

# SINET

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## SOCIAL INDICATORS NETWORK NEWS

A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.  
News Included of Research Committee 55 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association.

### REPORT ON SYMPOSIUM ON THE HISTORY OF WELL-BEING

OCTOBER 28-31, 2013, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

SPONSORED BY

HALLORAN FOUNDATION

AND

MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDIES

The symposium on the History of Well-Being is sponsored by the Halloran Philanthropies. The symposium was organized by Richard Estes (University of Pennsylvania) and Joe Sirgy (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University). It is a first step to fulfill the vision of Harry Halloran, the benefactor and the face behind Halloran Philanthropies. Mr. Halloran's vision is to assemble the greatest minds and scholars on well-being research to provide data and narrative characterizing historical trends of well-being of the human condition of all world regions with a special emphasis on vulnerable population groups. The ultimate goal is to complete an edited book reflecting the history of well-being that can be widely disseminated to the general public across the globe. The book also targets public policy decision makers—those who can develop policies guided by good science and data from well-being research. The symposium participants will share their research on well-being in the context of their assigned chapters.

The goal of the symposium was not only to share ideas of the history

of well-being of specific world regions and population groups but also to learn from one another about concepts and methods of well-being research. Ultimately, the authors should speak with one voice, with the same frame of mind.

The symposium began on Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup> with an informal dinner at the Soffitel Hotel. This is the pre-conference day. The symposium officially opened on Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at 9 am with a warm welcome Richard Estes, Joe Sirgy, and Harry Halloran, the benefactor. Project goals/outcomes and project deliverable dates were reviewed and discussed. One of the goals at the symposium was to capture oral histories of the presenters that will be posted on the project website (go to [www.miqols.org](http://www.miqols.org) and click on History of Well-Being). Michael Frisch, Professor of Psychology, at Baylor University (USA) conducted 22 oral histories during the three-day symposium. Also, the symposium presentations were videotaped and will be posted on the project website soon.

The second session on Tuesday morning involved a discussion of using timelines to identify “drivers”

of well-being. Richard Estes conducted this session. This discussion was designed to help the authors use a set of uniform concepts and methods to help create a cogent narrative to reflect the history of their assigned region and population groups.

The remaining sessions on Tuesday focused on western conceptions of well-being (Alex Michalos--presentation delivered through Skype--and Daniel Weijers), the history of well-being of Europe (Wolfgang Glatzer and Juergen Kohl), Asian conceptions of well-being (Shawn Arthur and Victor

*(Continued on next page.)*

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*Editor's Note:* This issue of SINET features a Report on a Symposium on the History of Well-Being recently held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Participants in the Symposium included several members of the International Sociological Association Research Committee 55 – Social Indicators and also of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies. The second component of this issue is an announcement of a new master's degree program to begin in January 2014 at the University of Florence, Italy that will be coordinated by ISQOLS President Filomena Maggino

# SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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Mair); and the history of well-being of East Asia (Takashi Inoguchi), and Southeast Asia (Mahar Mangahas).

The Wednesday sessions involved conceptions of well-being of “first people” (Robert Biswas-Diener and Ryan Howell—presentation was delivered by Ryan Howell), the domains of well-being (Richard Estes, Joe Sirgy, and Audrey Selian), the history of well-being of the MENA region (powerpoint presentation from Habib Tiliouine and Mohammed Meziane in abstentia), the history of well-being of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mariano Rojas and Jose de Jesus Garcia Vega), the history of well-being of North America (Alex Michalos—presentation delivered through Skype, Rhonda Phillips, and Ken Land), the history of well-being of the successor states of the former Soviet Union (Carol Graham), and the history of well-being of Oceania (Robert Cummins). Neil Halloran, an expert in digital media, also made a presentation on data visualization during the luncheon event. Wednesday ended with a cultural evening out.

The Thursday sessions began with the history of well-being of women (Liz Eckermann) and other vulnerable population groups (Richard Estes and Joe Sirgy), followed by a session on the editing and the editorial process (Pamela Fried). The symposium ended with a session on review and integration (Richard Estes and Joe Sirgy). A farewell luncheon followed.

All in all, it was a happy and productive symposium.

Richard Estes and Joe Sirgy  
Co-directors of the History of Well-Being Project

Here are some pictures taken at the symposium.



From left to right:  
Joe Sirgy, Jose Garcia, Ryan Howell, Kay Halloran, Carol  
Graham, Harry Halloran, Liz Eckermann, Wolfgang Glatzer,  
and Mahar Mangahas

(Continued on next page.)

**From left to right:  
Carol Graham and Harry  
Halloran**



**From left to right:  
Liz Eckermann, Anna Lau, and  
Bob Cummins**

**From left to right:  
Jeurgen Kohl, Pamela Fried,  
and Victor Mair**





**From left to right: Ryan Howell, Kay Halloran, Carol Graham, and Harry Halloran**

**From left to right: Wolfgang Glatzer and Mahar Mahangas**



**From left to right: Jose Garcia, Richard Estes, and Ryan Howell**



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# QoLexity

## Measuring, Monitoring and Analysis of Quality of Life and its Complexity

... from concept definition to statistical indicators ...

... addressing better policies ...

Leading concept: *managing complexity*      Pathway: question → data → analysis → results → communication

“This is a beautiful program. [...] the most important thing is the collaborative initiative and its conceptualization, which I think are excellent. I feel as if I am watching the birth of a new era in quality-of-life research and I could not be happier to see it.” (Alex Michalos)

### 1. Presentation

“QoLexity” is a neologism, coined on the occasion of first international workshop of the Italian Association for Quality-of-Life Studies (AIQUAV) which was held in September 2011 in Florence (<http://www.aiquav.it/workshopseminari.html>). It refers to the complex approach to Quality of Life definition, analysis and communication and has been discussed at that workshop by many scholars and experts. The discussion produced a new interdisciplinary approach (defined QoLexity), identified in order to define, measure, monitor and analyse the quality of life in quantitative terms. And involving different academic disciplines (philosophy, sociology, psychology, statistics, economics, politics sciences).

Following that discussion, the University of Florence and the Italian National Institute of Statistics agreed upon the necessity to build a new education path which takes into account that complexity. They identified in the “second level master degree” the right formula addressing that need.

The master tries to develop the well-known “knowledge triangle”, describing the linkage between innovation, education and research.

### ***Innovation: the master’s goal***

The recent debate on defining new measures of societal progress and well-being (beyond GDP movement) highlighted a new role for the National Statistical Offices (NSOs).

To this end, we can remind the Istanbul Declaration, signed during the II OECD World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy” (2007) (<http://www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum/Istanbul>) by the representatives of the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, who agreed on the need for “statistical offices, public and private organisations, and academic experts to work alongside representatives of their communities to produce high-quality, facts-based information that can be used by all of society to form a shared view of societal well-being and its evolution over time. Official statistics are a key “public good” able to foster the progress of societies. The development of indicators of societal progress offers an opportunity to reinforce the role of national statistical authorities as key providers of relevant, reliable, valid, timely and comparable data and the indicators required for national and international reporting.”

<sup>1</sup> According to the Italian University system, the access to the second level master is possible to anyone in possession of a qualification corresponding to bachelor’s degree (3-year degree) + master degree (2-year degree).

<sup>2</sup> An interesting experience provided some inspiration for this proposal. During the IX conference of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS), held in Florence in 2009, July 19-23 (<http://www.isqols2009.istitutodeglinnocenti.it/>), among the special collateral events (<http://www.isqols2009.istitutodeglinnocenti.it/Collateral.htm>), a training course was organized on ‘Statistics, Knowledge and Policy’, fruit of a cooperation between the OECD – Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies, Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission and the International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS). The training course was held from 14th to 17th of July and attended by 16 people from 12 different countries and with many different professional backgrounds (economic, social and statistical).

## 2. The contents and didactic organization

The master develops four main topics, addressing different questions:

Quality of Life	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS	How can complexity be conceptually revealed and constructed?
		How can QoL be defined?
		How can QoL be defined through indicators?
	DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION	How can data be found?
		How can data be collected?
		What are the main technical issues?
	ANALYTICAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES allowing the whole picture to be reconstructed	How can the observed pictures be reconstructed?
		How can the whole picture be simplified and shown?
	FINDINGS' COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION	How can the whole picture be represented?
		How can the whole picture be communicated?
		How can knowledge be transferred into policy?

Access to the second level master is reserved to students in possession of any second level degree (master degree) who had in their curriculum studiorum at least one exam in Statistics.

The master provides 60 Credits composed by

- 42 credits provided by didactics (252 hours)
- 13 credits provided by traineeship (13 credits x 25 hours)
- 5 credits provided by the thesis.

A mixed didactic formula will be developed, (i) traditional lesson (first part: teacher's lesson; second part: open discussion), (ii) work exercise (first part: teacher's illustration of the work to be accomplished; second part: group work).

The 42 credits provided by didactic are developed in **four areas**.

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| A. Concepts and tools  | Total: 7 credits – 42 hours  |
| o Towards a common language: general concepts and their meanings |                              |
| o Quality of life and related concepts                           |                              |
| B. Data  | Total: 12 credits – 72 hours |
| o Quality-of-Life data   |                              |
| o Data collection:   |                              |
| C. Analytical approaches   | Total 15 credits – 90 hours  |
| o Indicators: from reality to reading the reality                |                              |
| o Indicators: analytical tools and strategies                    |                              |
| o Quality-of-life data analysis: pathways to modelling           |                              |
| o Quality-of-life data analysis: looking for explanations        |                              |
| o Making all concrete  |                              |
| D. Representing and communicating                                | Total 8 credits – 48 hours   |
| o Representing quality-of-life data and results                  |                              |
| o Communicating quality-of-life results                          |                              |
| o Putting all together   |                              |

### Individualized paths

The students should attend the whole program in order to get the final certification.

In particular cases, the students could be interested to attend one or two modules, according to their individual needs and interests. In this case, the certification will be granted.

<sup>3</sup> In the Italian University System, each credit corresponds to 6 to 12 hours of work (lessons, individual study, laboratory, and so on).

<sup>4</sup> According to the University-of-Florence rules, the 42 credits should be delivered by professors belonging to the University of Florence (at least for the 60%, 25, of the credits) and external teachers (max. 40%, 17, of the credits). Moreover, a minimum of 6 credits are assigned to each subject.

<sup>5</sup> Many institutions and organizations have already expressed their availability to host our students. In particular: Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), EUROSTAT (2 positions per Academic Year), OECD EUROFOUND, Region of Tuscany (different agencies: IRPET ARS, ARPAT).



## CALL FOR PAPERS

Applied Research in Quality of Life

The Official Journal of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

The aim of this journal is to publish conceptual, methodological and empirical papers dealing with quality-of-life studies in the applied areas of the natural and social sciences. As the official journal of ISQOLS, it is designed to attract papers that have some direct implications for or impact on practical applications of research on the quality-of-life. We welcome papers crafted from inter-disciplinary, inter-professional and international perspectives. This research should guide decision making in a variety of professions, industries, nonprofit, and government sectors such as healthcare, travel and tourism, marketing, corporate management, community planning, social work, public administration, human resource management, among others. The goal is to help decision makers apply performance measures and outcome assessment techniques based on concepts such as well-being, human satisfaction, human development, happiness, wellness and quality of life. The Editorial Review Board is divided into specific sections indicating the broad scope of practice covered by the journal, and the section editors are distinguished scholars from many countries across the globe.

Authors interested in submitting manuscripts for publication should consult the website <http://ariq.edmgr.com>. Further information may be obtained by contacting one of the journal's Co-Editors: Richard Estes, University of Pennsylvania (USA), [restes@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:restes@sp2.upenn.edu); Alex C. Michalos, University of Northern British Columbia (Canada), [michalos@unbc.ca](mailto:michalos@unbc.ca); M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (USA), [sirgy@vt.edu](mailto:sirgy@vt.edu).

# SINET

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As a service to the world-wide social indicators community, SINET is issued quarterly (February, May, August, November). Subscribers and network participants are invited to report news of their social indicator activity, research, policy development, etc., to the Editor for publication. Deadlines are the 20th of the month prior to each issue.

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# SINET

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