

A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.
News Included of Working Group 6 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association.
Newsletter of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

THE WORLD'S BEST COUNTRY BY LAZA KEKIC: A CRITIQUE

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Background

Late in 2004, The Economist Intelligence Unit announced it had developed a new Quality of Life Index: http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/QUALITY_OF_LIFE.pdf

This had been used to rank 111 countries in the world, and the results were published in The World's Best Country by Laza Kekic. The rankings were widely published in the media. The following (abbreviated) summary is taken from The Economist:

www.economist.comtheworldininternationaldisplayStory.cfm?story_id=3372495&d=2005

Why Irish eyes are smiling

Where will be the best place to live in 2005? Ireland comfortably tops the league. America, though the second-richest country (behind Luxembourg) in GDP per head, slips to 13th in quality of life. Britain languishes in 29th place.

It has long been accepted that material well-being alone does not adequately measure quality of life. But how to combine in a single, comparative statistic the factors believed to influence people's happiness? There have been many attempts, none entirely successful: the factors selected, and the weights assigned to them, tend to be arbitrary. So ours takes a new approach.

We use life-satisfaction surveys (assembling the average scores for 74 countries) as a starting point for weighting the various factors that determine quality of life. A regression analysis suggests that as many as nine indicators have a significant influence, and can be turned into an equation explaining more than 80% of the variation in countries' life-satisfaction scores. The main factor is income, but other things are also important: health, freedom, unemployment, family life, climate, political stability and security, gender equality, and family and community life. We feed the factors into the equation, measuring them using forecasts for 2005 where possible (in four cases) and latest data for slower-changing indicators, such as family life and political freedom. The resulting score, on a scale of one to ten, gives the quality-of-life index.

Critique

The methodology used in this Report was the subject of an email discussion by members of the International Wellbeing Group http://acqol.deakin.edu.au/inter_wellbeing/index.htm

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Editor's Note: The feature article of this issue is a discussion of a new Quality of Life Index developed by Laza Kekic of The Economist Intelligence Unit. The Kekic Index was used to rank 111 countries and the results recently were published in The Economist. Bob Cummins and several members of the International Well-Being Group engaged in a discussion of the Kekic Index, which is summarized in their commentary published herein together with Kekic's response. This exchange will not settle the issues that are discussed, but we all benefit from this public exchange of points of view. The issue also contains reports (and photos) on the recent conference, co-sponsored by ISQOLS and Working Group 6 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association, on Europe and North America – Societies in Contrast that was held in Delmenhorst, Germany, as well as comments on next steps for Quality of Life Research by ISQOLS Past-President Wolfgang Glatzer ~ K. Land

SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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Key extracts from this discussion are presented below. The broken lines indicate separate communications:

Statistical analysis

I think that the analysis may be fundamentally flawed. This is due to the nature of the data distribution as depicted in the Figures 1 and 2 below.

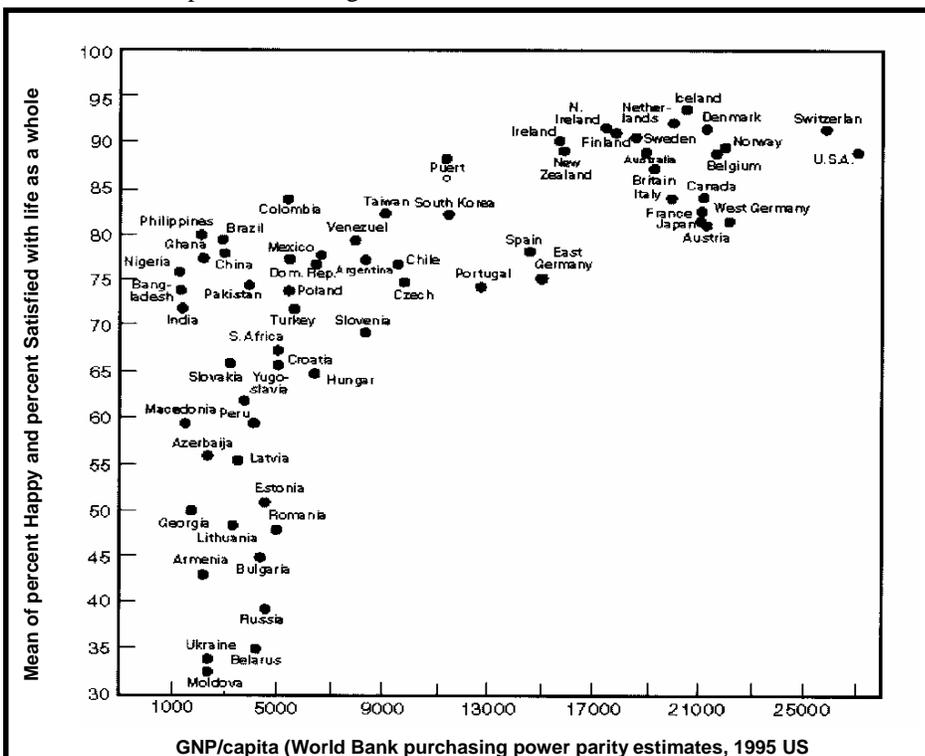


Figure 1: Subjective wellbeing by level of economic development. Source: World Values surveys: GNP/capita purchasing power estimates from World Bank, World Development Report, 1997, $R = 0.70$, $N = 65$, $p < 0.0000$.

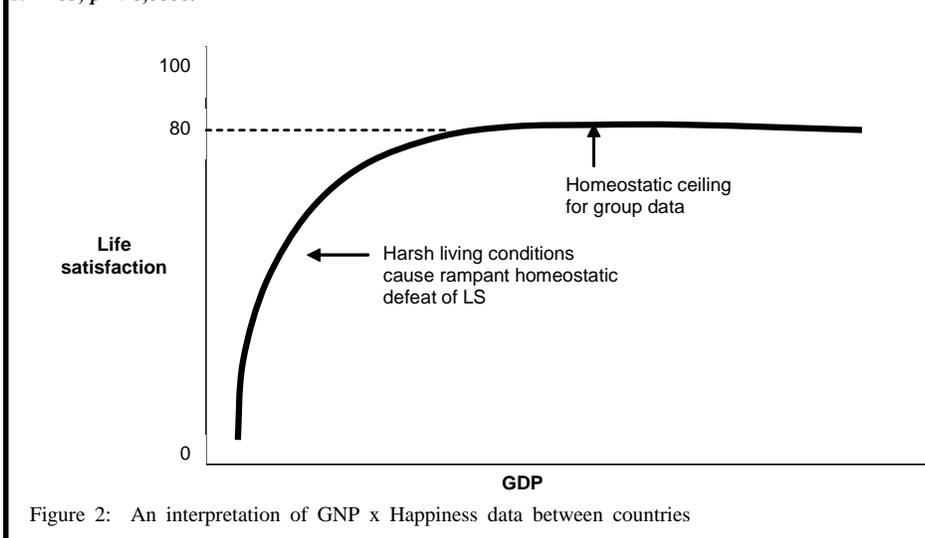


Figure 2: An interpretation of GNP x Happiness data between countries

This distribution pattern has been demonstrated in many publications over the years. The annotated explanations in Figure 1 are in terms of homeostasis theory.

The distribution is severely non-normal. It is actually exponential, as the ceiling level of life satisfaction (LS) for groups prevents average values from exceeding approximately 80 on a standardised 0-100 scale. This means that there are, roughly, two semi-linear data sets. One comprises the Rich Countries where increasing GDP (or any other derivative objective measure of wellbeing) will have almost no impact

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on LS due to the homeostatic ceiling. The second will comprise the countries where, due to the harsh circumstances of living, homeostatic failure is rampant. Here, the control of LS is vested in the external resources that allow life to be experienced as relatively better or worse. Under such conditions, LS is very sensitive to GDP, and this forms the vertical component of the overall distribution.

If a linear regression is applied to such data overall, the beta value that describes the degree of relationship between LS and GDP will be almost completely driven by the vertical component. This is the only region of the distribution where LS and GDP reliably change together.

One consequence of this is that the calculated relationship between LS and GDP will not apply to the horizontal distribution of rich countries. Therefore, any use of beta values to create an index of absolute difference between countries overall will be fundamentally flawed and invalid.

Further, while it is true that the rank-ordering of the countries on such a derived index will be statistically valid (but note the caveat of inadequate N values), it then becomes crucial to distinguish between countries on the basis of statistical significance. This has not been done and, indeed, the top-ranking country is lauded as though its ranking has meaning, rather than it being randomly located within a group of values that do not statistically differ from one another.

These data require logistic or logit transformation before being analysed by regression. These procedures remove the exponential growth function, and would allow the upper limit to be normalised. This is not the same as arguing that this would overcome the 80% homeostatic limit a theoretical and factual matter. However, even were this to be undertaken there would still be two distributions present, and it is not truly possible to distinguish countries at the same logit order.

They do need a transformation in order to “linearize” the regression model when looking at GDP per Capita as the sole IV. However there are more IVs that have been used in the analysis. These variables are presented as “determinants” of QOL. There is no recognition given as to the multicollinearity that would exist between these other IVs. In essence these independent variables are unlikely to be independent of one another. While such problems will not cause problems with the regression fitted values it does potentially pose some considerable problems with interpretation.

Further there is the problem of simultaneous inference of the regression coefficients. A “back of the envelope” Bonferroni calculation puts the critical t-statistic at around 3.15. On this basis we can only have comfort that life expectancy and GDP per person are in the model. The other variables are questionable. Using 1999 data sourced from <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2001/en/> it can easily be shown that life expectancy and GDP per capita are certainly not independent of one another (see previous slides) and any attempt at

linearization of GDP with respect to QOL will be likely to increase any colinearity in the data.

The Report also states

“These scores (life satisfaction) were then related in a multiple regression to various factors (their 9 objective variables, or IVs in the regression) together these variables explain more than 80% of the inter-country variation in life satisfaction scores”

The reason the explained variance is so high, is that the countries are so different that the regression is being driven by extremes. So, for example, very poor countries will have very low objective indicators and very low life satisfaction. This is important when the results of the regression are applied back to provide absolute difference scores for individual countries as they have done. It seems to me that the ‘Index’ value they derive would only be valid for the average country, and would be least valid for the countries at the extremes of the distribution. If this is so then their linear scale of difference between countries is wrong. Moreover, a quite different, and much, much weaker result would be produced if the analysis was restricted to Western countries.

The coefficients they derive could be interpreted as the average effect of each determinant across all of the countries used. I suspect that if you regressed these determinants or their equivalents back against the raw data separately for each country you might get a different answer. Essentially I am saying that the simple fact that you are in a particular country would probably make the coefficients turn out differently.

There is a further problem in relation to their multiple regression based on 74 data points and 9 independent variables. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, p117) a rough rule for the minimum number of cases required for standard multiple regression is “ $50+(8 \times m)$ ”, where m is the number of independent variables (IV’s). In accordance with this formula, a reliable analysis would need about 122 data points.

The method they have used is sound, if, and only if, they limit it to the sample they have drawn it from. In other words, it is a sound method for dealing with population measures. Using 12 original variables in a regression would require 146 cases ($50+k8$; where desired power (1-beta [type II error]) is 0.8) if they wish to make statistical inferences from these data. So long as they don’t make any statistical inferences beyond their data they are not violating type I error. Essentially what they are doing is a statistical multiple regression where only useful IVs are retained, then expressing the retained regression equation to obtain the predicted values of the dependent variable. Thus, they are obtaining a Regression-Smoothed Estimate of their original DV, the Life-Satisfaction surveys. Their results reveal the IVs explain 80% of the variance in Life Satisfaction. Another way of saying this is that their Regression-Smoothed Estimate is 80% similar to the original life satisfaction data. If we suddenly found that Life Satisfaction (LS) surveys had about 20% error in them I would not be surprised, so bluntly, I am not surprised by this result. What

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does surprise me is that they are touting this as a big deal. It has already been demonstrated by Cummins that LS surveys average out at about 75%, and that these have an SD of 5%. If we square that, we find about 25% variability in LS measures. This may also be viewed as error from the LS regression vector, which concurs well with their estimate.

Yes when I looked at the results and the methodology I too felt that the “weightings” were inappropriate as they would make the scores a bit too generic. The beta scores were used to rank the dimensions in order of importance. From what I interpret this is all they have done. The QOL scores for the remaining 37 countries making a total of 111 (remember there was satisfaction/QOL data from only 74 originally) were predicted from the available dimension data from those countries eg GDP, job security, etc fed into the equation.

People often try to give those formulas like $50 + (8 \times K)$, but they are just rough guides. Some time ago I worked out some numbers using Pedhazur’s remark that “Even when R^2 in the population is zero, the expectation of the sample R^2 is $k/(N-1)$ ” (p.148 in his 1982 book). Here are some useful numbers (Table 1), which people can use to decide if they think their sample size/variable ratios might be too large or small.

10 100.10	10 11 1.00!	8 100.08	6 100.06
10 80.13		8 80.10	6 80.08
10 60.17		8 60.14	6 60.10
10 40.26		8 40.21	6 40.15
10 20.53	974.12	8 20.42	6 20.32
Thus, with 9K and 74 cases, there is .12 apriori even if the population R^2 was 0.			

Here is a paper I have written which deals with the issue [of cases vs predictors]. http://acqol.deakin.edu.au/inter_wellbeing/index.htm#archive [see Jan/Mar 2005 Bayesian Variance Estimation]

It is probably way too precise an answer for most people, but I did try to write it for everyone. Essentially, as the number of predictors increase to the number of cases, you get over fitting, which we all should know. However, we can correct for this (i.e., corrected R^2). The problem is that most corrections are not very good. This paper details the issue and indicates a way to correct that actually works. As with all stats, there is “no free lunch” (a phrase our economist friends should be familiar with). Having less data is a cost. The confidence intervals around your R^2 increases as the ratio of predictors to cases increases until eventually they span the entire R^2 distribution (i.e., 0 to 1.00). In the end, your R^2 tells you nothing. If they culled the predictors just to the ones which were significant, they have merely hidden the problem, a very misleading practice.

Other aspects of the Report

Report statement:

“People know very well how satisfied they are.” (p. 1)

Comment:

Well, there is no agreement on this, some researchers believe it

to be true, others, such as (Kahneman, 1999; Schwarz & Strack, 1999), don’t. As an example, consider the fact that more people consider themselves “very happy” if there exists a category above this option, (such as “completely happy”) as compared with a situation in which “very happy” is the top category (Smith, 1979). So, do people know how happy they are, or are they answering according to standard unrelated to their true happiness/satisfaction? Others have found that unconscious emotions affect behaviour, but not self-reports of happiness (and other emotions) (Berridge, 1999). Thus, I would argue that we do not have compelling evidence showing that people know VERY WELL how satisfied they are.

Report statement:

“People in different countries report similar criteria as being important for life satisfaction.” (p. 1)

Comment:

Not completely true. A series of studies have shown differences in the correlates of SWB (e.g., (Diener & Diener, 1995; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999; Schimmack, Radhakrishansn, Oishi, & Dzokoto, 2002)

Report statement:

“(there exist) .. no different meanings and connotations between different languages for the words “happiness” and “satisfaction” (p. 2).

Comment:

Wrong! There are huge differences in the meaning of these words in different cultures (and therefore in language use). For example, when asked about it, almost twice as many US-Americans consider themselves “very happy” as compared with Norwegian”. When asked about satisfaction, on the other hand, people in Norway normally score higher than people in the US.

Report statement:

“Self-reports of overall life satisfaction can be meaningfully compared across nations.” (p. 2)

Comment:

Depends how you define meaningfully. There is a growing number of studies showing how these inventories are differently understood in different countries. One finding (Vittersø, Røysamb, & Diener, 2002) shows for instance that the reliability of satisfaction measures is lower in non-western countries, which imply that the correlates between factors assumed to have an impact on well-being is underestimated in these countries. Moreover, after controlling for response biases, means scores of satisfaction has changed from a non-significant difference to a significant difference in the opposite direction (Vittersø, Biswas-Diener, & Diener, in press). Again I would say that the answer to this question awaits further research.

References

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(Continued on page 11.)

RESPONSE TO RA CUMMINS ET AL

Laza Kekic

The Economist Intelligence Unit

The critique by RA Cummins et al of the quality of life index (to be referred to as QoL) that was published in the Economist's *World in 2005* appears to involve three inter-related areas:

1. Methodological objections to comparing across countries the results of subjective life satisfaction (or happiness) surveys.
2. Statistical and econometric issues concerning the estimation of a cross-country relationship between life satisfaction and objective indicators of wellbeing.
3. The nature of the relationship between average income levels and happiness or life satisfaction scores.

1. Interpreting and comparing the results of life satisfaction surveys

Three claims, in particular, made in QoL about life satisfaction surveys are disputed:

"People know very well how satisfied they are."

"People in different countries report similar criteria as being important for life satisfaction."

"Self-reports of overall life satisfaction can be meaningfully compared across nations."

The critique notes that some researchers agree and that some disagree, or that the propositions may not be completely true and await the results of further research. Well yes, but this could apply to just about any proposition in the social sciences. The overwhelming weight of evidence and logical argument provides strong support for these claims—for example, the meticulous and convincing case made by Veenhoven (1996) and (2002); also discussion in Frey and Stutzer (2002); and for a useful and balanced review of the arguments see Donovan and Halpern (2002). This is the justification for using cross country life satisfaction scores as the *starting point* for estimating a quality of life index.

The critique also states that a related fourth claim in the QofL methodology is just wrong: "answers to questions on satisfaction in bilingual countries do not reveal any linguistic bias arising from possibly differing meanings of the words 'happiness' and 'satisfaction'". This point was incompletely and thus incorrectly cited in the critique. Arguments that allege that cultural or linguistic biases render non-comparable the results of life satisfaction surveys across countries are also effectively countered in some of the works cited above.

The universalist and "objectivist" assumptions in the QofL methodology are, I believe, very well-grounded.

2. Life satisfaction and objective determinants

Criticism is made of the multiple regression that was used to derive the QofL. A so-called rule of thumb is mentioned, concerning the relationship between a minimum required number of observations and the number of explanatory variables (K)—the " $50 + (8 \times K)$ ". There is, in fact, no such rule in econometrics, beyond the obvious that $N-K-1$ be greater than zero.

Clearly, the greater the number of observations, other things being equal, the more likely that the results will be relatively robust. But there is nothing unusual in having 9 K and 74 observations (for example, many cross section studies on economic growth). It is difficult to come across any regression result, irrespective of the number of observations and other statistical properties, that is robust in the sense of being completely insensitive to changes in specification and data sets.

Some degree of collinearity between the independent variables is, of course, unavoidable but does not appear to be a major problem here. In particular, life expectancy is not, as alleged, hopelessly correlated with GDP per head. I come back to the issue of collinearity in section 3.

Unfortunately, we do not have other or bigger data sets. In time more results for more countries will become available, allowing tests with bigger samples. The situation is, however, improving. To recall, until a few years ago we had data only for developed countries.

The "out-of-sample" application of the result—the use of the regression based on 74 countries to estimate QofL in 111 countries—is indeed illegitimate in formal statistical, but essentially sterile terms. A due "health warning" to this effect can be appended.

Most important, as with any other regression result, its use—including the interpretation of the coefficients and implied weights—depends on reasoning and considerations external to the statistical regression. The regression results in QofL linking life satisfaction to objective determinants are broadly in line with prior work in terms of the factors that are identified as being most important—and also on the non-significance of factors such as education and income inequality. The weights from the regression also appear consistent with priors and with the results of other studies and survey evidence (which is not driven by extreme values or is inapplicable for developed countries). This also includes, coincidentally, even the weights derived from a large survey conducted for the Economist's *World in 2005* of the globally unrepresentative Economist readership.

3. The relationship between income and happiness

The data are inconsistent with the oft-repeated claim (including in the critique) that happiness and income are unrelated for developed countries. Even the bivariate relationship for the 22 most developed countries (those with GDP per head in 2000 above US\$20,000 at PPPs) is positive and statistically significant at the 10% level, despite the low degree of variation in the values for both income and life satisfaction in that sample and in even though there is no particular reason that this should be the case in a bivariate setting if life satisfaction is also dependent on a host of other variables.

Another point concerns the curvature of the relationship, that it flattens with growing income, as demonstrated by a well-known graph reproduced in the critique. But, to re-emphasise, the exclusive focus on the bivariate relationship between income and happiness is inappropriate if happiness is also affected by other things. Indeed, the data for the 74-country sample shows a linear relationship between income per head and life satisfaction after allowing for other influences on happiness—a plot between income and the residuals of a regression on life satisfaction on all

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other determinants points to a straight line. Increased income buys (quite a lot of) happiness also in rich countries, but this is almost completely offset by other factors which diminish happiness (ie family and social breakdown, crime etc), which need not be causally linked with income.

This interpretation, supported by this point-in-time data, also appears to be a much more convincing explanation of the apparent paradox from time series data for rich countries of rising incomes alongside stagnant life satisfaction than the alternative explanations to do with relative incomes (ie envy) and "adaptive expectations" (individuals ratcheting up their expectations with rising income levels).

That brings us back to the point of collinearity between the explanatory variables. What is the impact on the linear relationship of the fact that some of the factors that offset the positive impact of income on life satisfaction may be correlated with income? The data and results in QoFL appear to avoid the usual symptoms or manifestations of serious multicollinearity. Limited tests do not indicate that small changes in the data produce wide swings in the parameter estimates. The estimated coefficients do not have very big standard errors (alongside a high R²). The coefficients are not economically implausible and they do not have the wrong sign. No two regressors have a simple correlation that is bigger than the overall R². Experience appears to show that multicollinearity becomes a very serious problem when the correlation between two regressors is more than 0.85. The highest correlation is between income and political stability, a finding that is also familiar from the literature.

Correlation matrix (a)

	LIFE SAT	GDP pc	LIFEEXP	FREEDOM	UNEMP	DIVORCE	LATITUDE	POLSTAB	GENDER	COMUN
LIFE SAT	1.00									
GDP pc	0.75	1.00								
LIFEEXP	0.65	0.65	1.00							
FREEDOM	-0.65	-0.68	-0.53	1.00						
UNEMP	-0.43	-0.41	-0.13	0.20	1.00					
DIVORCE	0.11	0.45	0.38	-0.40	-0.16	1.00				
LATITUDE	0.15	0.44	0.46	-0.42	-0.02	0.64	1.00			
POLSTAB	0.80	0.77	0.65	-0.76	-0.40	0.35	0.39	1.00		
GENDER	-0.02	0.10	-0.01	-0.11	-0.08	0.39	0.41	0.11	1.00	
COMMUN	0.43	0.18	0.12	-0.18	-0.11	-0.19	-0.01	0.23	-0.11	1.00

(a) Variables are defined in the QoFL methodology.

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THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDIES

The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) was formed in the mid-1990s. The objectives of ISQOLS are: 1) to stimulate interdisciplinary research in quality-of-life (QOL) studies within the managerial (policy), behavioral, social, medical, and environmental sciences; 2) to provide an organization which all academic, business, nonprofit, and government researchers who are interested in QOL studies can coordinate their efforts to advance the knowledge base and to create positive social change; and 3) to encourage closer cooperation among scholars engaged in QOL research to develop better theory, methods, measures, and intervention programs. The year 2004 membership fees are US\$50 for regular members and \$25 for students or retired persons. Prof. M. JOSEPH SIRGY (Virginia Tech and State University) is Executive Director of ISQOLS. Anyone interested in knowing more about ISQOLS should contact Prof. Sirgy at the central office: International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies, Dept. of Marketing, Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0236; tel.: 540-231-5110; fax: 540-231-3076; e-mail: sirgy@vt.edu. The Society's homepage on the Internet also can be accessed at <http://www.cob.vt.edu/market/isqols/>.

RENEW YOUR ISQOLS MEMBERSHIP DUES ... ONLINE at <http://marketing.cob.vt.edu/isqols> Click on Membership Application, renew your dues with a credit card. You can also order publications online, subscribe to Social Indicators Research and the Journal of Happiness Studies at a very high discount. You can make a donation to ISQOLS Foundation too - all online - it is that easy. Joe Sirgy, ISQOLS Executive Director

Claiming our Future – Next Steps for Quality of Life Research

Remarks by Wolfgang Glatzer

The Sixth Conference Of The International Society For Quality-of-Life Studies,

November 10-14, 2004, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

A view into the future should always start with a diagnosis of the presence. Future steps have to build up inevitably on the past developments and they start from contemporary levels. From my view – as I explained it at the ISQOLS Conference in Frankfurt, in July 2003 – especially quality of life (QoL) research is characterized by a number of tendencies which contribute to differentiation and multi-variety of the field. Therefore, we need a counter-development integration and consolidation of the knowledge of the field.

Factors contributing for differentiation and multi-variety are:

- Quality of life research is at present not a clear defined discipline but it is like an umbrella, which attracts worldwide people with a broad range of interests.

- Quality of life is a term which doesn't exclusively belong to ISQOLS or other qol-researcher groups, moreover it is used in many fields inside and not at last outside scientific approaches.

- Quality of life is a term used internationally in many languages. Speaking of quality of life seems to be on the one side universal, but it is at the other time related to many local cultural influences ("glokalisisation").

- Quality of life in social sciences is a concept related to different dimensions of a society, it is on the one side part of the goal and value discussion of societies and has insofar a political connotation. On the other side it is related to the measuring of the quality and change of societies and is insofar related to social indicators and monitoring social change.

- Quality of life is a multi level term and this is essential for the questions connected with the concept. It can be defined on the one side for the individual and on the other for the global world and offers insofar a broad spectrum of research topics.

- Quality of life implies a positive view of the world but it should not neglect the negative features of society, like alienation and exclusion, like anxieties and fears, like worries and loneliness. Besides positive and negative dimensions of life also the future has to be taken into account. Insofar the approach should never be a narrow one, which excludes important aspects of society.

- Quality of life, in the full sense of the expression, is an interdisciplinary term: different approaches use it in varying ways. I do not know another area of research where so many scientific fields are engaged: sociology, political science, economics, (social) psychology, medicine, philosophy, environmental science, marketing and others. Thus, in quality of life research, a new discipline is emerging under the influence of very different number of traditional disciplines.

From my view the need for integration and consolidation of QoL-knowledge could be met especially by the following activities:

- There is need for an introductory book on QoL, which is easy to understand and which could guide young students, interested public and experts in the political arena into approaches and results of quality of life.

- We are already on the way to produce a handbook respectively an encyclopedia, which presents the state of QoL-science and demonstrates its performance. By doing this a significant inventory of our basic knowledge could be developed.

- We should support activities which try to summarize and resume the literature of special fields, may it be the quality of life of children or the relationship between wealth and quality of life and so on. There should be more clarity about the knowledge which has been developed and dissemination into the public should be improved.

- It would be good to establish and to support networks among the various fractions of QoL-researchers. At present the different organizations and groups are working rather independently.

- It makes sense to have comprehensive conferences regularly with a very broad topic, which attracts many people to come together. But at the same time there should be more specific conferences and workshops on narrowly defined topics, which bring the discussion of the experts of a field forward.

Altogether, to repeat myself, the integration, consolidation and dissemination of our knowledge should be regarded as crucial for the future success of QoL-research.

SOCIOECONOMIC CODING OF U.S. OCCUPATIONS

Charles Nam, Florida State University

The sixth decennial series of occupational socioeconomic scores for the U.S. has now been published, and a companion guide has been developed to facilitate coding any occupation to its equivalent SES score.

The set of occupational SES scores for 2000 is published, along with an article describing the method of developing them and its historical context, in Charles B. Nam and Monica Boyd, "Occupational Status in 2000; Over a Century of Census-Based Measurement," *Population Research and Policy Review* (2004), 23:4, 1-36.

The coding guide can be found at www.fsu.edu/~popctr/papers/floridastate/2004.html. Under the title of "NAM-POWERS-BOYD OCCUPATIONAL STATUS SCALE," go to CODING TON-P-B SCORES. The documentation directs you to three tables, the second of which is labeled EXTENDED OCC and includes a list of about 30,000 job titles found on census forms over time and their N-P-B equivalent 2000 Census scores (as well as other related information). The table is in Excel format and can be downloaded for your use.

PROGRAM

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA – SOCIETIES IN CONTRAST

MARCH 2005, SUNDAY 6TH 16.00 TO TUESDAY 8TH 19.00

Opening session

Sunday 6th

16.00–18.30

Welcome Adresses

Gerhard Roth, Rector of the Hanse Wissenschaftskolleg,
Wolfgang Glatzer, Chairperson of the Workshop

Panel discussion

The Quality of Societies in Europe and North America
with:

Karl Otto Hondrich (chair) (Frankfurt am Main),
Ted Caplow (Charlottesville): Traditional views from Europe
on the US and return;
Alberto Martinelli (Milano): Differences and similarities of
societies: US and EU;
Ruut Veenhooven (Rotterdam): Happiness in Europe and the
US
Alex Michalos (Prince George): Measuring the quality of
societies
Richard Estes (Philadelphia): The Worlds Social Development
Joachim Vogel (Stockholm): Welfare production in Europe
and North America;

18.30 Dinner at HWK

Monday 7th

9.30–13.00

Social Trends in the European Union and the United States
Chair: Simon Langlois (Quebec)

9.30–10.00

Antonio Chiesi (CCSC, Trento)
Socio-economic Trends in the EU and US

10.00–10.30

Salustiano del Campo (CCSC, Madrid)
Population and family in the EU and US.

10.30–11.00

Ted Caplow (CCSC, Charlottesville)
The Fertility Puzzle in Europe and America

11.00 Coffee Break

11.30–12.00

Paul W. Kingston
More equal than others: Stratification in Europe and the U.S.

12.00–13.00

Alberto Martinelli (CCSC, Milano):

The political democracies of the United States and the Euro-
pean Union
and

Transatlantic Divide: the United States and the European
Union as two distinct models of society

13.00 Lunch

14.30–18.00

Social Inequality and Social Cohesion
Chair: Lance Roberts (Winnipeg)

14.30–15.00

Heinz Herbert Noll (ZUMA, Mannheim)
Quality of Life and Societies: European Heterogeneity and/or
Transatlantic Divide?

15.00–15.30

Joachim Vogel (University of Umea, Sweden)
European and US Welfare Production: A Comparative Assess-
ment of Living Conditions and Inequality.

15.30–16.00

Georg Mueller (ISQOLS/Fribourg)
The Public Perception of the Welfare State – National versus
International Cleavages

16.00 Coffee Break

16.30–17.00

Dieter Bögenhold (Bozen, Wien) and Uwe Fachinger (Bremen)
The Development of Consumption Patterns in International
Comparisons and over Time: Contradictory Process of
Differentiation and Levelling out.

17.00–17.30

Maya Becker (CCSC/Frankfurt):
Social Stratification in Canada and Germany

17.30–18.00

Roland Habich (WZ-Berlin)
European Social Structures in Comparison

19.00 Dinner at Restaurant Weinkrueger

Tuesday 8th

9.30–12.30

Quality of Life in Europe and the US
Chair: Ruut Veenhoven (Rotterdam)

9.30–10.00

Wolfgang Glatzer (ISQOLS, Frankfurt am Main):
Quality of Life in Europe and North America

10.00–10.30

Alex Michalos
Developing Indices for National Well-being: Recent Initiatives
in Canada and the US

10.30–11.00

Sergiu Baltatescu (Oradea, Romania)
Confidence in Government and Happiness in the EU and the
US

11.00 Coffee Break

11.30–12.00

Richard Estes (ISQOLS, Philadelphia)
Europe and the United States: Contrasting Development
Trends and Challenges

12.00–12.30

Ansgar Weymann (EMPAS, GSSS Sfb 597, University of
Bremen)
Life Course Institutions and Life Course Policy in an Era of
Globalization.

12.30 Lunch

13.30–15.00

Visit of a German Middletown: “Delmenhorst” including Expo-
Area “Nordwolle”

15.30–18.00

Mutual Learning between Europe and North America?
Chair: Richard Estes (ISQOLS/Philadelphia)

15.30–16.00

Christian Lammert (ZENAF, Frankfurt am Main):
Reforming Tax and Welfare Systems: European and North
American Patterns

16.00–16.30

Mathias Bös (Marburg), Susanne von Below (Frankfurt), Lance
Roberts (Winnipeg)(CCSC)
Can the North American Model of Ethnicity be Applied to
Europe? The German Example.

16.30–17.00

Hans-Jürgen Puhle (ZENAF/Frankfurt am Main):
Different Trajectories, Mutual Learning Processes, Limited
Convergence: The U.S. and Europe in the 20th Century

17.00–18.00

Final Discussion
What can American and European societies learn from each
other?

18.00 Dinner



Simon and Lance



Matthias and Laura



Wolfgang and Ruut



Heinz-Herbert, Alberto and Richard

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA - SOCIETIES IN CONTRAST

A WORKSHOP REPORT

Rabea Krätschmer-Hahn and Wolfgang Glatzer

The workshop "Europe and North America - Societies in Contrast", was held at the Hanse Institute for Advanced Study in Delmenhorst, Germany, March 6-8, 2005. It was organized to discuss an important issue of immediate interest: the similarities and differences between European and North American societies, especially between the US and the EU. The presentations and discussions were embedded into the stimulating atmosphere of the transparent HWK buildings. Topics of social trends, social inequality, quality of life and learning from each other were discussed in great detail.

The workshop was sponsored by the Werner Reimers Stiftung and the Hanse Institute for Advanced Study; the co-organizers were ISQOLS, CCSC, ISA-WG06, and additional members of the University of Bremen (EMPAS) and the University of Frankfurt am Main (ZENAF). In the opening session on Sunday Gerhard Roth, Rector of the Hanse Institute, outlined the work of the Hanse Institute for Advanced Study for the participants, and Wolfgang Glatzer, chairperson of the workshop, introduced into the conference thematic. He demonstrated that the idea to compare Europe and America exists since a long time; examples were the Italian painter G.B. Tiepolo who created ceiling paintings during the 18th century in the residence of Würzburg symbolizing the continents of Europe and America and also the American writer Mark Twain who contrasted the American and the German life style in his writings.

Karl Otto Hondrich (Germany) chaired the opening panel discussion "The Quality of Societies in Europe and North America". In this panel discussion key answers to the similarity/difference problem and moreover the converge/diverge question were drafted from Alberto Martinelli (Italy), Ruut Veenhooven (The Netherlands), Alex Michalos (Kanada), Richard Estes (USA) and Joachim Vogel (Sweden). Following the panel discussion and divided into four major topics, the workshop continued with lectures on the social trends at the continents, social inequality and social cohesion, quality of life, and finally mutual learning between Europe and North America.

In respect to social trends showed up in the US and Europe, the more successful development in economic and demographic terms was on the side of the US at least in the last decades. The performance of the US was higher in regard to the GDP growth and the unemployment rate (Antonio Chiesi) and the balance of the population development as expressed in the ageing of the population (Salustiano del Campo). As a contrast in a number of social concerns the US were not attaining similar success like the European countries. It is interesting to see that people in the US and in Europe spend their private money in very different ways, much less on housing and much more on health in the US (Dieter Bögenhold/Uwe Fachinger). The social trends are running into different directions partly converging and partly diverging and they constitute more a mixture than a clear picture (Richard Estes).

Special attention was directed to the problem of inequality, because the US are one of the most unequal of modern societies. Whereas the preference for equality is emphasized a lot in European countries especially in Germany, Americans have developed an own attitude toward inequality and poverty (Paul Kingston). They do not worry a lot about it, the Europeans confronted with less poverty are more troubled about it. Canada and Germany are examples that social scientists define their stratification system in different ways: The dissolution of class is not seen as a serious problem in Canada. Nevertheless, internal conflicts seem to show a higher intensity in the US than in European nations (Georg Müller). And life courses are subject to very different regulations in the European and American nations (Ansgar Weymann).

As far as quality of life is concerned, the US is not a leading country and its score at comprehensive measures is below many European countries (Wolfgang Glatzer). Its position varies a lot depending on the kind of index used: Human Development Index (HDI), Human Well-Being Index (HWI) or the Weighted Index for Social Progress (WHI). In the area of perceived quality of life, it seems obvious that the people in the US show in average a higher life satisfaction than the Europeans. This

is especially due to the fact that higher percentages of the American population are rating their satisfaction at top scores. In Europe, especially in the Eastern countries, there has remained up to now a low satisfaction with life. A debate then ensued about the correlation between income inequality and happiness - and of course how to measure "happiness" best, especially whether it is possible to compare the terms of different countries or not. As described already in previous studies income plays an important role for happiness only if people earn a very small amount of money. It was also shown that the relationship between trust in government and happiness is converging in the EU and the US (Sergiu Baltatescu).

A remarkable aspect of discussion concerned whether we can generally speak of a society in Europe as in North America. Europe seems more on the way of making a society, but it is far away from a society in American and Canadian style (Alberto Martinelli). For scientists it is already a problem to define Europe as a continual unit as it changed in the course of time from 6 to 25 member countries. A closer look to the European societies gives arguments to divide at least four European areas: the Northern or Scandinavian part, the Central part, the Southern, Mediterranean part and the Eastern Part. Some lectures on the background of the European Indicator System (Heinz Herbert Noll/Roland Habich/Joachim Vogel) supported this view. One interesting conclusion was that the US look like an European Nation as its position is in many respects always amongst the European countries. Aside it was also postulated that Great Britain constituted more an American than an European nation. To feel together as a nation is in Europe very different from the US.

Can the societies of North America and Europe learn from each another? The area of integrating foreign minorities was used to show restrictions and possibilities for such an approach (Matthias Bös/Susanne von Below/Lance Roberts). Different historical traditions, differences in opinions, wishes and goals of the populations are reasons for singularities. The idea that it

(Continued on next page.)

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would be possible to combine simply the best elements of both societies was rejected. To learn from each other is bound to many presuppositions.

Besides the often highly engaged discussions, the workshop also was impressively organized—including a visit to Delmenhorst's historical sights. A century ago "Nordwolle" in Delmenhorst controlled 25 % of the world's wool production, but today there is nothing left but impressive old industrial buildings. Thus, one of the main trends in developed societies—Schumpeter's "creative destruction" in capitalist economies—was visually present for the participants.



Louis and Karl-Otto



Katja and Rabea



Alberto and Paul



Alex, Wolfgang, and Joachim

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