

---

# Über vierzig Jahre Sozialberichterstattung und Lebensqualitätsforschung in Deutschland – ein Blick in die Vergangenheit und Perspektiven für die Zukunft

Jürgen Schupp, Leiter der Leibniz Längsschnittstudie Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (SOEP) am DIW Berlin



Tagung "Gutes Leben oder gute Gesellschaft? Gefördert durch Volkswagen Stiftung, 17-18 Juni 2016, Hannover

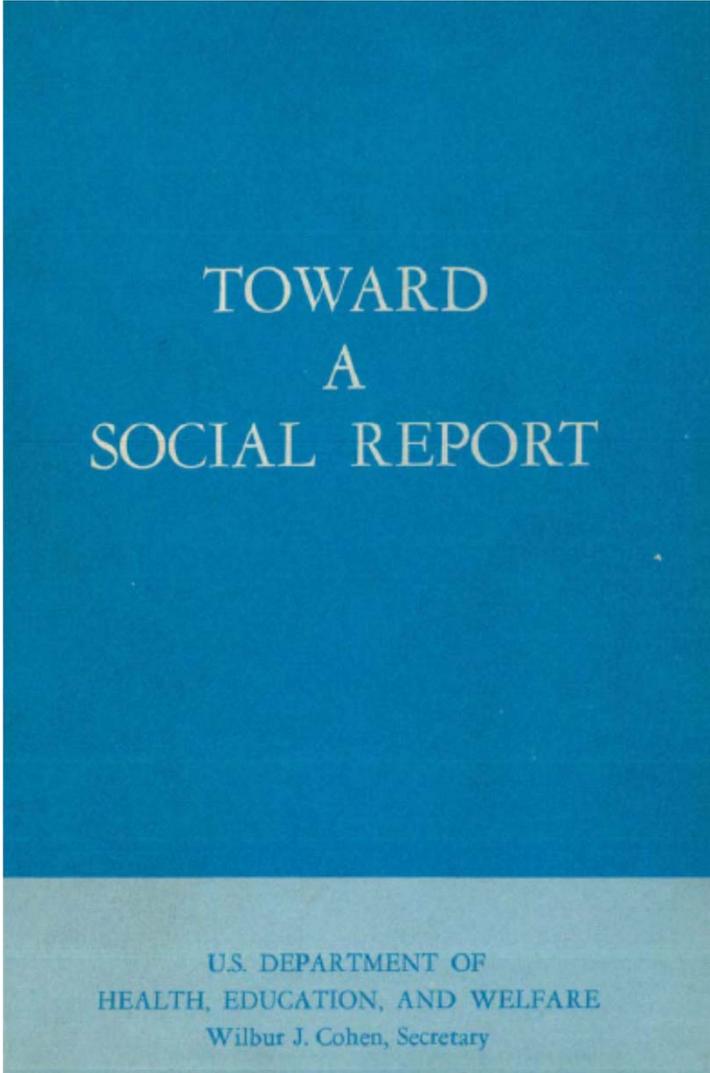
<mailto:jschupp@diw.de>

# Topics

1. Progress in Societies & Social Indicator Movement
2. Psychological and Sociological Roots of Quality of Life
3. SOEP: Contribution on Research of Well-Being & Longitudinal Evidence on Quality of Life
4. SOEP based social reporting and policy evaluation
5. The Discovery of SOEP by Psychologists
6. Summary & Discussion

1

## Progress in Societies & Social Indicators - 1969



TOWARD  
A  
SOCIAL REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
Wilbur J. Cohen, Secretary

**1969** “Dear Mr. President:  
In March 1966, you directed the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to search for ways to improve the Nations’ ability **to chart its social progress**. In particular you asked this Department

**to develop the necessary social statistics and indicators.**

... With these yardsticks, **we can better measure the distance we have come and plan for the way ahead.”**

Preface, Toward a Social Report, John W. Gardner, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare

## 1969

A **Multidisciplinary Working Group**, headed by **Mancur Olson**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Social Indicators, started with (initially) seven relevant research questions and topics:

- **Health and Illness:** *Are we becoming healthier?*
- **Social Mobility:** *How much opportunity is there?*
- **Our physical Environment:** *Are conditions improving?*
- **Income and Poverty:** *Are we better off?*
- **Public Order and Safety:** *What is the impact of crime in our lives?*
- **Learning, Sciences, and Art:** *How much are they enriching our society?*
- **Participation and Alienation:** *What do we need to learn?*

# Social Indicator Movement

- “Social indicators movement” 60<sup>th</sup> - Towards a Social Report (1969) USA
- Special role of international organizations (OECD, WHO, UNICEF)
- 1983 –1987: Brundtland Commission and their report
- 1990: Human Development Index (HDI), United Nations
- “Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators”
- The European Initiative – Anthony Atkinson – From “Social Inclusion in the European Union” to “Horizon 2020”
- Stiglitz/Sen/Fitoussi Commission - Sarkozy 2009
- The OECD Better Life Initiative: How’s Life? The Measurement of Well-Being (2011, 2014)
- The German Enquete Study Commission on Growth, Wellbeing and Quality of Life (2011-2013)
- 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

# 1

## Two pioneers of social indicators

- In 1972, Hans-Jürgen Krupp was a Professor of Economics at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, and Wolfgang Zapf was a Professor of Sociology at the University of Mannheim.
- They were joint directors of the SPES, a highly promising interdisciplinary DFG (German Research Association) project to develop a “Sociopolitical Decision-Making and Indicator System for the Federal Republic of Germany (SPES)”
- The SPES project gave rise to the DFG’s Collaborative Research Center Sfb 3, “Microanalytical Foundations of Social Policy” (1979 to 1990).
- The Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) longitudinal study was founded within the Sfb 3 in 1983/1984.

1

44 years ago - 1972



## Social Indicator Movement in Germany

### Wolfgang Zapf

- 1972 Founding of the Section „**Social Indicators**“ of the **German Association of Sociologists** – first conferences at Reimers Foundation
- 1972, basic article on the research agenda on well-being in the newly established German Journal of Sociology „Zeitschrift für Soziologie“: **„Zur Messung von Lebensqualität“**
- 1972 Start of a book series Social Indicators (Herder, later Campus)
- **(still) classical definition of „Indikatoren, soziale“**  
1978 im Handwörterbuch für die Wirtschaftswissenschaften (HdWW), by **Hans-Jürgen Krupp, Wolfgang Zapf**

- Social indicators are statistical time series “*used to monitor the social system, helping to identify changes and to guide intervention to alter the course of social change*” (Ferriss 1988: 601)
- In addition to specific indicators, recent work has led to the development of *summary indices* that combine a number of specific indicators into composite measures of the quality of life or well-being for a society as a whole or for specific segments or subunits thereof (HDI).



# 1

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by United Nations  
– 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from **September, 25-27, 2015**  
in New York – with **17** Sustainable Development **Goals** and **169** targets

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Target

1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Target

1. By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

# Eurostat - From Recommendations to Work Accomplished

The screenshot displays the Eurostat website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Eurostat logo and the tagline "Your key to European statistics". Below this, there is a search bar and a language selector set to "English". The main content area is titled "QUALITY OF LIFE (QoL) - DATA" and includes a brief introduction and a central infographic.

**Navigation Menu:**

- News
- Data
- Publications
- About Eurostat
- Help

**Left Sidebar:**

- GDP AND BEYOND
- Overview
- Background
- Publications
- Links
- Quality of life
  - Context
  - + DATA
  - Legislation
  - Publications
  - More information
- Household perspective in income, consumption and wealth
  - Context
  - Data
  - Legislation
  - Publications
  - More information
- Environmental sustainability
  - Context
  - Data
  - Legislation
  - Publications
  - More information

**Main Content:**

Since the "Beyond GDP" conference, several initiatives have been set up, which have culminated in the decision of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) in November 2011 to work towards developing a set of **Quality of Life (QoL) Indicators** for the EU.

The set is organised along the following dimensions:

**QUALITY OF LIFE Infographic:** A central smiley face is surrounded by ten dimensions of quality of life, each represented by a yellow circle with an icon:

- Overall experience of life
- Natural and living environment
- Material living conditions
- Productive or main activity
- Education
- Health
- Leisure and social interactions
- Economic and physical safety
- Governance and basic rights

**Right Sidebar:**

**SEE ALSO**

- QUALITY OF LIFE: Find out more about the well-being of Europeans
- EU-SILC
- Education and training
- Youth
- Health
- Employment and Social Policy Indicators

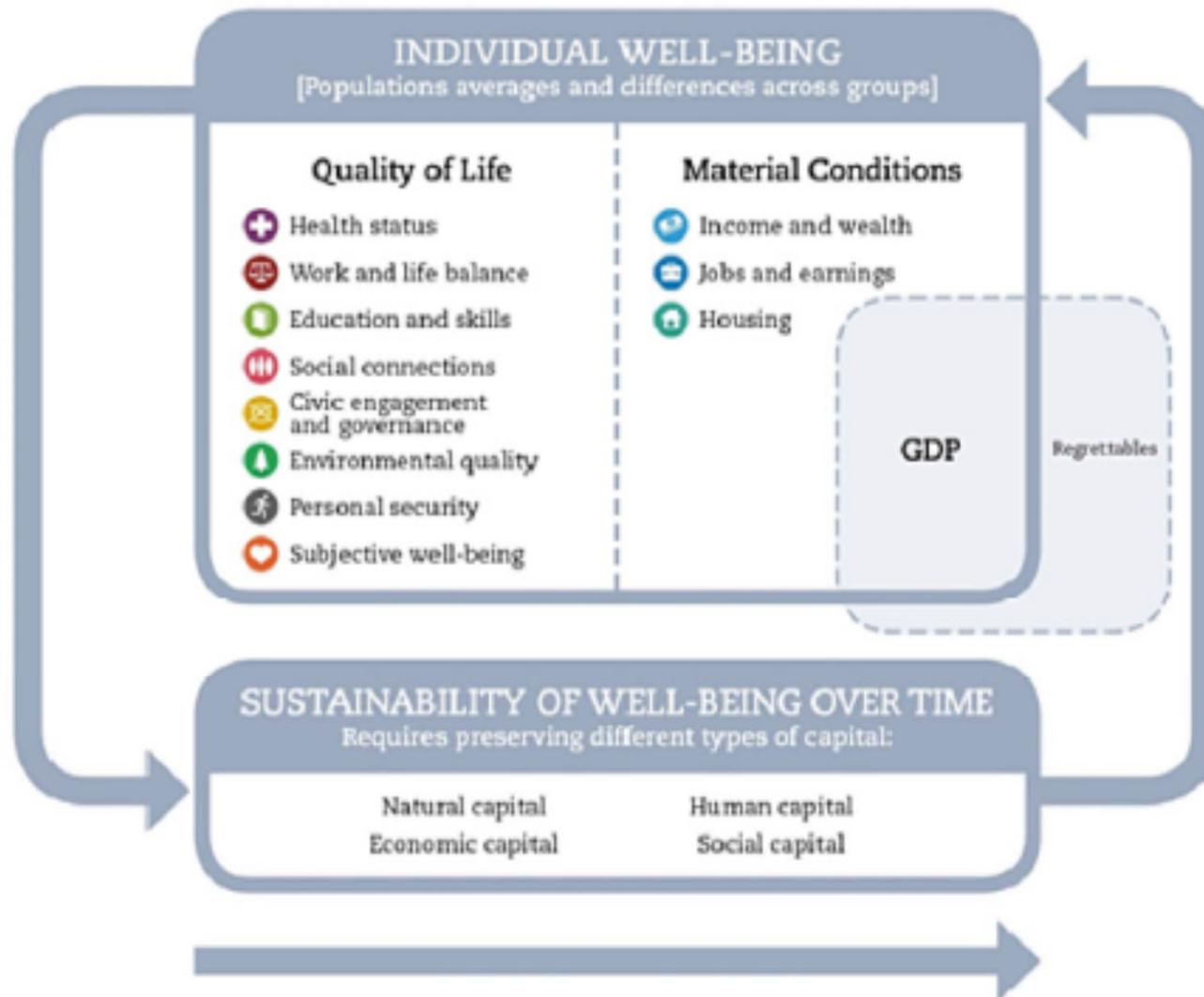
**Footnote:**

The "overall experience of life" refers to the personal perception of quality of life (i.e. life satisfaction, affects, meaning of life).

The data presented here come from several sources from within the European Statistical System (ESS), in particular SILC (statistics on income and living conditions), LFS (labour force survey), EHIS (European Health Interview Survey), and administrative sources. In case no data are available from within the ESS, external links to non-ESS sources, such as the EQLS (European Quality of Life Survey), are used as placeholders.

# 1

# The OECD Well-Being Conceptual Framework



## Psychological & Sociological Roots of SWB

- Campbell, Angus (1972): Aspiration, Satisfaction, and Fulfillment. In: Angus Campbell, and Philip E. Converse (ed.), *The Human Meaning of Social Change*. New York: Russell Sage, 441-466.
- “We have begun to take part in the **investigation of subjectively perceived quality of life.**”  
(Wolfgang Zapf 1979, *Social Indicators Research*, 6, 416)
- Diener, Ed (1984): Subjective Well-Being. *Psychological Bulletin* 95(3):542-575.
- Diener, Ed (2006): Guidelines for National Indicators Subjective Well-Being and Ill-Being. *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 1(2):151–157.



## 2

# The Sociological Tradition of Welfare Production – promoted by Wolfgang Zapf

- The development of social indicators and the production of welfare
- Quality of life as a goal using social indicators as measurement tools
- Objective living conditions **and** their subjective evaluation
- Multidimensional approach

Objective life conditions	Subjective perception and evaluation	
	“good”	“bad”
“good”	Well-being	Dissonance
“bad”	Adaptation	Deprivation

## “SOEP” (German Socio-Economic Panel Study)

- 1984: start of the survey with two sub-samples: one presenting a representative picture of the entire population and one with an above-average proportion of immigrants from the “guest worker” countries
  - now 31 waves available, wave 32 in autumn, wave 33 still in the field and wave 34 in preparation
- Longest-running longitudinal multiple-cohort study of private households and persons in the Federal Republic of Germany (“Living in Germany”)
- Started with 6,000 households in 1984, actually approx. 15,000 households → about 30,000 individuals
  - Over-sampling of foreigners, migrants, 2013/15 (with IAB)
  - East Germans (1990), high-income, families with small children
  - Various top-up and refresher samples
- Starting 2016 with a random sample of refugees

## Mission of longitudinal surveys

- “Longitudinal surveys, which collect information about the same persons over many years, have given the social sciences their **Hubble telescope**. Both allow the observing researcher to **look back in time** and **record the antecedents of current events and transitions**”  
*(Butz, W.P. & Boyle Torrey, B. (2006): Some Frontiers in Social Sciences. Science 312, 1898-1900)*
- The research-driven infrastructure unit SOEP seeks to serve an international scientific community by providing **nationally representative longitudinal data** from a **multi-disciplinary perspective** covering the **entire life span** in the **context of private households** (household panel) in Germany

## Replication & Innovation

Replication of Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID, founded in 1968) but with some major innovations

- Individual questionnaire given to **each adult** (16+) in the household – **no** proxy interviews!
- Questions on **subjective well-being** and other subjective indicators
  - Since 1984: cognitive well-being
  - Since 2007: affective well-being
- Since 1990: including East Germany
- Since 2000: age-specific instruments for children/youth (*discovery of the early life course*)
- Since 2002: short assessments of psychological concept (e.g., personality traits, locus of control, time preferences, risk aversion every three to five year replication cycle)

# 4

## SOEP based social reporting and policy evaluation

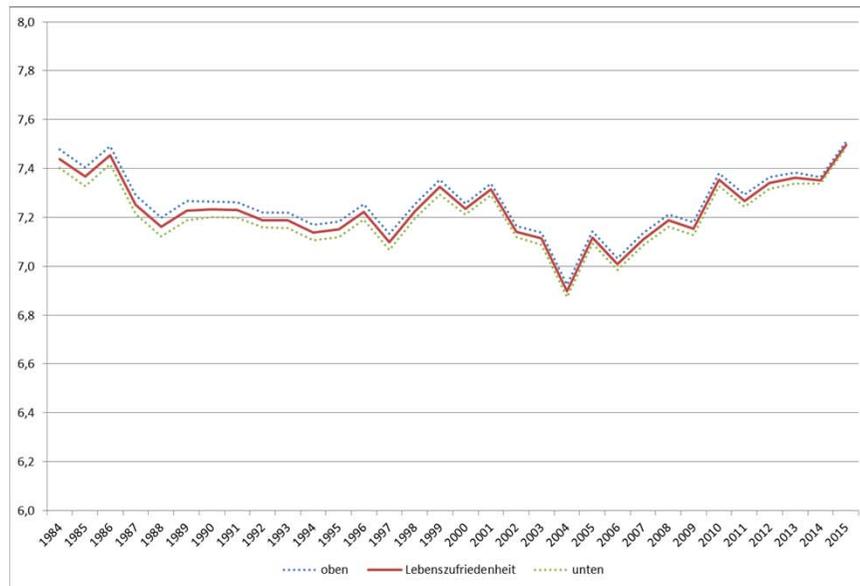
- SOEP is a major part of the re... economic Experts (SVR) ... ernment Repo... ed by the Feder... *umsberichte der Bund...*
- Not o... present cross-sectional indicators; SOEP... y longitudinal indica... of poverty or on incom...
- Chan... ion ("natural exper... vage)



# 4

# Trends in Life Satisfaction in Germany

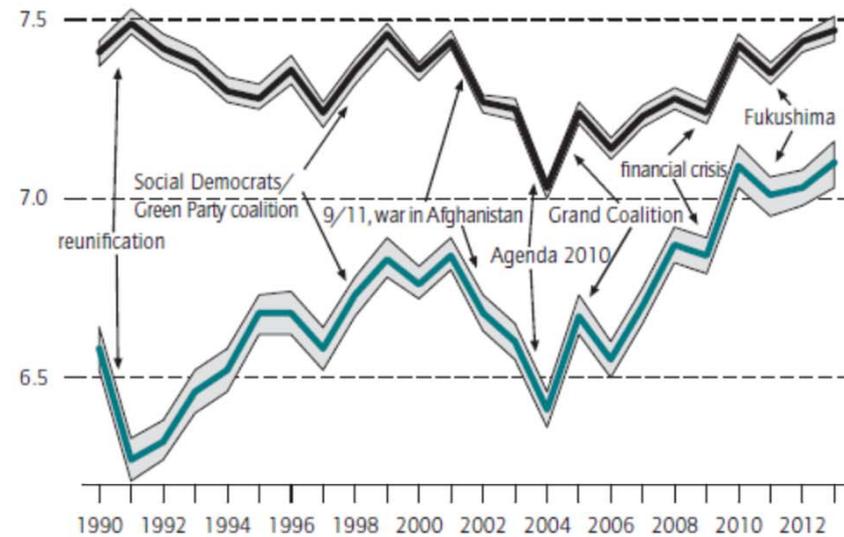
Mittlere Lebenszufriedenheit<sup>1</sup> in Deutschland



<sup>1</sup> Um Wiederholungsbefragungs-Effekte korrigierte Schätzung.  
Vor 1990 alte Bundesrepublik Deutschland.  
Quellen: SOEPv32; für 2015 vorläufige Ergebnisse.

Average Life Satisfaction<sup>1</sup> in Germany

Scale from 0 to 10 with 95-percent confidence interval



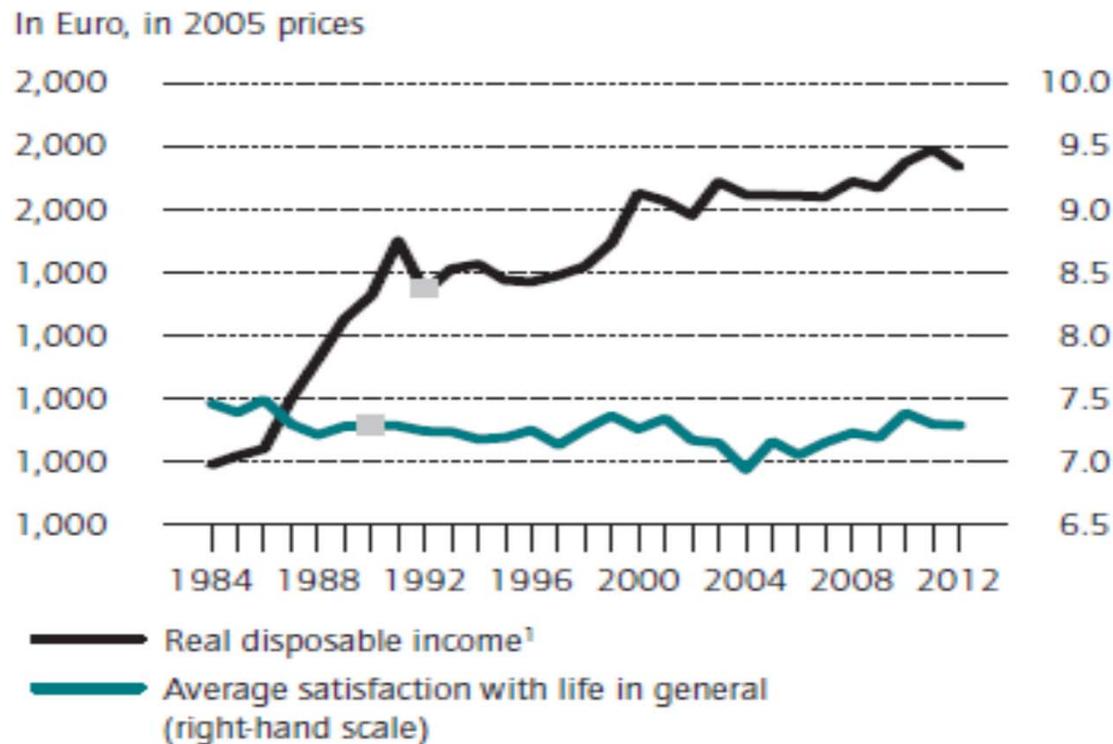
<sup>1</sup> Estimate corrected for repeat-survey effects. The basis of the estimated value for 2013 was a provisional weighting procedure (not including adults surveyed in the SOEP for the first time in 2013).  
Source: SOEP v30; calculations by DIW Berlin.

© DIW Berlin

Historical events have an impact on life satisfaction.

## 4

## Trends in Income and Life Satisfaction

Income<sup>1</sup> and Life Satisfaction<sup>2</sup>

*1 Annual income surveyed in the following year, including the rental value of owner-occupied housing, needs-weighted with a modified OECD equivalence scale.  
2 Estimate corrected for effects of repeated surveying. Scale from 0 to 10. Figures for unified Germany beginning with the gray square.*

*Source: SOEP v29; preliminary estimate for 2013.*

## 5

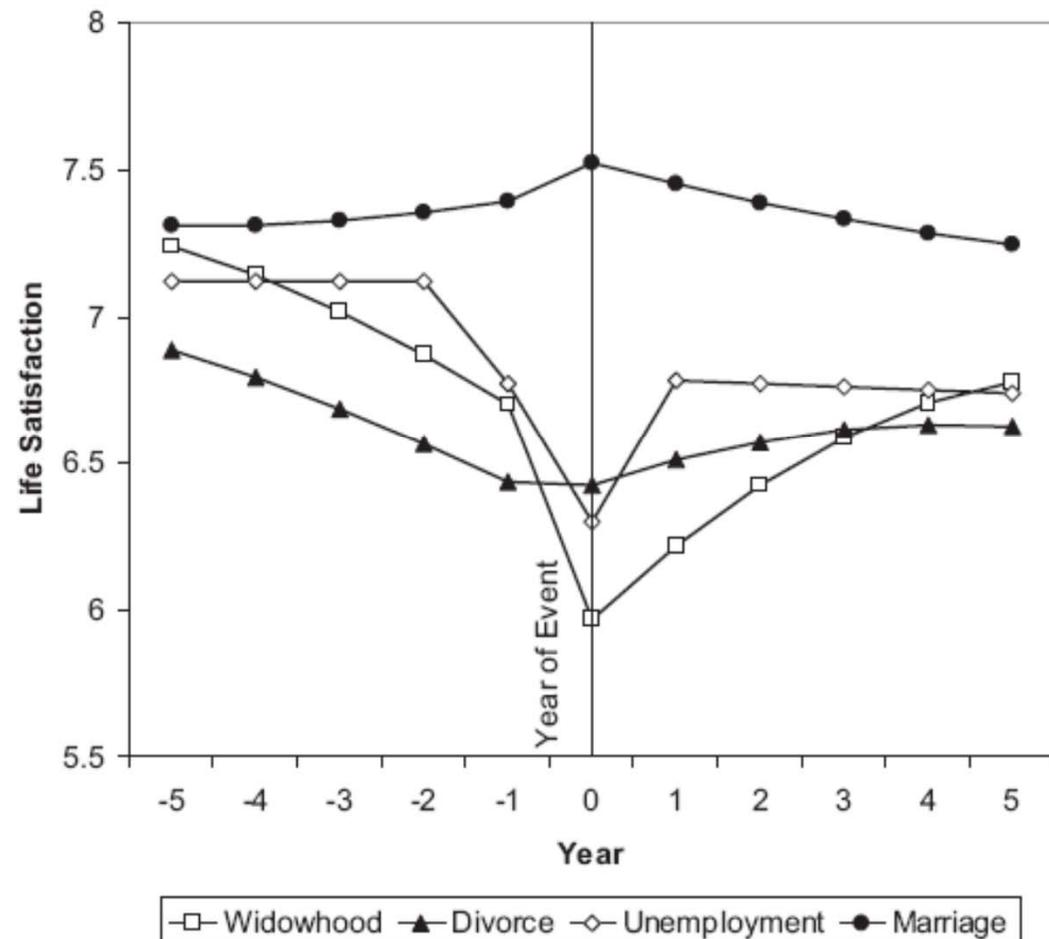
# The Discovery of SOEP by Psychologists

Diener et al. 2006, Beyond the Hedonic Treadmill – Revising the Adaptation Theory of Well-Being. *American Psychologist*, 61(4), 310

Figure 2  
Adaptation to Good and Bad Events

And the citation of Ed Diener's work by well-known economists:

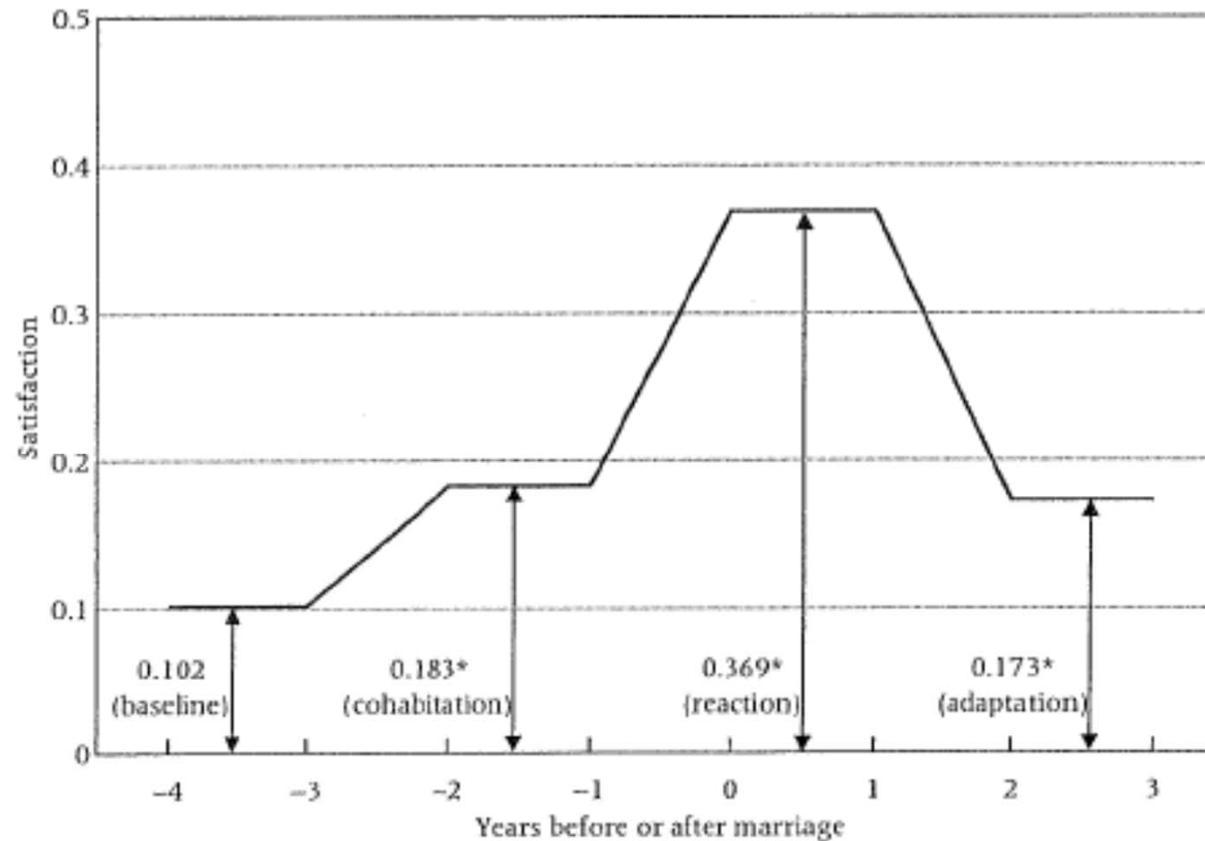
**Daniel Kahneman/  
Alan B. Krueger**  
(2006): Development in the Measurement of subjective Well-Being, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1).



# Replication studies

Zimmermann/Easterlin 2006,  
Population and Development Review, 32(3), 517

**FIGURE 1** Added life satisfaction before and after marriage for persons in first marriages



\*significant at 0.001 level or better.

NOTE: The slope coefficients are usually added to the coefficient of the intercept. The value for the intercept (baseline) is not statistically different from 0 here. The figure thus does not show slope coefficients that are added to 0.102 (baseline), but added to 0.

- „Finally, social forecasting, program evaluation, and prioritization are areas in which social indicators have little or no direct benefit and should no longer be considered as major appropriate goals of social indicators.“

Tom W. Smith (1981) *Journal of Social History*, 14(4), 742.

## Summary & Discussion

- In the European Union and in worldwide data production, new social statistical and social reporting efforts have been undertaken to evaluate progress in societies and social change
- Access to data by scientific use files & more replications – don't trust macro-econometric models based on indicators that claim causal explanations (*e.g. debate on inequality and growth*)
- The establishment of surveys and the measurement of subjective well-being should primarily be kept under academic governance – even in the OECD (e.g., GALLUP)
- Dilemma for political actors if indicators and time series move into the “wrong” direction and the opposite of a “good society”

## Summary & Discussion

- To understand human behavior and progress in society, we need longitudinal analyses of heterogeneous populations based on randomized samples
  - disentangle treatment groups and control groups by experiments, natural experiments or at least quasi-experiments
  - including a rich set of psychological indicators (a life-course model of well-being, personality traits, cognitive & non-cognitive skills)
  - if possible, in international comparative contexts
- Good living or good society ?
- Satisficing level of wellbeing and combat against deprivation could shape a “better” society 4.0

**Further information :**  
**<http://www.diw.de/soep>**  
**<http://www.facebook.com/SOEPnet.de>**  
**<http://www.youtube.com/user/SOEPstudie>**

Thank you for your attention

---



**Research Infrastructure Socio-Economic Panel Study I (SOEP )**  
**at DIW Berlin — German Institute**  
**for Economic Research e.V.**  
Mohrenstraße 58, 10117 Berlin  
[www.diw.de/soep](http://www.diw.de/soep)

### History and Mission

- SOEP was founded in 1984 (*1990 start in East-Germany*) based on cutting-edge research (on **social indicators and income distribution**) and was originally funded by the German Science Foundation (DFG); since 2003 institutional funding within the Leibniz Association (WGL)
- The research-driven infrastructure unit SOEP seeks to serve an international scientific community by providing **nationally representative longitudinal data** from a **multi-disciplinary perspective** covering the **entire life span** in the **context of private households** (household panel) in Germany

# SOEP-Innovation Sample

Scope – what SOEP-IS offers

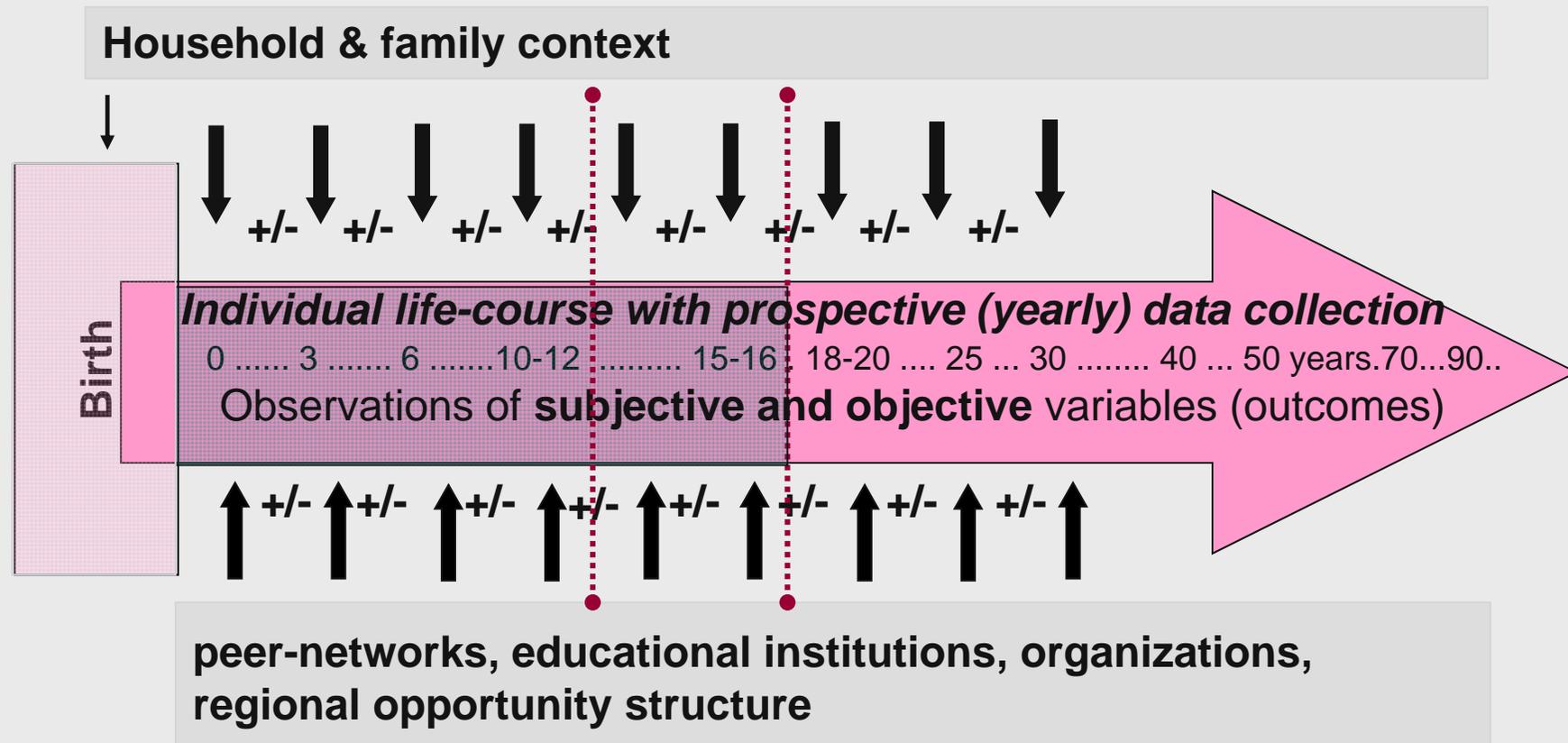
- **Open for International Research Community**
- Innovative procedures that go beyond the classic survey components (IAT, DRM, experiments)
- Tool to test new survey methodologies beyond the limits of the SOEP pretests
- Representative sample of 2,500 private households
- Longitudinal data from existing SOEP subsamples
- Cross-references and linkages to the topics and content of the main SOEP survey

## What are we measuring?

- Representative micro-data on persons, households, families
- Objective (e.g., labor force status, occupation, income, transfers) and subjective (e.g., satisfaction, preferences) indicators
- Retrospective information on biographical history
- Measure stability and change in living conditions
  - periods, cohorts, and age groups
- Topics in economics, sociology, political science, psychology, and geography



## SOEP – The individual Life Course in Long-Running Household Panels



social, cultural, and economic frame





# RatSWD

## *Working Paper Series*

Working Paper

Nr. 171

Die Rolle alternativer Wohlstands-  
indikatoren bei der Begutachtung der  
gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung

Reprint eines Gutachtens für den Sachverständigenrat  
zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung  
vom September 1972

---

Hans-Jürgen Krupp und Wolfgang Zapf

---

März 2011

---