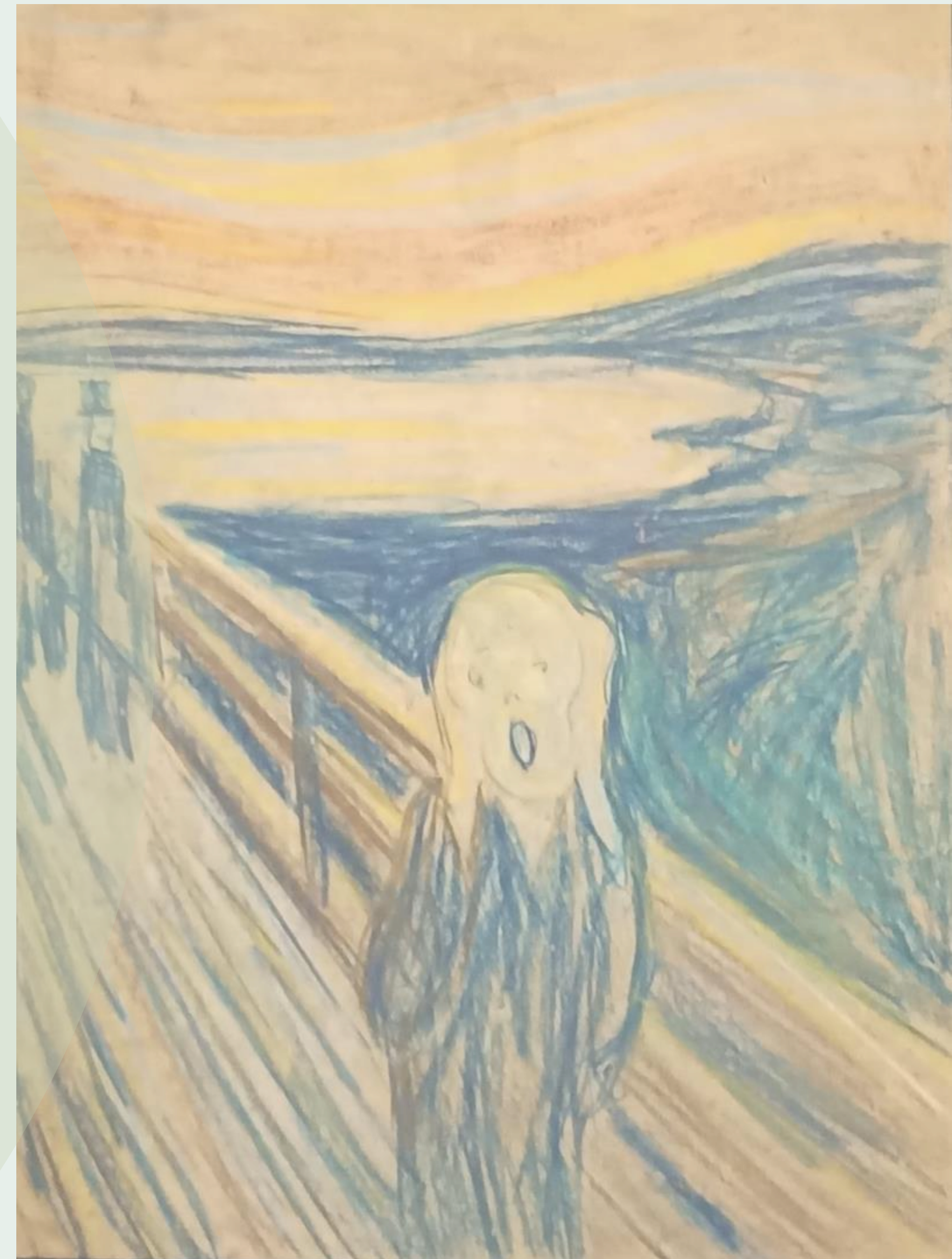


**15 Years of the HCCH  
Washington Declaration**

**Progress and Perspectives on  
International Family Relocation  
2-4 April 2025**

***The impact of  
depriving children  
of parental contact***

**Dr. Jorge Guerra González  
2nd April 2025 (13:30-15h)**



FSS and  
discrepancy  
=  
Mediation

# Plan

02.04.25

## 1) Introduction

=> *Feedback?*

## 2) a. Study

=> *Presentation*

=> *Results*

## b. Family support system (FSS)

=> *discrepancy Mandate-Outcome*

## 3) Outlook

=> *How to do better? (for our children)*



# Presentation



## Theory:

Law and psychology

## Practice:

Expert witness, mediator

Guardian ad litem, contact and supplementary guardian

## Science:

Lecturer and researcher



# At the beginning was just one question...



What do the **professionals working in the FSS** have in common? different from other professions?

(electricians, medical doctors, teachers, watchmakers, craftsmen, engineers, computer scientists, car manufacturers,...)

**No (proper) evaluation of our work!**

*What follows from this?*



# Consequences...



## Possibilities are limited:

- Right/wrong decision? Which criteria to apply?
- Limited opportunity to learn from decisions
- No science possible (statistics, theories, theses, etc.)
- Decisions (still) made on an unclear basis
- Social impact of the decisions unknown



**And yet...**



**... We have a goal:**

To implement  
the best interest  
of children



# Objective



## ANSWER:

**Scientific study** (retrospective)

**Goal:**

*Feedback to* - Caregivers  
- FSS

on the effect of adult/FSS decisions upon children



**But the question  
became more than that**



**The Pandora's Box:  
was opened**





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# Study

## Structure

Comparison between 3 groups of test subjects

### N-Sch

(not separated children)

A

Grew up in "intact" families  
(18 P)

### SCh

(separated children)

B

Grew up in "Separation" families  
(20 P)

### ACh

(alienated children)

C

Experienced *intentional and unjustified severance of parental bonds* (IUSPB)  
(17 P)



# Study

## Conditions of participation

**Adults**

**No domestic violence**

(No criminal conviction)

**Germany as a cultural space**



# Study

## Hypotheses

### Hypothesis 1



Life satisfaction/  
health (psy/phy)

$$C < B / A$$



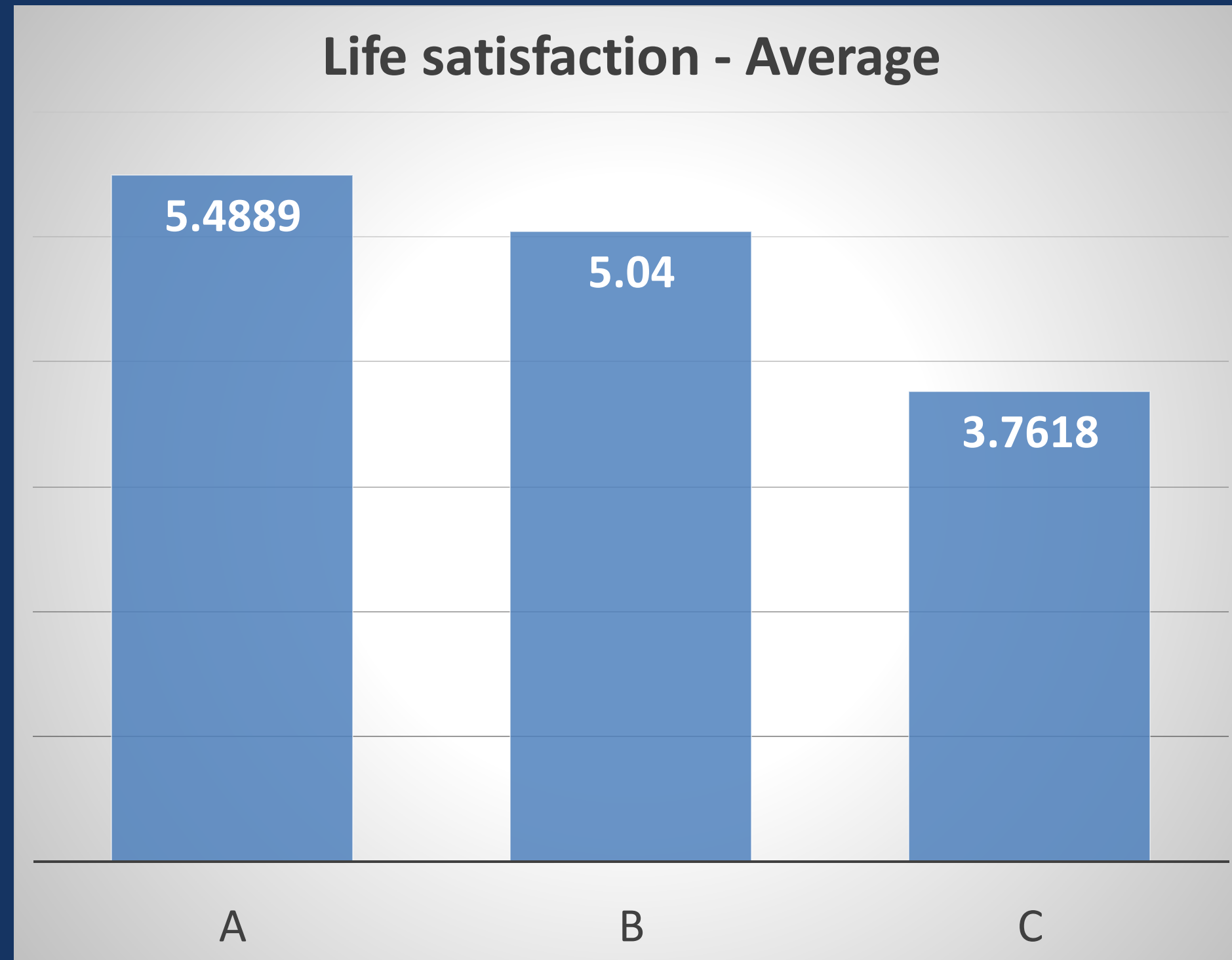
### Hypothesis 2

Life satisfaction/  
health (psy/phy)

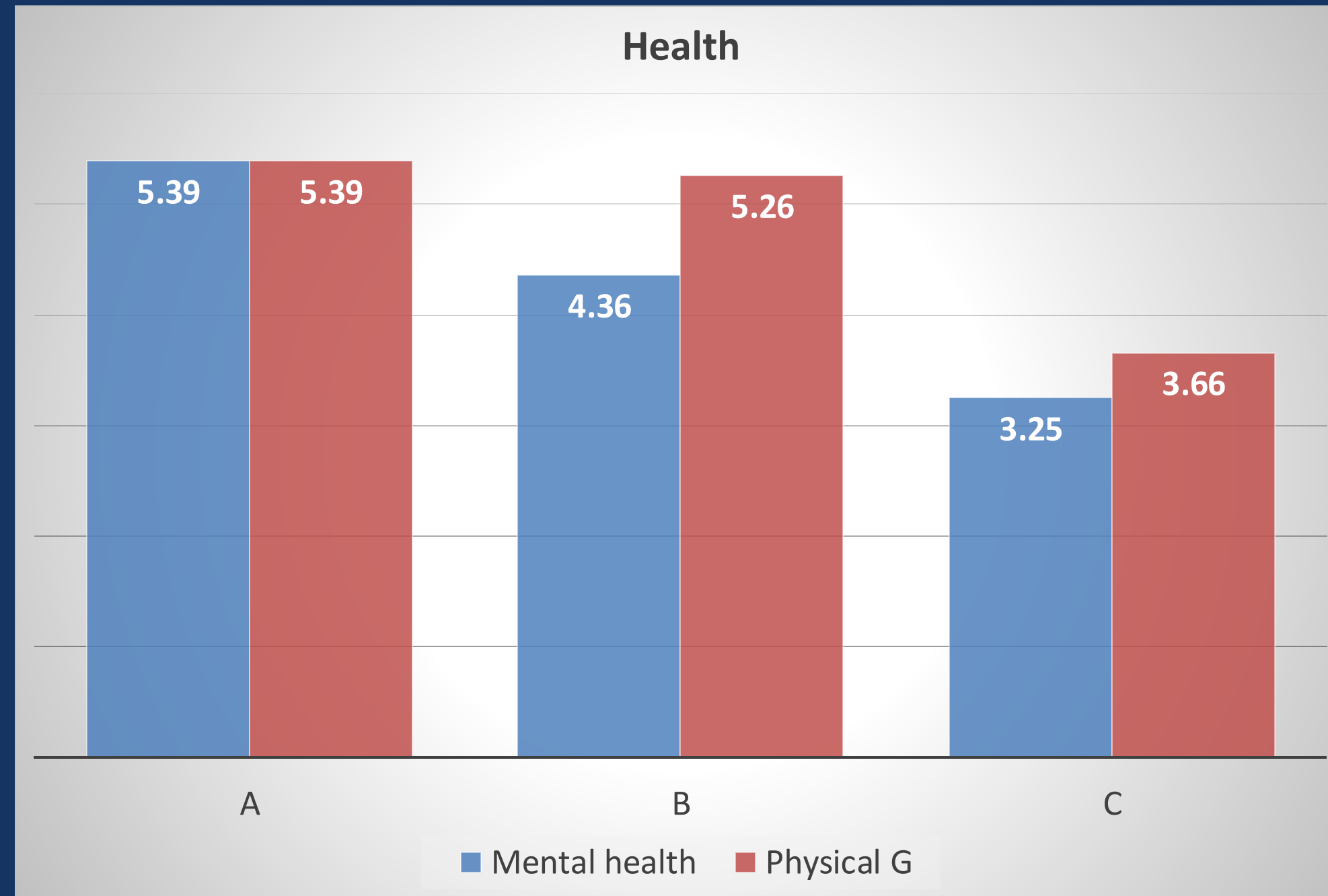
$$B < A$$



# Life satisfaction



# Health



# Qualitative analysis

Stress due to separation/divorce (0-25-13)

Dissociation/psychosis (0-2-3)

Depression/bipolar disorder (0-9-9)

PTSD (0-4-0)

Alcohol/substance abuse (0-3-5)

Negative self-image/social rejection (0-6-9)

*Anxiety disorder/panic attacks* (0-3-1)

Adjustment disorder (0-1-6)

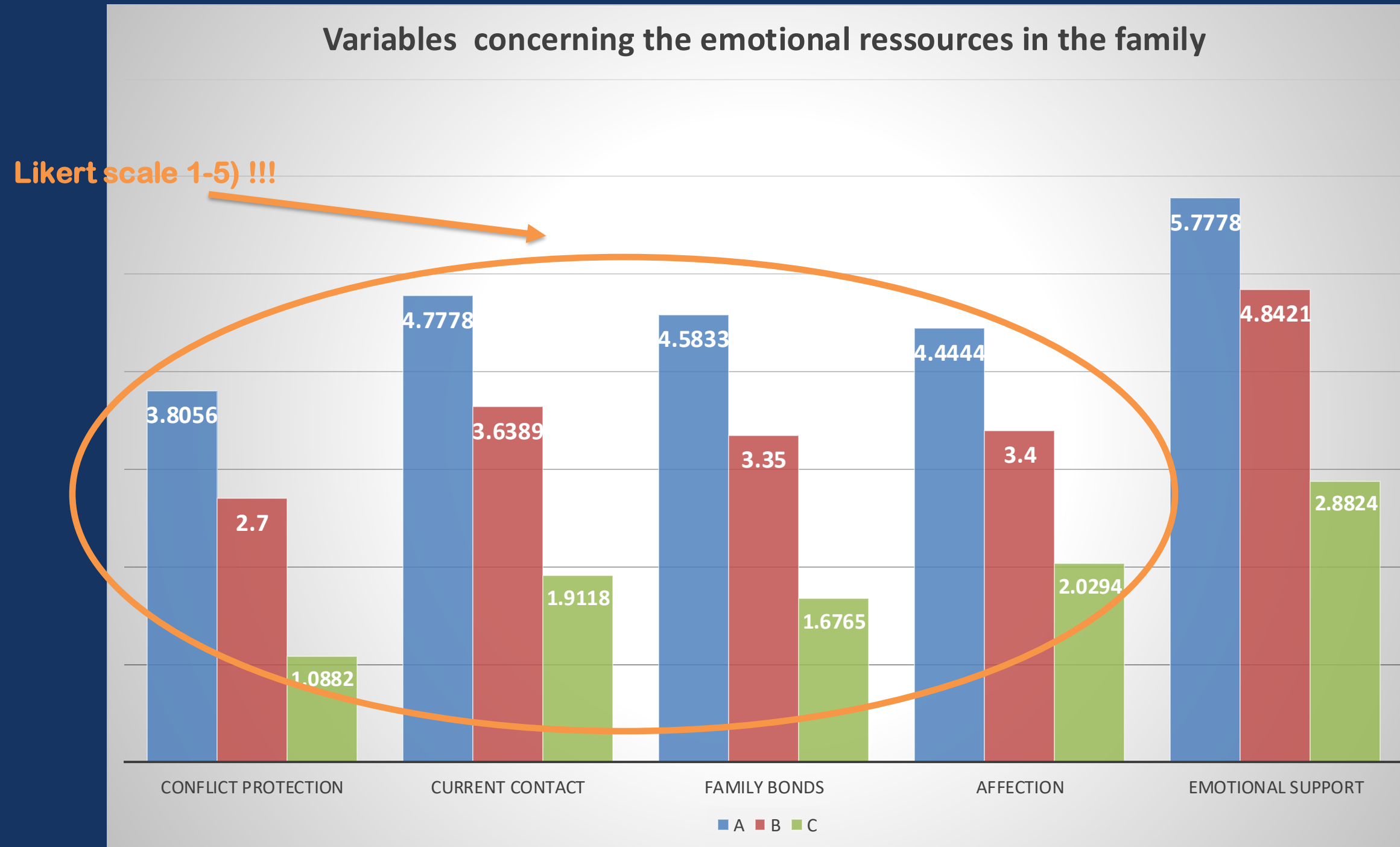
Drop in performance (0-5-12)

Criminality (0-0-6)

Interestingly: Performance pressure (15-0-0)

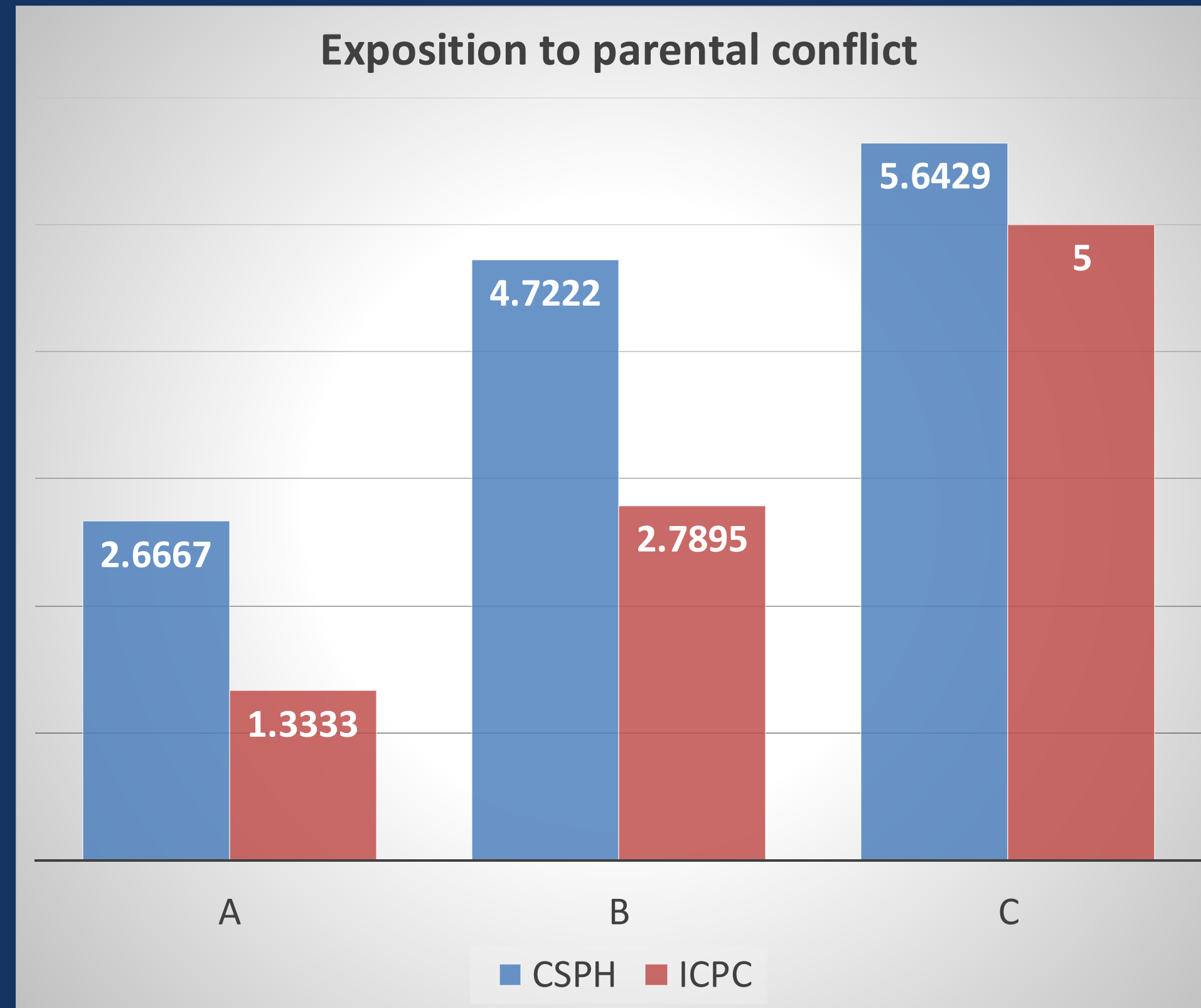


# Emotional protection





# Conflict exposure



**CSPH:** Conflict Situations in Parental Home  
**ICPC:** Involvement of Children in Parental Conflict

# What explains the results?

Increasing exposure of children to parental conflict situations (C>B>A)?  
and/or

Parental conflict situations that are increasingly serious (C>B>A)?  
and/or

Increasing involvement of the children in the parental conflict (C>B>A)?  
and/or

An increasing threat to parental bonding (C>B>A)?  
and/or

An increasing bad-mouthing of the other parent (C>B>A)?  
and/or

An increasing guilty conscience of child concerning the absent parent  
(own or inducted) (C>B>A)?

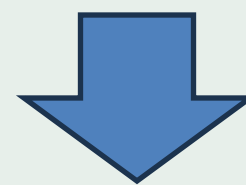


# What explains the results?

## Additionally (International Child Abduction)

### Intercultural-interpersonal Aspects

New: Culture, Language, Environment, Contact Persons  
Or else: isolation?



**More vulnerability – more helplessness – hopelessness**  
**More Fear... insecurity...**  
**Deeper imbalance**



# Whole picture

+ Parents are – at least (!! ) – as much affected as the children (!!)

Hence they are relevant for their well-being (!!)

Thus: Social relevance:

per highly contentious family  
Are about **3-8 people affected**

+ Transgenerational effect

=

**X** - but imagine the total costs for society



# Quantitative analysis: FSS

		LZ Ø	PsychG	PhysG	FSS-ges
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	Correlation (Pearson)	1	,742**	,693**	0,144
	Sig. (2-sided)		<,001	<,001	0,441
<b>Mental health</b>	Correlation (Pearson)	,742**	1	,631**	0,092
	Sig. (2-sided)	<,001		<,001	0,636
<b>Physical health</b>	Correlation (Pearson)	,693**	,631**	1	0,225
	Sig. (2-sided)	<,001	<,001		0,24
<b>Family support system - total</b>	Correlation (Pearson)	0,144	0,092	0,225	1
	Sig. (2-sided)	0,441	0,636	0,24	



# Qualitative analysis: FSS – IRR (Inter-Rater-Reliability)

Family support system

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid percentages	Kumulative per cent
Valid	(very) negative	18	32,1	58,1	58,1
	rather negative	7	12,5	22,6	80,6
	medium	5	8,9	16,1	96,8
	Rather positive	1	1,8	3,2	100,0
	Total	31	55,4	100,0	
Missing	99,00	24	42,9		
	System	1	1,8		
	Total	25	44,6		
Total		56	100,0		

Family support system

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid percentages	Kumulative per cent
Valid	(very) negative	22	39,3	71,0	71,0
	rather negative	7	12,5	22,6	93,5
	medium	2	3,6	6,5	100,0
	Total	31	55,4	100,0	
	Missing	99,00	24	42,9	
System		1	1,8		
Total		25	44,6		
Total		56	100,0		



# FSS - Mandate-Outcome discrepancy

## Hypotheses



1) (Legal) tradition

2) Inconsistent application of the legal system (custody Law v rest of legal system)

3) The core of the parental conflict is emotional

4) Translation of the parental conflict into legal categories

5) Limited resources

FSS and  
discrepancy  
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Mediation

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## Relocation after child Abduction

### Elements to consider from the Child's perspective

1. Law: condition sine que non for a solution, but ≠ solution  
(Only parent, then the other, then the first one again?)  
Legal situation? Maybe jail?
2. Relocation – but (emotional) Parental conflict situation  
still unresolved
3. Children need...  
Affection, Guidance, Bonds... and conflict protection
4. FSS: unintended own contribution to the conflict?  
(secondary child jeopardizing)
5. Methods: Parents = resource (real experts) => Mediation

See you  
soon!

# Thank you very much!

Trying to get closer to the children's perspective

"Les grandes personnes ne comprennent jamais rien toutes seules, et c'est fatigant, pour les enfants, de toujours leur donner des explications."

(Le Petit Prince, 1943)

"Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to always have to give them explanations."

