

Why are things not getting better?

DAVID GUSZEJNOV

Question 1

In all low-income countries across the world today, how many girls finish primary school?

- A: 20 percent
- B: 40 percent
- C: 60 percent

Question 2

Where does the majority of the world population live?

- A: Low-income countries
- B: Middle-income countries
- C: High-income countries

Question 3

In the last 20 years, the proportion of the world population living in extreme poverty has ...

- A: almost doubled
- B: remained more or less the same
- C: almost halved

Question 4

There are 2 billion children in the world today, aged 0 to 15 years old. How many children will there be in the year 2100, according to the United Nations?

- A: 4 billion
- B: 3 billion
- C: 2 billion

Question 5

Worldwide, 30-year-old men have spent 10 years in school, on average. How many years have women of the same age spent in school?

- A: 9 years
- B: 6 years
- C: 3 years

Question 6

11. In 1996, tigers, giant pandas, and black rhinos were all listed as endangered. How many of these three species are more critically endangered today?

- A: Two of them
- B: One of them
- C: None of them

Answers

Let's look at how well we did!

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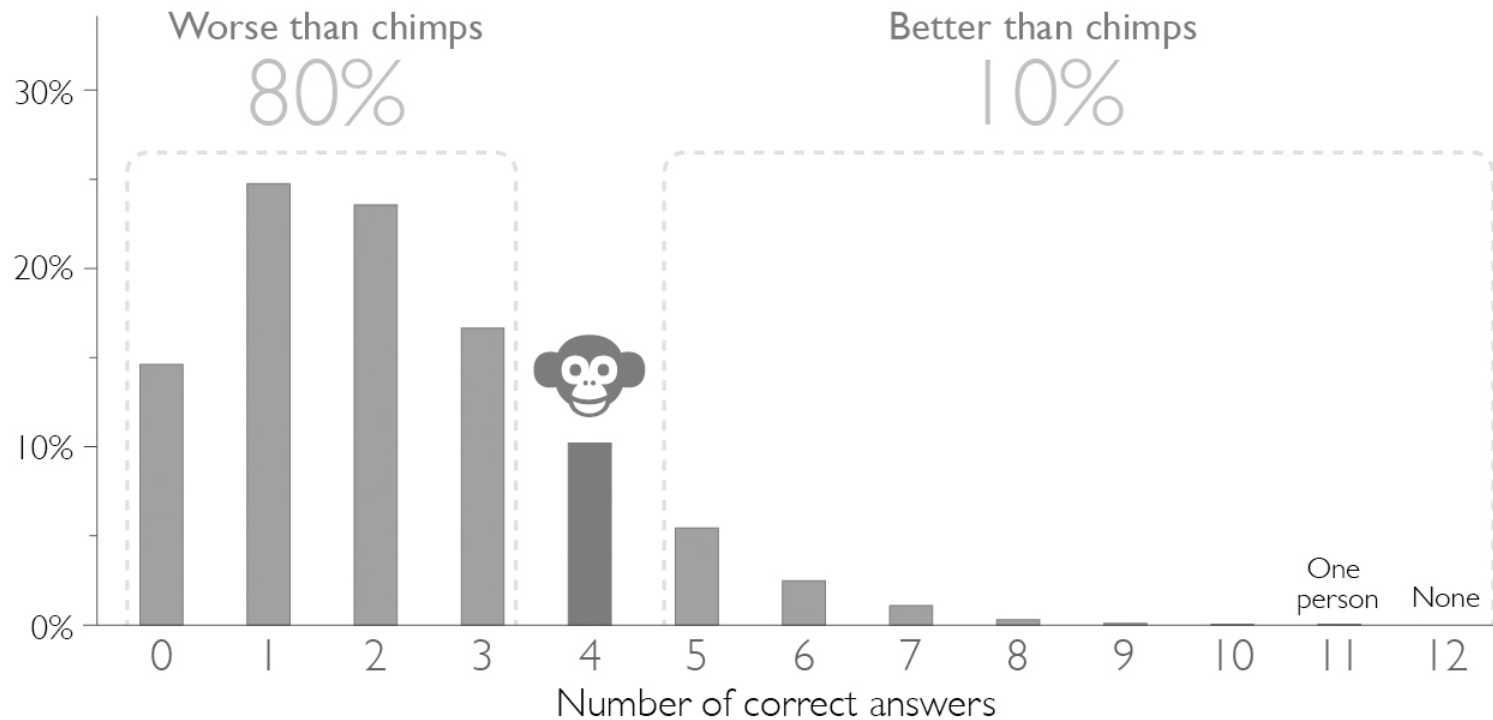
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How well-informed are we?

ONLY 10% ANSWERED BETTER THAN THE CHIMPS

Share of people by number of correct answers on the twelve questions.
(12,000 people in 14 countries.)



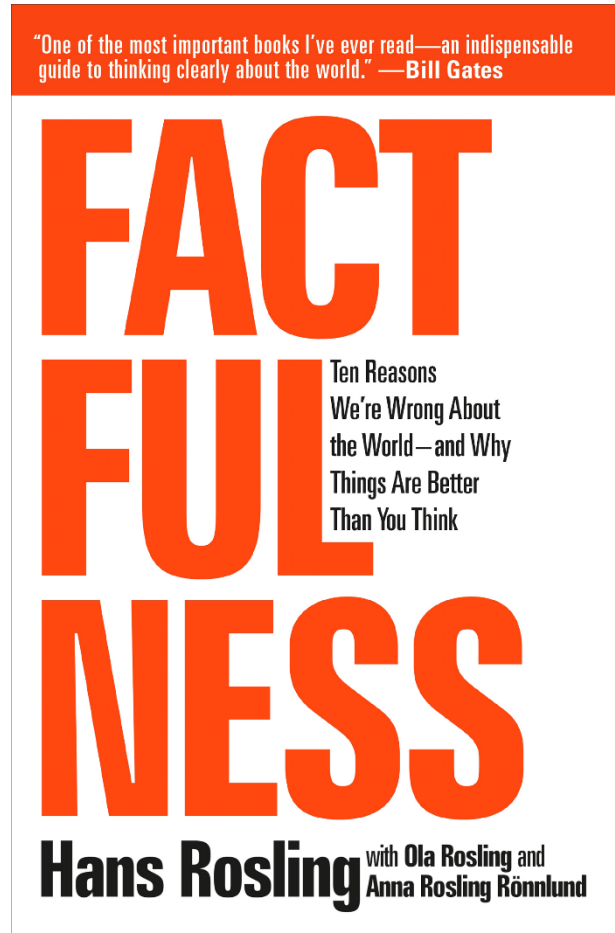
Sources: Novus[1] & Ipsos MORI[1], See gapm.io/rtest17

Book: Factfulness

Written by Hans Rosling,
professor of public health and
general optimist.

Free for all college graduates in
2018 (thanks to Bill Gates).

*“The reasons why we are wrong
about the world”*



Why are we getting it wrong?

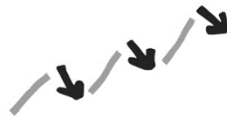
10 Instincts working against us

1. GAP



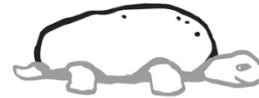
Look for the majority

2. NEGATIVITY



Expect bad news

7. DESTINY



Slow change is still change

8. SINGLE



Get a tool box

3. STRAIGHT LINE



Lines might bend

4. FEAR



Calculate the risks

9. BLAME



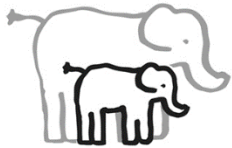
Resist pointing your finger

10. URGENCY



Take small steps

5. SIZE



Get things in proportion

6. GENERALIZATION



Question your categories

Gap Instinct

“Rich vs poor”, “Left vs Right”, “Us vs Them” ...

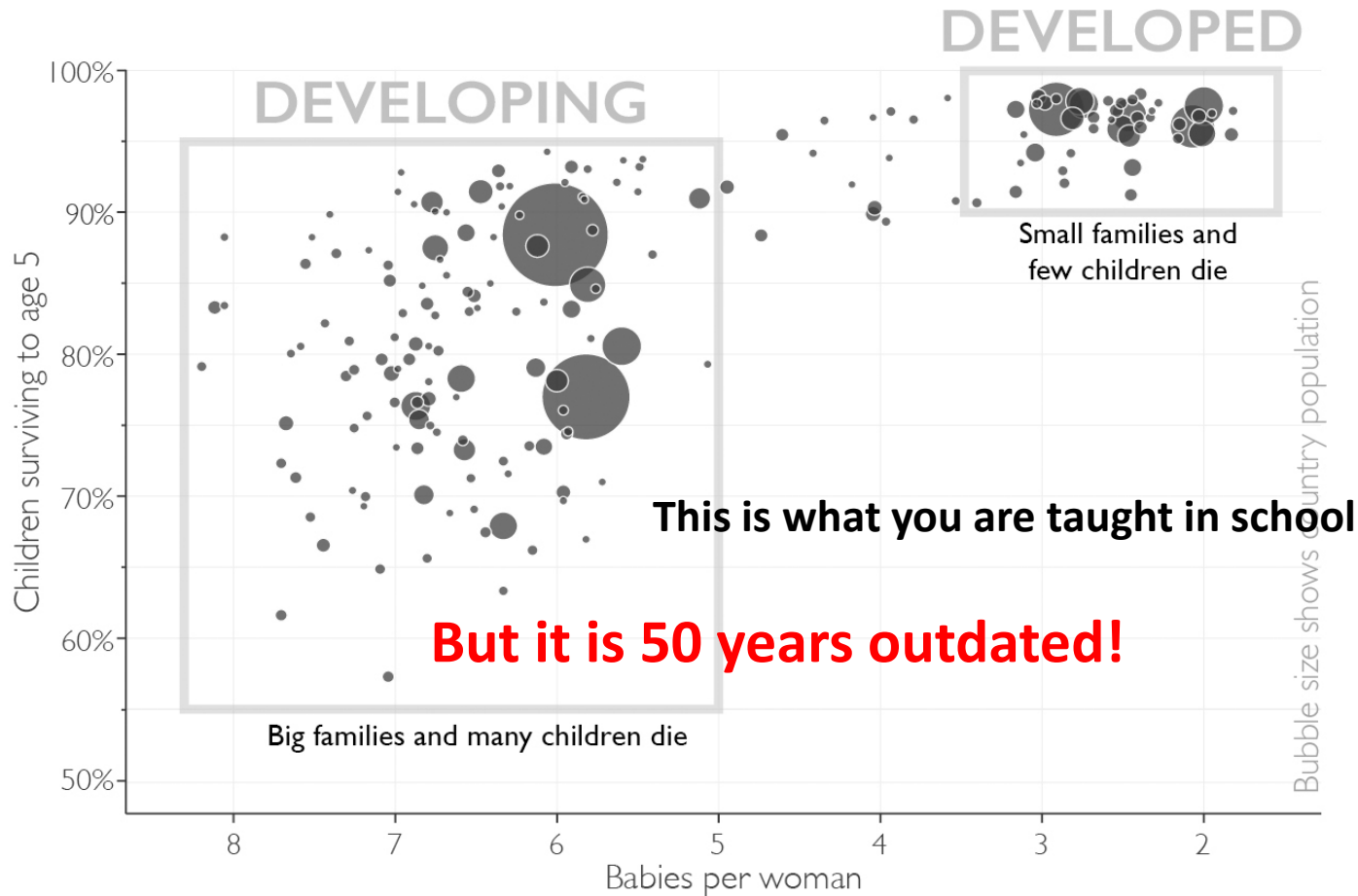
We assume that countries/people can be assigned to distinct categories with no overlap

Gap Instinct



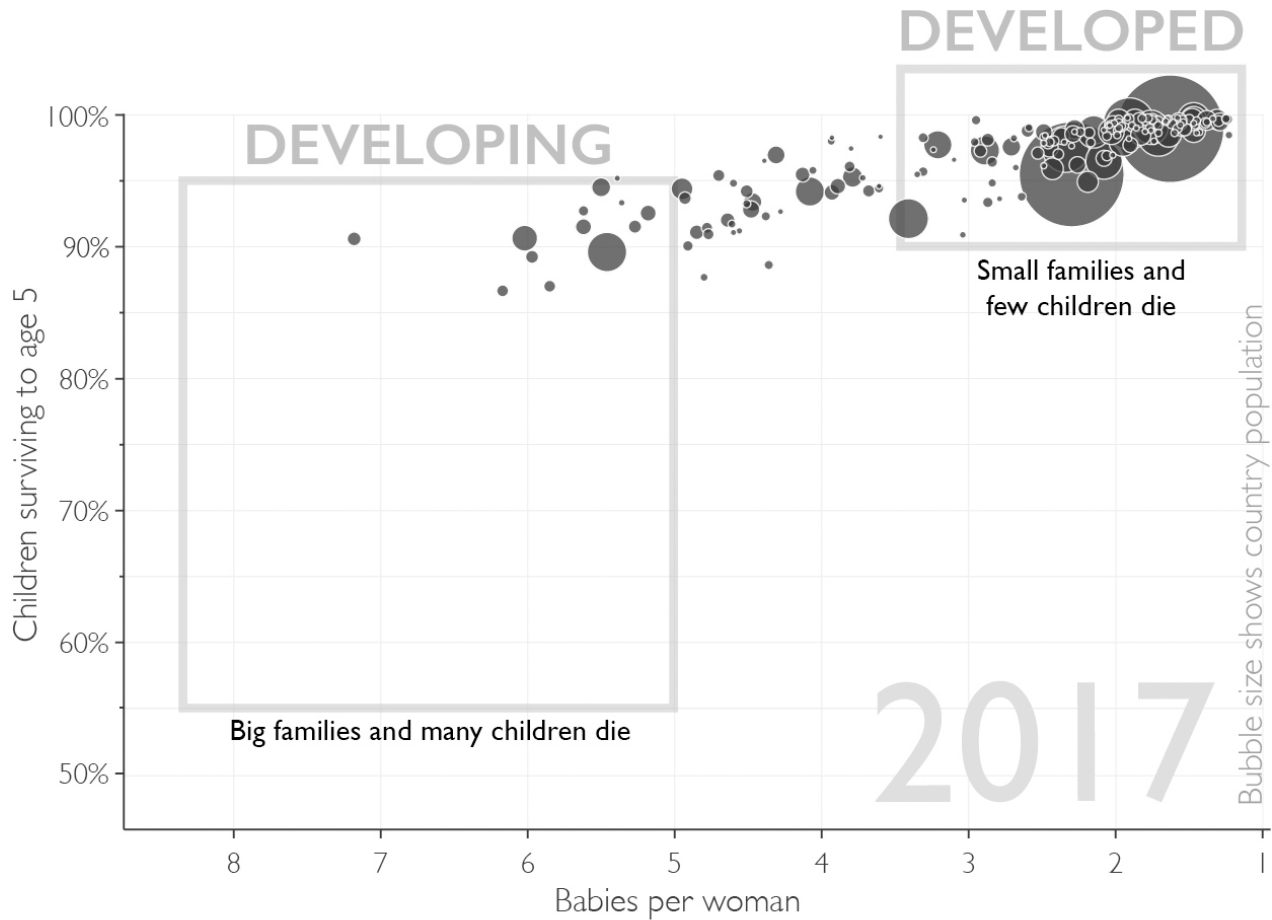
Sources: UN-IGME & UN-Pop[1,3]

Gap Instinct



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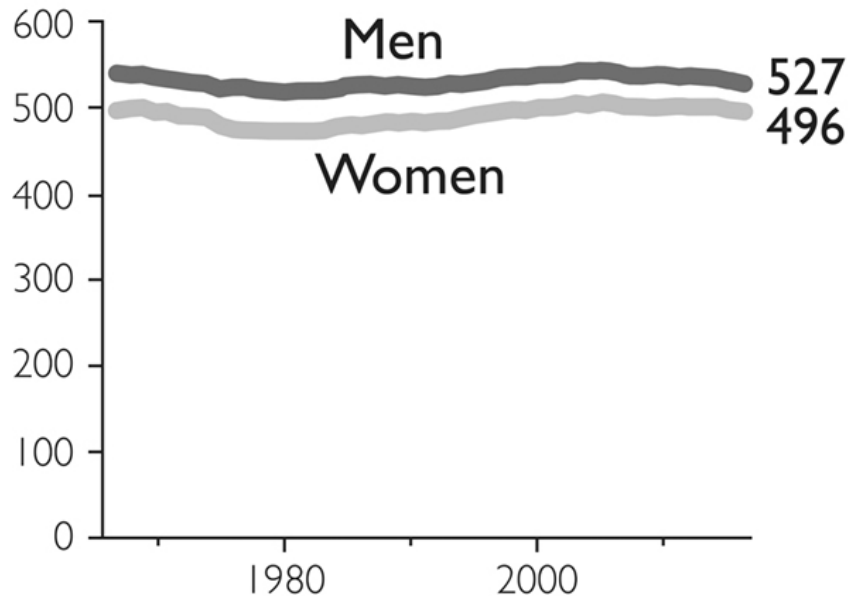
Gap Instinct



Sources: UN-IGME, UN-Pop[1,3] & Gapminder[6]

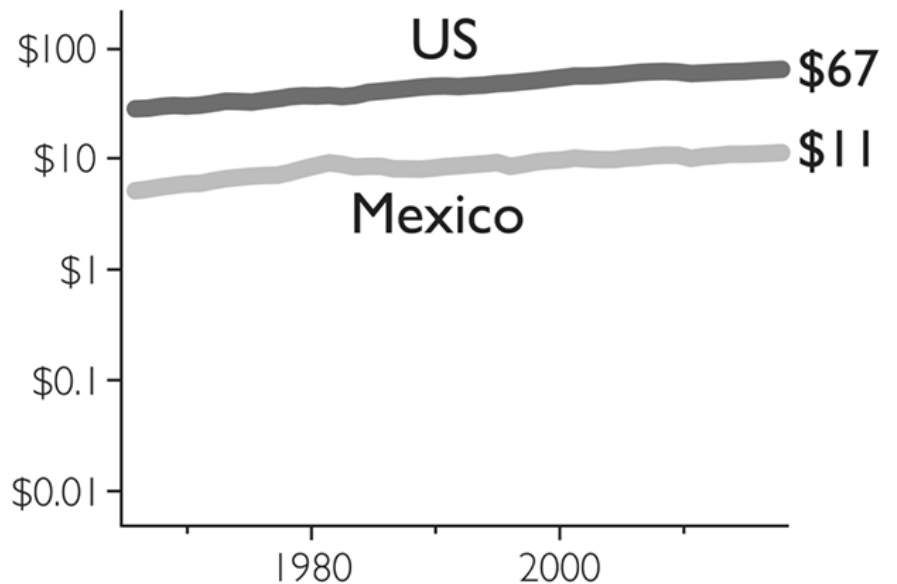
Gap Instinct

AVERAGE MATH SCORES



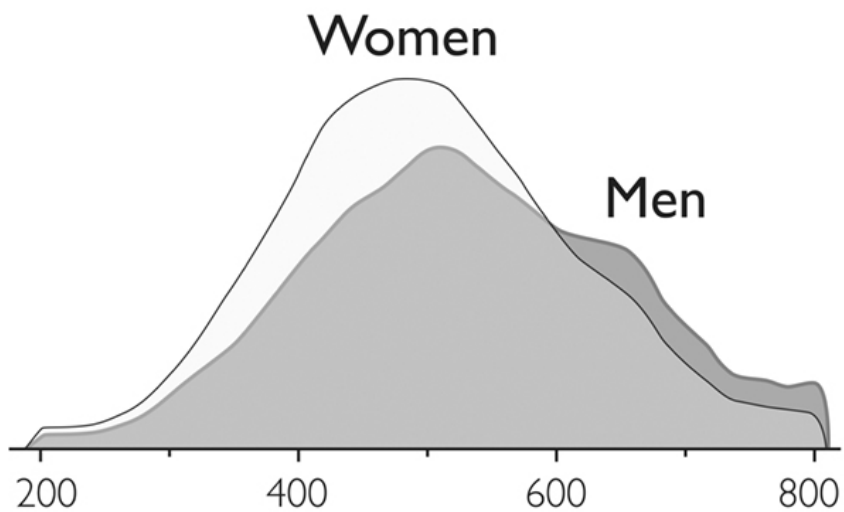
Source: College Board via Perry

AVERAGE INCOME \$/DAY



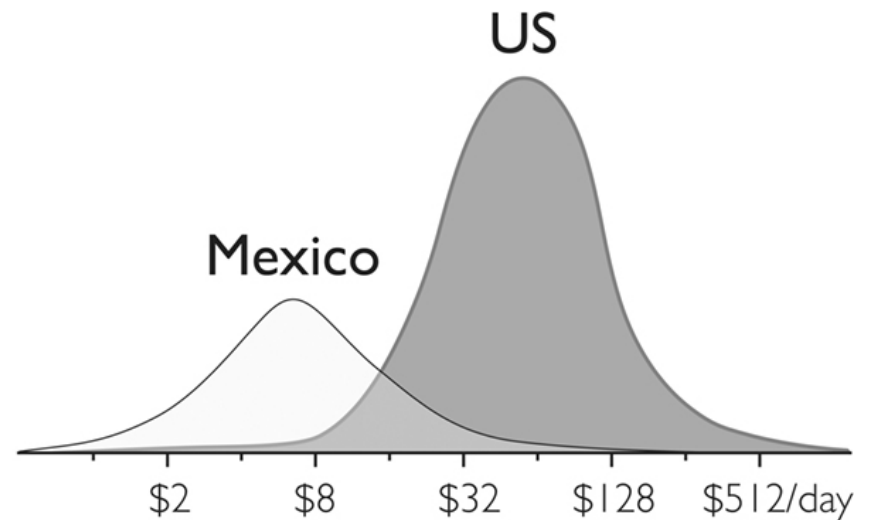
Source: Gapminder[10] based on PovcalNet & IMF[1]

Gap Instinct



NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DIFFERENT MATH SCORES 2016

Source: College Board

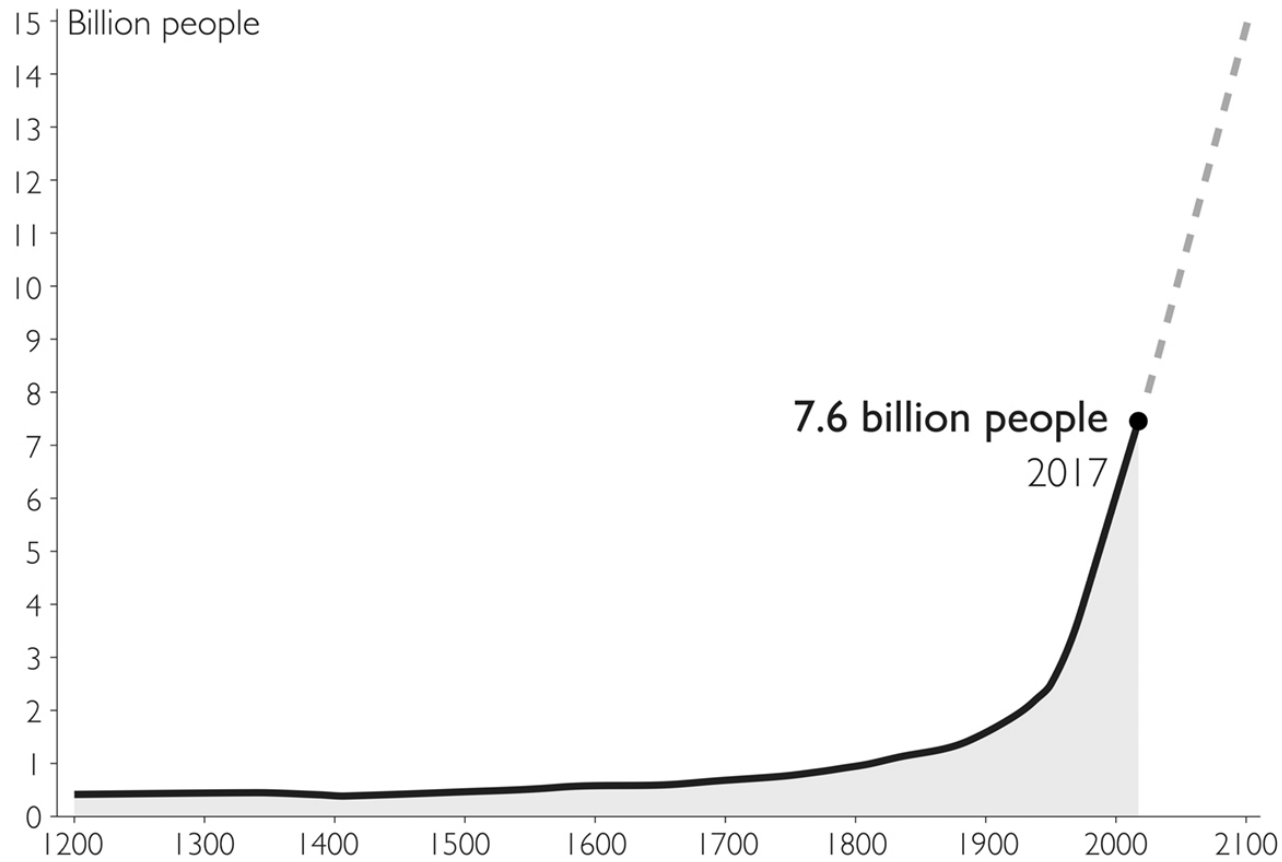


NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DIFFERENT INCOMES 2016

Source: Gapminder[8] based on ENIGH, US-CPS & PovcalNet

Straight Lines Instinct

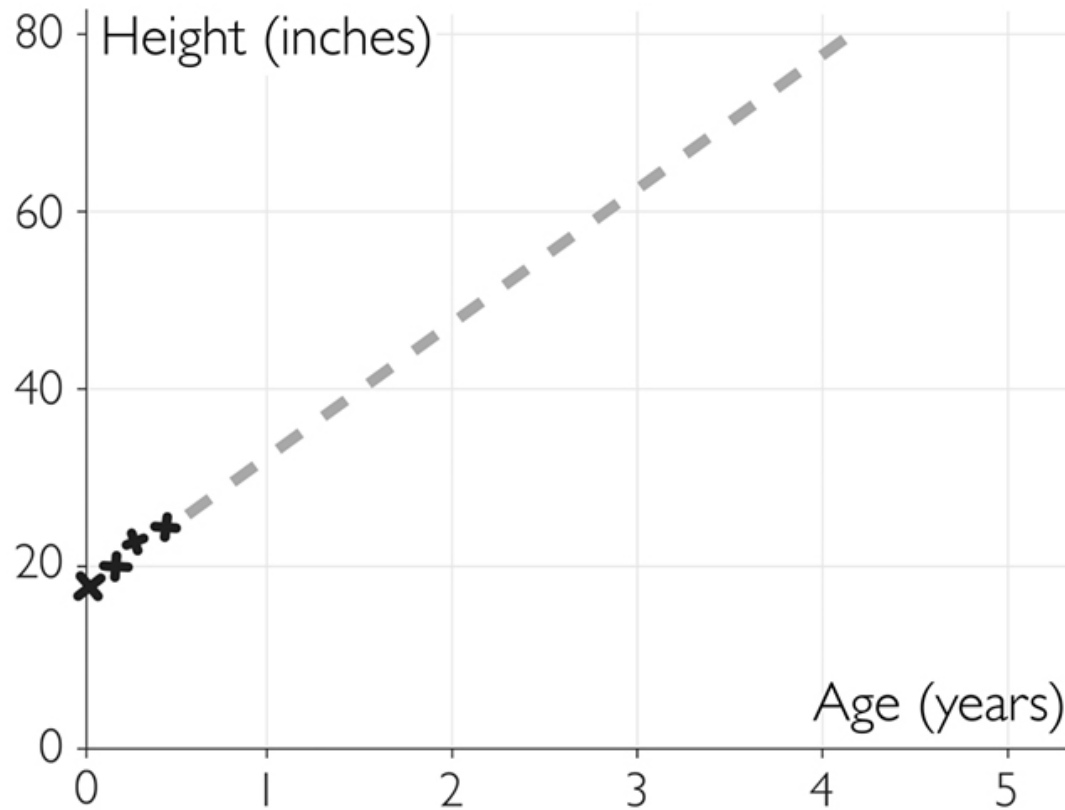
PERCEIVED WORLD POPULATION INTO THE FUTURE



Source: Gapminder[17] based on Biraben, McEvedy and Jones, Maddison[2] & UN-Pop[1]

Straight Lines Instinct

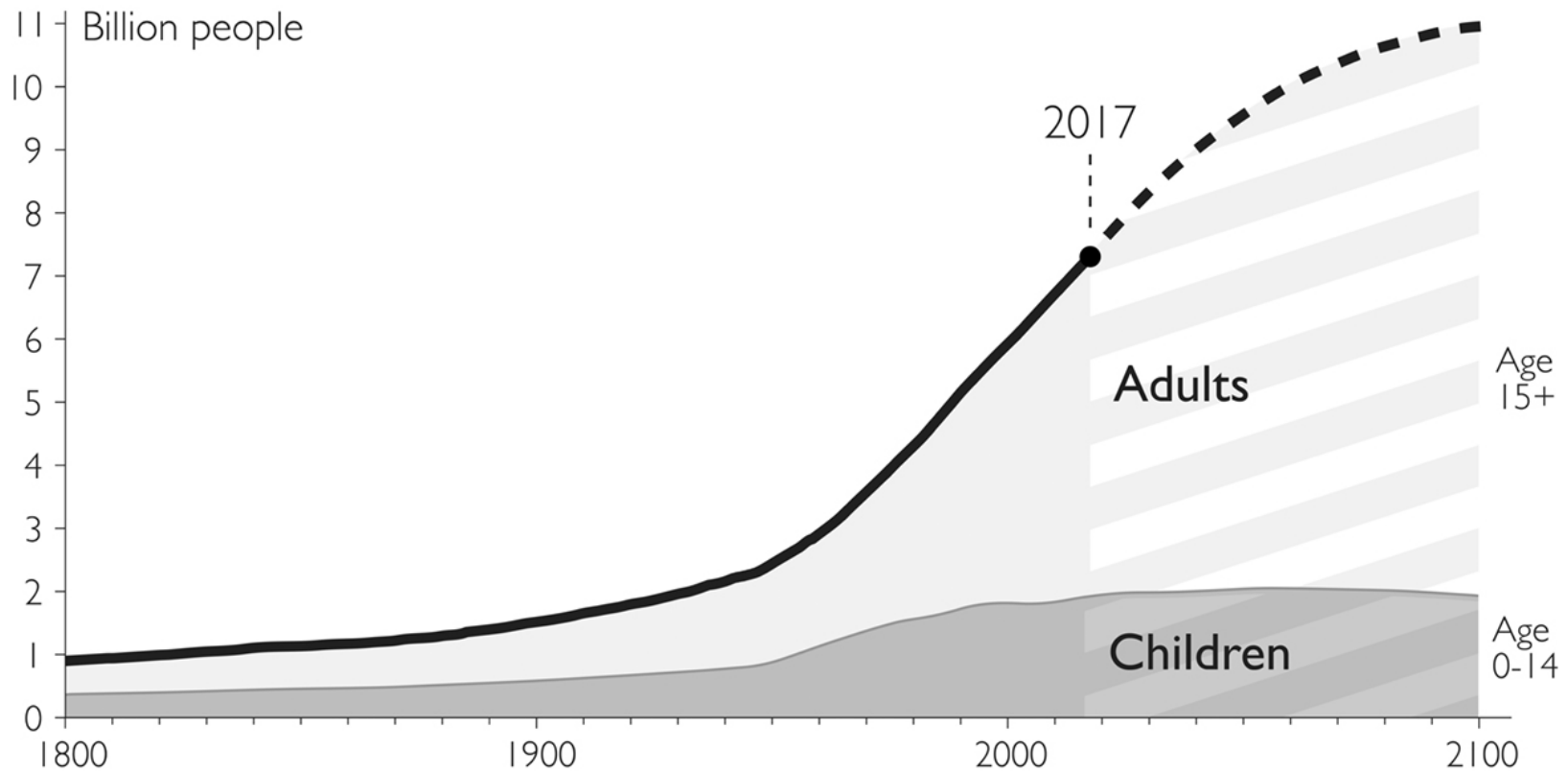
MINO'S HEIGHT INTO THE FUTURE



Source: Magnus & Pia

Straight Lines Instinct

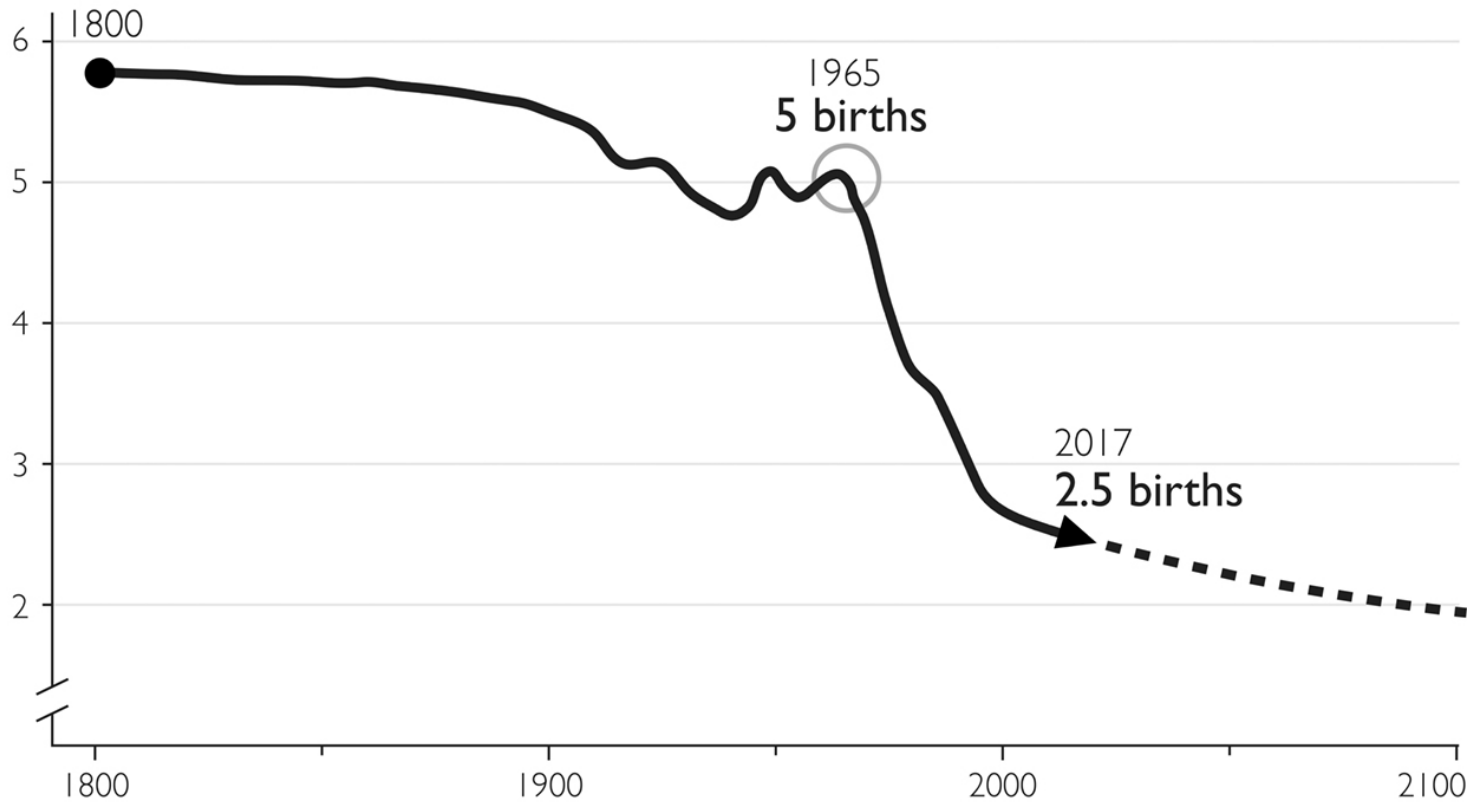
WORLD POPULATION: UN FUTURE FORECAST



Sources: Gapminder[17], Maddison[2] & UN-Pop[1,2]

Straight Lines Instinct

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BABIES PER WOMAN FROM 1800 TO TODAY

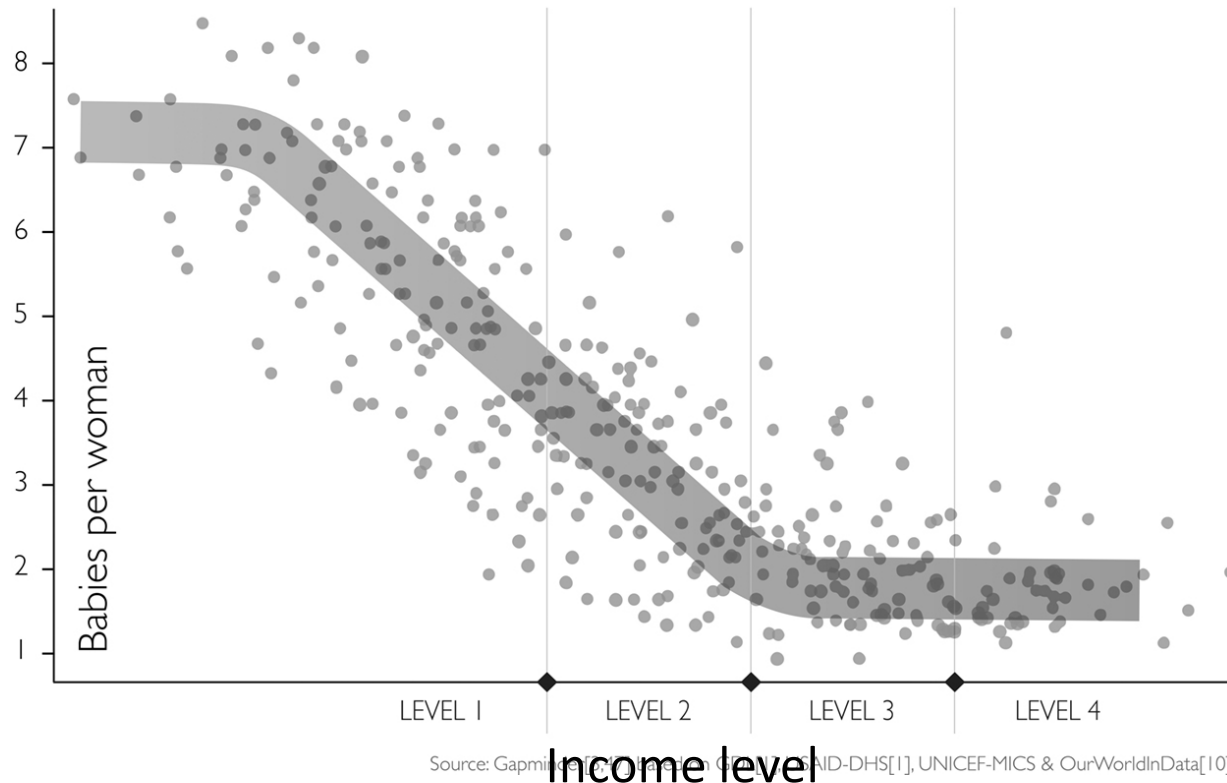


Source: Gapminder[7] based on UN-Pop[3]

Straight Lines Instinct

A SLIDE

In this graph dots may represent countries, or, wherever we had data, we split a country into five income groups, each representing 20 percent of the population. This shows 2013.

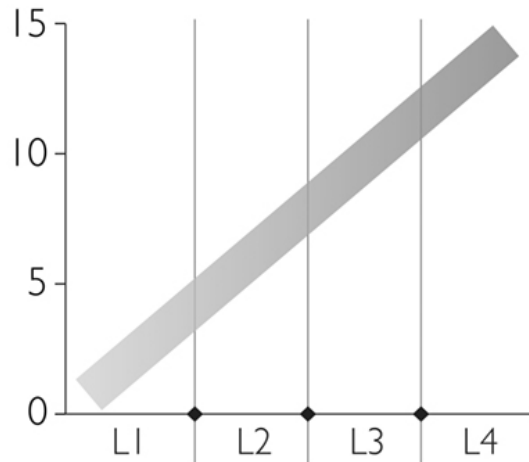


Straight Lines Instinct

Straight lines do exist though!

SCHOOLING

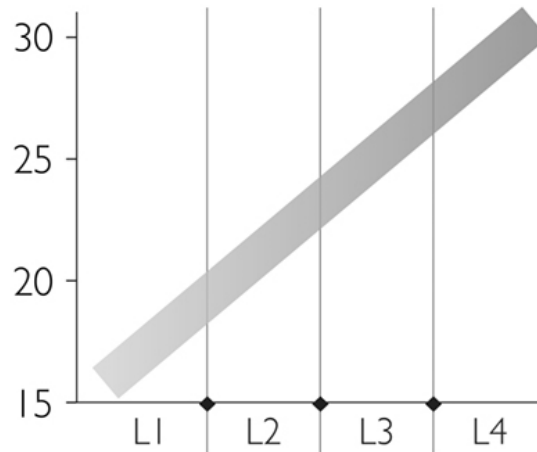
Average length of education in years



Sources: Gapminder[3,44] & IHME[2]

BRIDE AGE

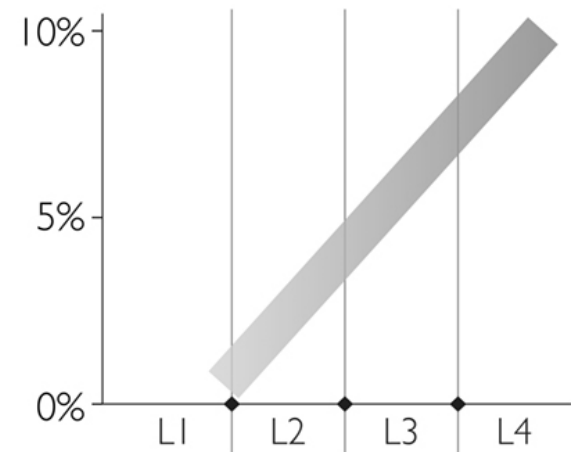
Women's average age at first marriage



Sources: Gapminder[3,33]

RECREATION

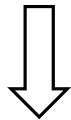
Share of income used for recreation and culture



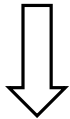
Sources: Gapminder[3,45] based on ILO[10]

Negativity

Bad news is always more dramatic,
people pay attention more



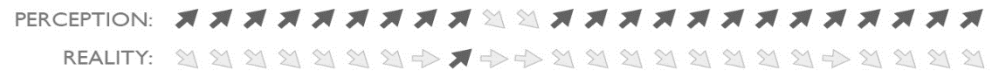
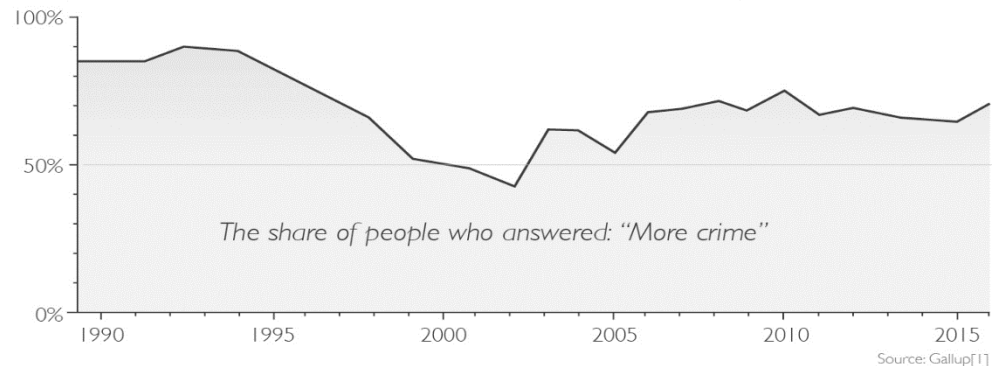
Media will overinflate bad news and
focus on them



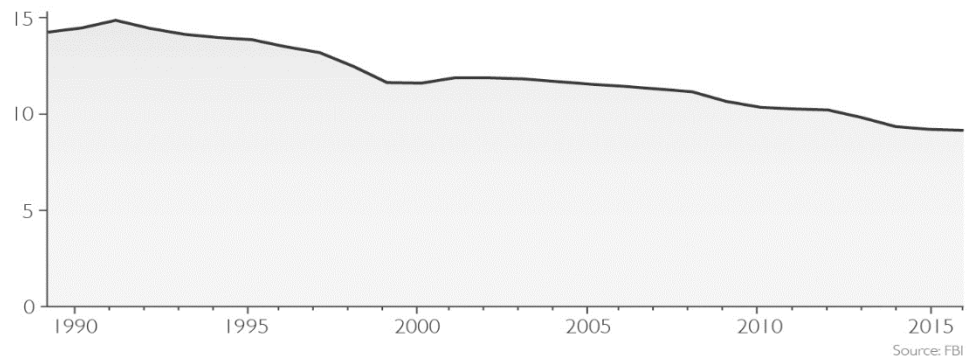
People's perception:
"Things are worse than ever"

MOST PEOPLE KEEP THINKING CRIME GOES UP

Gallup asked, "Is there more crime in the US than there was a year ago, or less?"



Reported crimes in US (millions)



Negativity

Most of us have a problem with saying
“Things are better.”

It does **not** mean: *“Nothing needs to be done”*

Things can be *better* and *bad* at the same time

Blame

“It is all bad because of X”

Common options for X:

- Media
- Rich/poor people
- Foreigners
- Religion Y

The world is complex, there are usually no villains, but we crave simplicity.

Blame

Example: Who is responsible for high drug prices?

- CEOs of Big Pharma, they make the decisions

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- Stock holders of Big Pharma = often retirement funds

Who are they beholden to? Who is the villain?

Blame

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Blame

We are looking for people/groups to blame when usually it is a problem with the system, for example:

- Media reports in hyperboles: because that is the only thing we listen to
- Politicians don't fulfill their promises: because we elect the person who promises what we want even if it is unfeasible

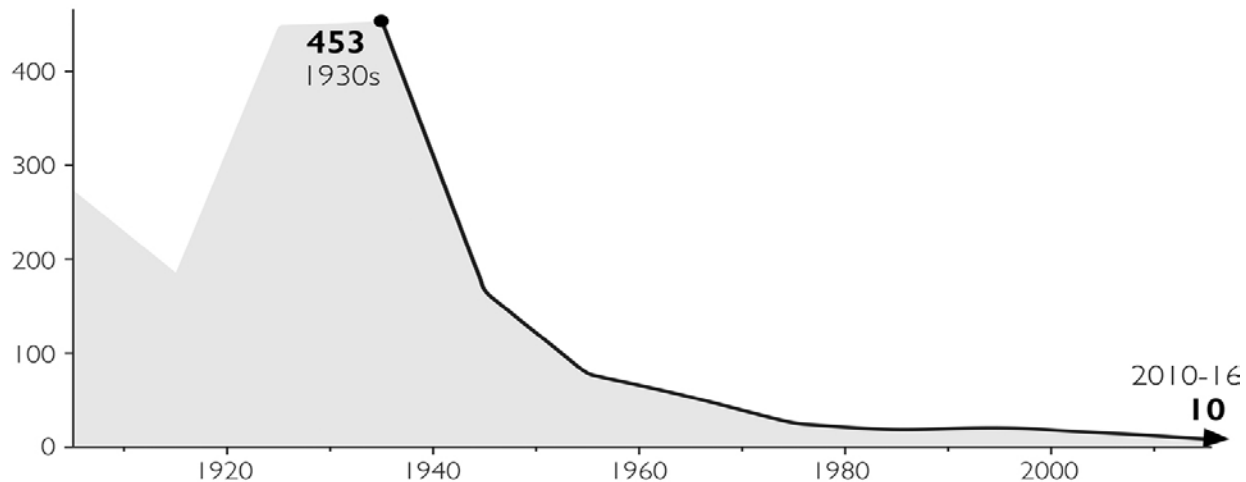
Fear

***“There are so many disasters/terrorists etc.,
and there are more every year”***

We are often afraid of things that have almost no chance of happening to us

DEATHS FROM DISASTER

Annual deaths per million people, 10-year averages.



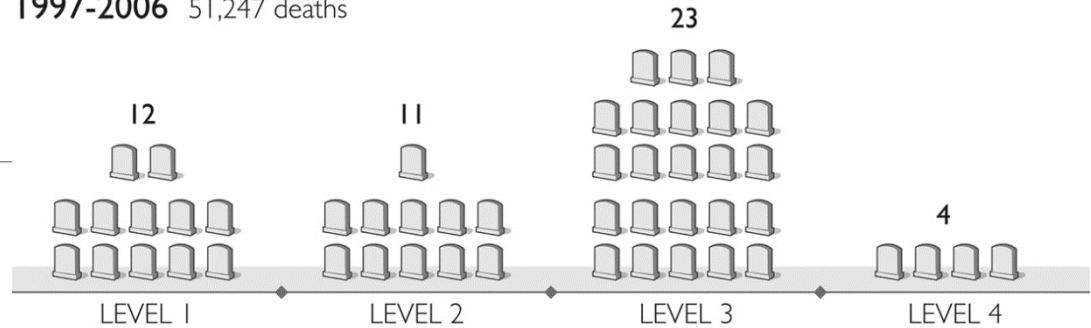
Source: Gapminder[52] based on EM-DAT & UN-Pop[1]

Fear

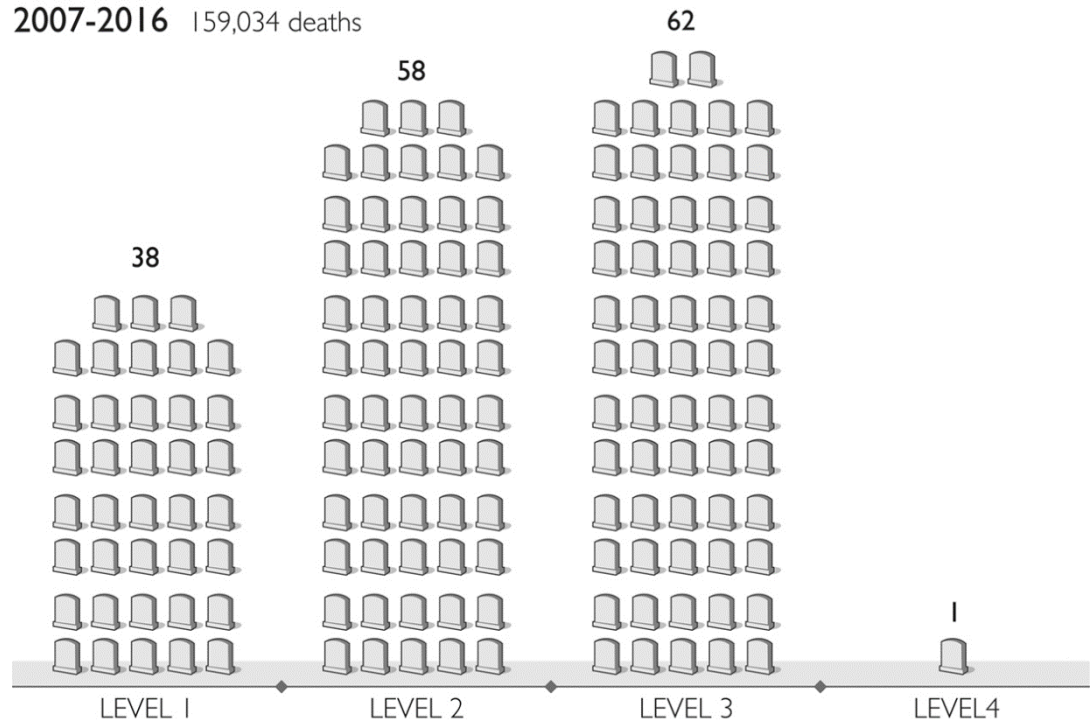
FEWER TERRORISM DEATHS ON LEVEL 4

Globally, terrorists killed three times more people than in the previous 10-year period. Each grave represents 1,000 deaths.

1997-2006 51,247 deaths



2007-2016 159,034 deaths



Sources: Global Terrorism Database (GTD) & Gapminder[3]

Sometimes the threat does increase, but not to us, and we still keep being afraid.

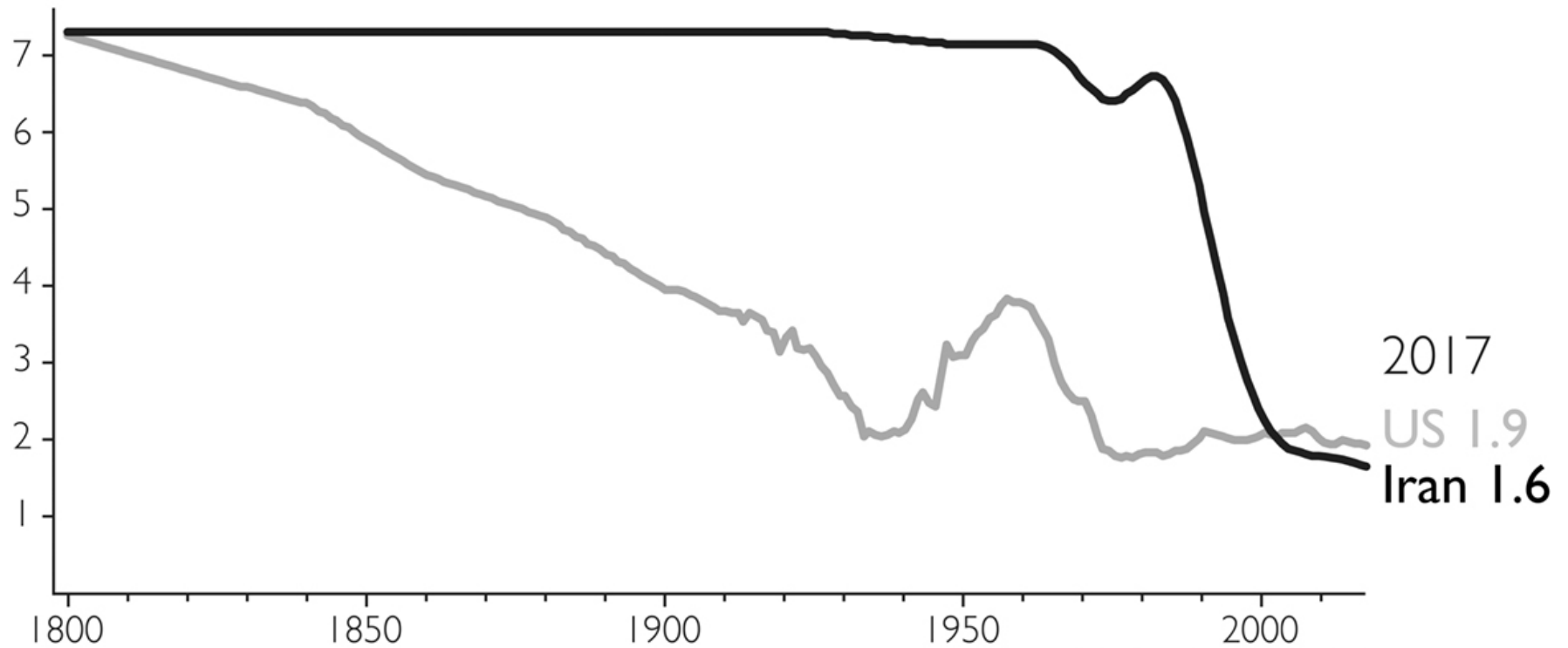
Destiny

“Things will never get better in Africa/Middle East/... because of their culture/religion/....”

We believe that certain things determine the fate of people without ever checking if it is true.

Destiny

AVERAGE BABIES PER WOMAN FROM 1800 TO TODAY

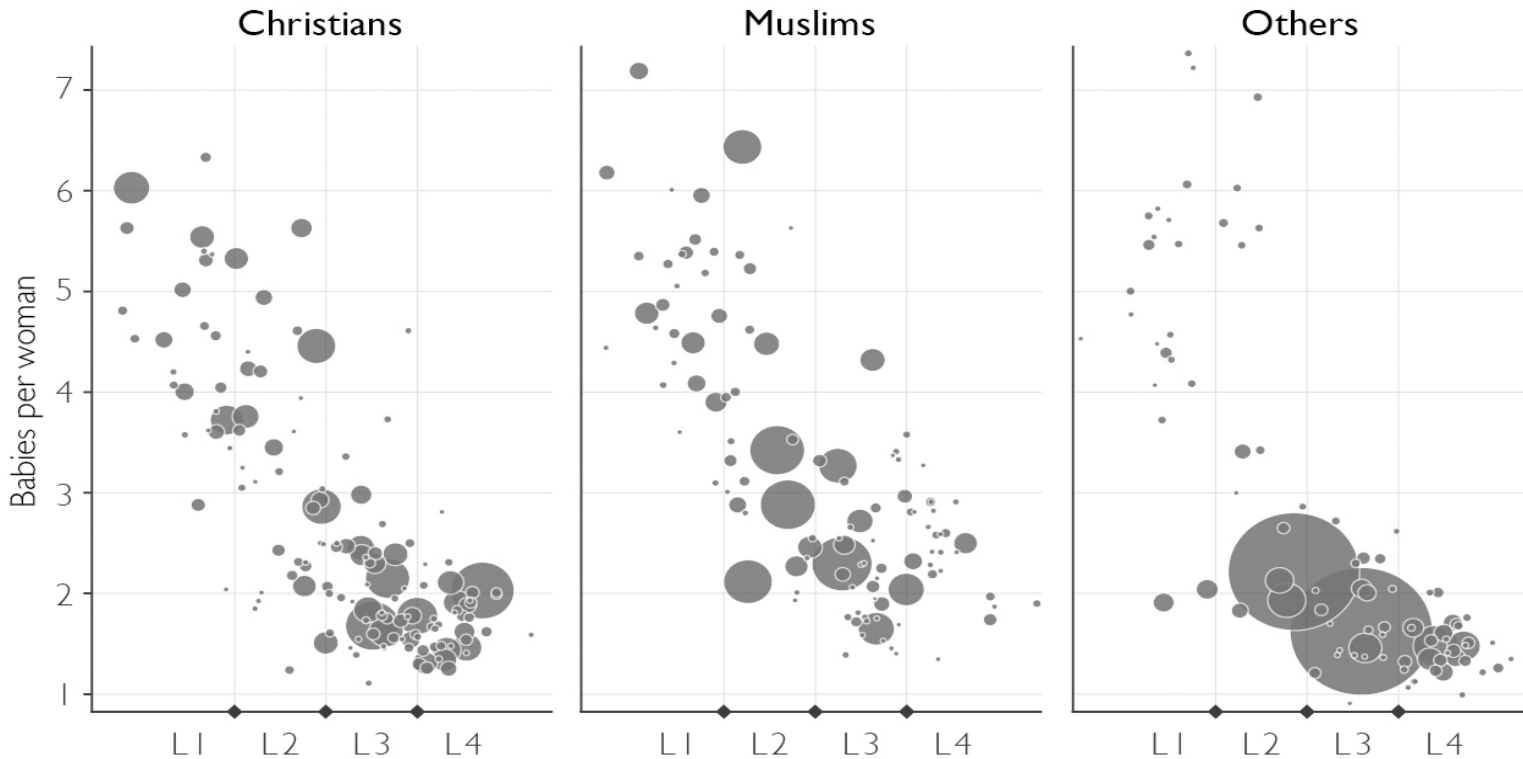


Source: Gapminder[7] based on UN-Pop[3]

Destiny

WITH HIGHER INCOME COMES FEWER BABIES

All countries split into religious groups, 2017. Bubble size shows number of people.



X-axis: GDP per capita in \$ adjusted for price differences.

Source: Gapminder[53] based on Pew[2,3], UN-Pop[1,4] & USAID-DHS[2]

Know your Instincts

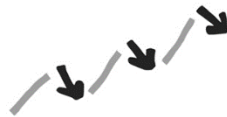
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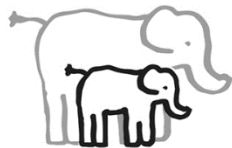
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More about these

GAPMINDER

www.gapminder.org

"One of the most important books I've ever read—an indispensable guide to thinking clearly about the world." —Bill Gates

**FACT
FUL
NESS**

Ten Reasons
We're Wrong About
the World—and Why
Things Are Better
Than You Think

Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling and
Anna Rosling Rönnlund