advertisement

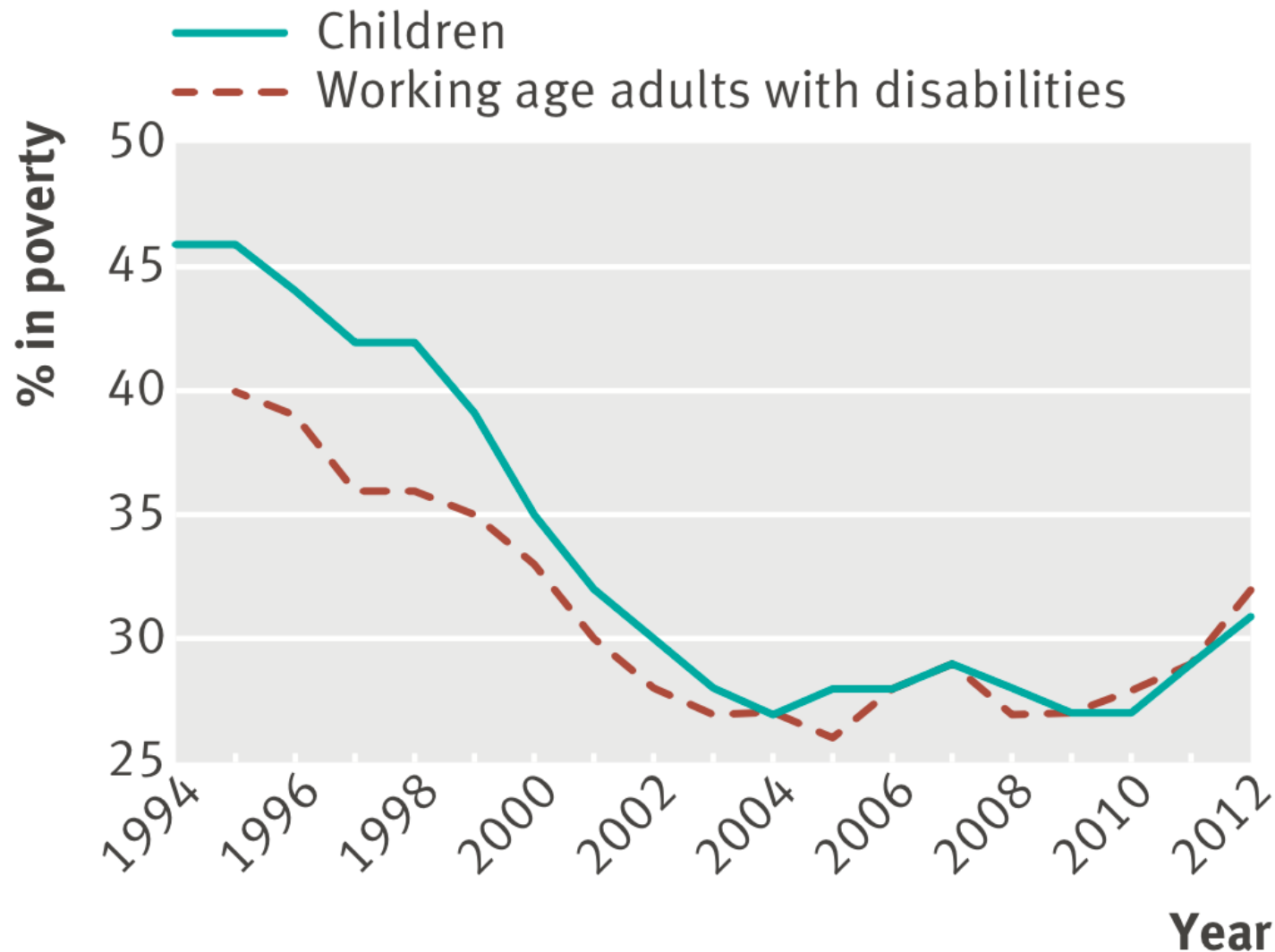


## At What Age Can You Retire?

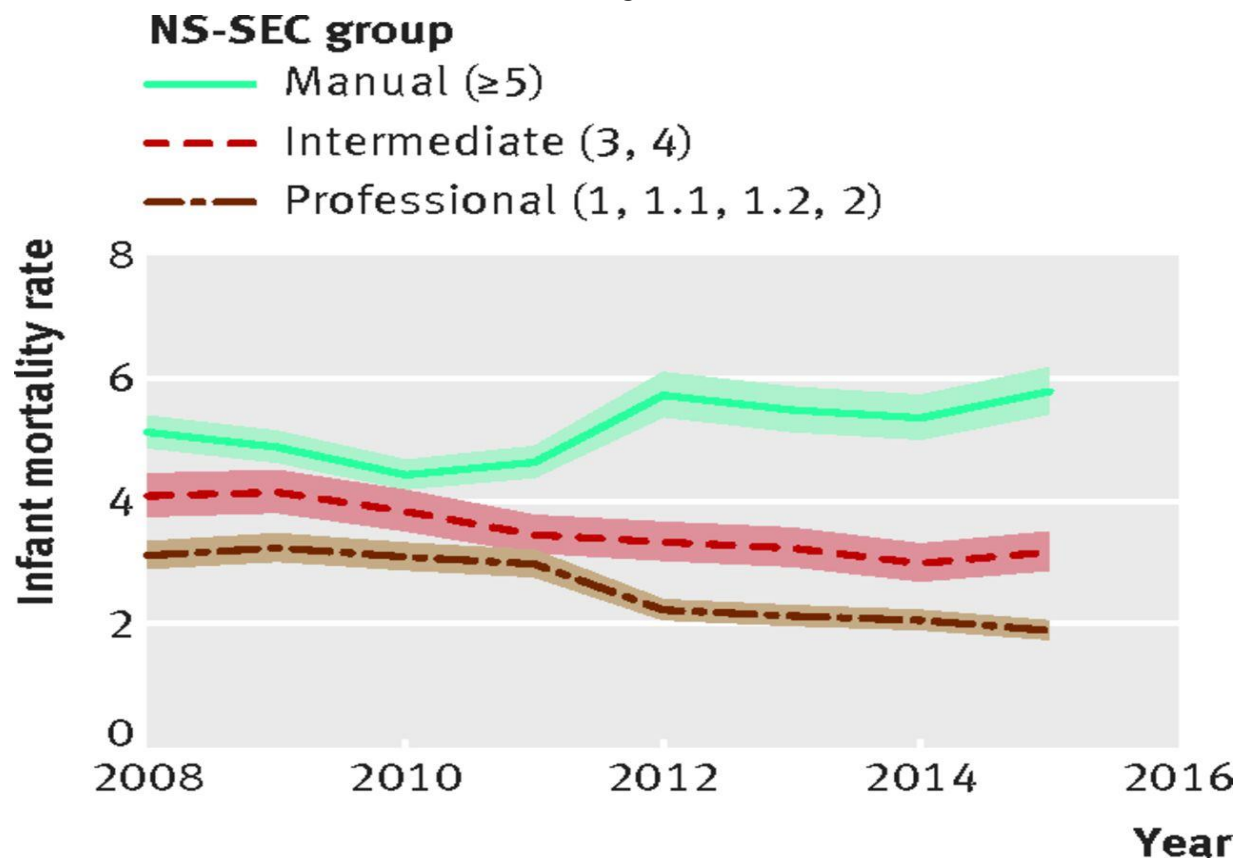
If you have a £250,000 portfolio, download the must-read guide by money manager Ken Fisher's firm.



# Gains of the past are being undone



**Fig 1 Infant mortality rate (95% confidence interval) by socioeconomic classification, 2008-15.**



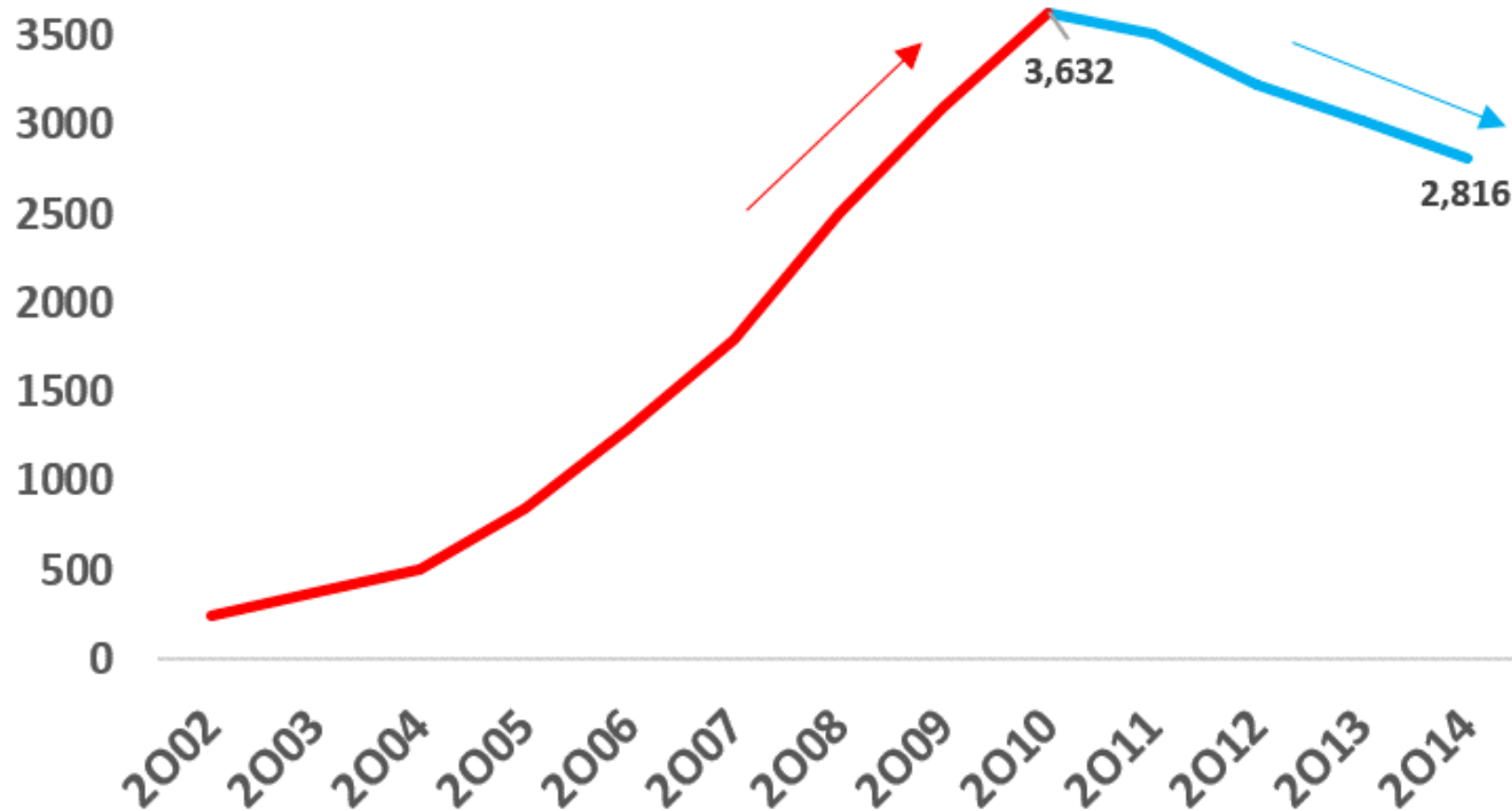
David Taylor-Robinson, and Ben Barr BMJ  
2017;357:bmj.j2258



## Local authority budget cut 2010-11 to 2014-15 versus child poverty

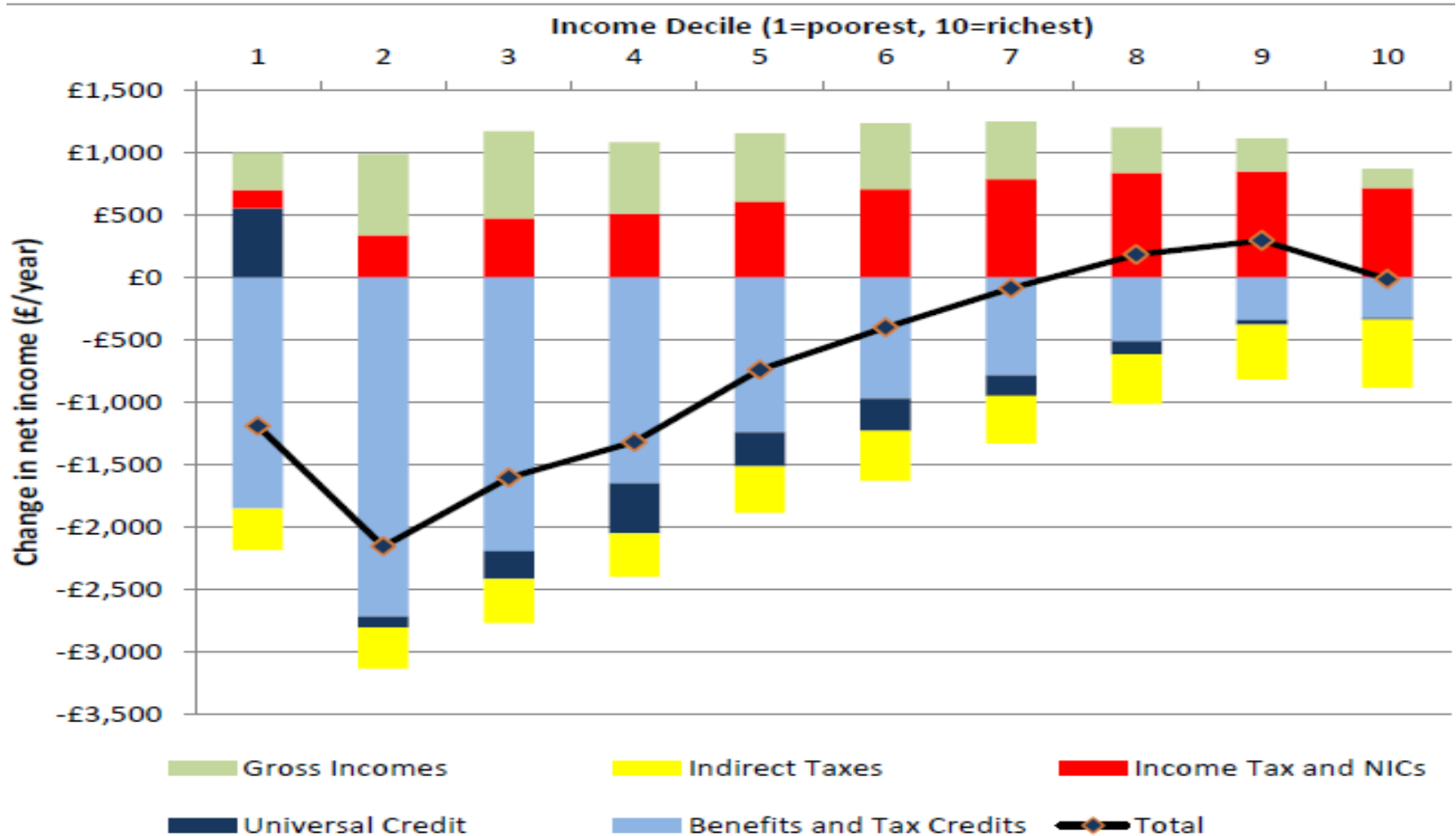


## Number of Children's **Sure Start** Centres (gov.uk)



# Impact of tax and welfare reforms 2010-2017

## Deciles of household net income, GB, 2021-2



# Discrediting experiences: outcomes of eligibility assessments for claimants with psychiatric compared with non-psychiatric conditions transferring to personal independence payments in England

Katie Pybus, Kate E. Pickett, Stephanie L. Prady, Charlie Lloyd and Richard Wilkinson

## Background

Recent qualitative research suggests that changes to the way eligibility for welfare payments is determined in the UK may be detrimental to claimants with mental illnesses. No large-scale analysis has been undertaken to date.

## Aims

To examine differences between claimants with psychiatric conditions compared with non-psychiatric conditions in the number of claims disallowed following a personal independence payment (PIP) eligibility assessment for existing disability living allowance (DLA) claimants.

## Method

Administrative data on DLA claimants with psychiatric conditions transferring to PIP between 2013 and 2016 was compared with claimants with non-psychiatric conditions to explore differences in the number of claims disallowed following an eligibility assessment.

## Results

Claimants with a mental illness were 2.40 (95% CI 2.36–2.44) times more likely to have their existing DLA entitlement removed

following a PIP eligibility assessment than claimants with musculoskeletal conditions, neurological conditions and diabetes.

## Conclusions

PIP eligibility assessment outcomes show marked differences by health condition, raising questions as to whether the process is equitable.

## Declaration of interest

None.

## Keywords

Service users; parity of esteem; personal independence payments; welfare reform; eligibility assessment.

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## Shut out of society, young Londoners talk to UN poverty envoy



United Nations rapporteur Philip Alston with Young Equality Campaigners in London Council

Photo: Ealing