

A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.  
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Newsletter of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies

## ANTICIPATING THE IMPACTS OF

## SIGNIFICANT SOCIETAL EVENTS ON WELL-BEING-

## A CASE STUDY:

## THE IMPACTS OF THE GREAT RECESSION ON CHILD AND YOUTH WELL-BEING IN THE UNITED STATES

As is common knowledge, the financial and banking crisis of 2008 mushroomed into a severe downturn in the economy, both worldwide and in the United States. The contraction in economic activity in 2008-2009 in the U.S. was the most severe since the early 1980s - that is, in a generation. Indeed, because of its depth and length, this economic decline has been termed the Great Recession.

This makes salient the questions: Can social indicators/quality-of-life researchers anticipate the impacts of major societal events-such as the Great Recession-on the quality of life, on well-being? Or must we wait three to five years until all of the data series have been updated and the studies done in order to estimate those impacts?

In this essay, I will describe a case study of an effort to which we in the social indicators/ quality-of-life research community should devote more attention in the future. I and my research team (Vicki L. Lamb, Ph.D., Hui Zheng, M.A.) are engaged in an ongoing study that tracks changes in a number of Key Indicators of child and youth well-being in the U.S. and corresponding Domain-Specific Indices and an overall Composite Index, the Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI). This study, sponsored by the Foundation for Child Development in New York City, produces an annual report on the CWI to the Foundation. In our 2009 Report, we addressed these questions of anticipation.

Data series used in the CWI study date back to 1975. Based on our tracking of

impacts of prior economic contractions, our 2009 Report indicated that we think that impacts of the Great Recession can be anticipated, at least to some extent. Our long-term record of changes in the CWI and its component Domains and Key Indicators provide a basis on which to do so. This was the special focus of our 2009 Report.

Predictions always are precarious, especially those of the future. However, based on our studies of the behavior of the CWI and its component Domains and Key Indicators over the years, we can at least begin to anticipate the rough outlines of happened to the well-being of America's children and youth in 2008 and 2009 and what will happen over the next three years, as we work our way through this economically difficult period. We emphasize that the anticipated impacts stated below are tentative, as this is uncharted territory - no one, to the best of our knowledge, has engaged in this kind of systematic anticipatory exercise for child and youth well-being.

**A Note on Terminology and the Time Frame of the Predictions:** For clarity of the exposition, we note the following properties of the predictions/projections given below.

**First, we distinguish two types of impacts - director primary and indirect or secondary.** The most direct/primary impacts of the recession will be on our Family Economic Well-Being Domain Index and its four Key Indicators, as identified below.

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*Editor's Note:* In addition to a tribute to Wolfgang Glatzer on passing his 65th birthday by Valerie Moller, this issue contains a report on efforts I and my colleagues made in 2009 to anticipate at least some of the impacts of the 2008-2009 economic recession on child and youth well-being in the United States. This report addresses a challenge to researchers in social indicator/quality-of-life studies-to go beyond measuring and charting past changes in well-being to the forecasting of changes therein in response to major societal events.

# SINET

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Specifically, there will be direct impacts through the employment and income circumstances of families with children, as the economy lost jobs, parents became unemployed, and incomes declined. We project these direct impacts and state them quantitatively.

In addition, however, as families cope with losses of jobs of one or more employed parents, corresponding losses or declines in family income, and stable employment, and as communities cope with declining public sector budgets due to decreases in taxes collected and with strained resources available to community organizations and voluntary associations, there will be many indirect/secondary impacts on other Domains and Key Indicators of child and youth well-being in the CWI. Based on the CWI databank of time series indicators of child and youth well-being and our analyses thereof, we can crosswalk among the Well-Being Domains and Key Indicators of the CWI to anticipate some of these secondary impacts. However, since they are secondary impacts and based on only three prior recessionary periods in the U.S. since 1975, these projections are more tentative and are stated qualitatively in terms of expected directions of impacts, but not in terms of magnitudes.

**Second, concerning the time frame of the predictions/projections stated below, the reality of the recession is clear.** Generally, it is dated from December 2007. The recession gained momentum through 2008 and extended into 2009. By some economic indicators, the recession bottomed in mid-2009 and there were signs of a recovery in late-2009. Even so, however, there will be a substantial period of additional months or years before unemployment levels, family incomes, and stable jobs return to pre-recession levels. Therefore, while the official time period of the recession may date from December 2007 to late-2009, the predictions/projections stated below have the negative impacts of the recession on family economic well-being extending into 2010. Hence, our projections of direct impacts of the economic recession on family economic well-being are reported for the years 2008 to 2012 in order to include the years of downturn, 2008-2009, as well as recovery in 2010-2012. By comparison, our projections of secondary impacts on other Well-Being Domains and Key Indicators use 2010 as the focal year, as 2010 likely will be the worst year of 2008-2012 for these impacts.

## I. Child and Youth Well-Being Index: A Brief Overview

The *Child and Youth Well-Being Index* (CWI) is an evidence-based composite measure of trends over time in the quality of life of America's children from birth to age 18. The CWI tracks changes in the well-being of children annually as compared to 1975 base year values.

The CWI is designed to address questions such as the following:

Overall, on average, how did child and youth well-being in the U.S. change in the last quarter of the 20th century and beyond?

- Did it improve or deteriorate?
- By approximately how much?
- In which domains of social life?
- For specific age groups?
- For particular race/ethnic groups?

The CWI is computed and updated annually, and is based on data from the Key Indicators through the year 2005. Updates on most of Key Indicators as of the time of our 2009 Report were available for the years 2006 and 2007, and three were available for 2008. The remaining indicators were projected by use of statistical time series models. Due to the substantial inertia in many of the indicators time series, we have found that the one-year-ahead projected values are quite accurate.

The objective of the Child and Youth Well-Being Index is to give a view of changes over time in the overall well-being of children and youth in the United States. The Composite Index, an equally-weighted average of the seven Domains, provides a sense of the overall direction of change in well-being, as compared to a base year of the indicators, 1975. For this reason, the focus of the Index is not primarily on specific indicators, but rather on the way in which they interact and change over time.

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Children and youth live unique lives and as such, at some point, each experiences a range of social conditions. The Index is comprised of Key Indicators associated with different stages of the life course in the first two decades of life.

The CWI includes the following 28 Key Indicators organized into seven Domains of well-being that have been found in numerous social science studies to be related to an overall sense of subjective well-being or satisfaction with life

*Family Economic Well-Being Domain*

1. Poverty Rate (All Families with Children)
2. Secure Parental Employment Rate
3. Median Annual Income (All Families with Children)
4. Rate of Children with Health Insurance

*Health Domain*

1. Infant Mortality Rate
2. Low Birth Weight Rate
3. Mortality Rate (Ages 1-19)
4. Rate of Children with Very Good or Excellent Health (as reported by parents)
5. Rate of Children with Activity Limitations (as reported by parents)
6. Rate of Overweight Children and Adolescents (Ages 6-19)

*Safety/Behavioral Domain*

1. Teenage Birth Rate (Ages 10-17)
2. Rate of Violent Crime Victimization (Ages 12-19)
3. Rate of Violent Crime Offenders (Ages 12-17)
4. Rate of Cigarette Smoking (Grade 12)
5. Rate of Binge Alcohol Drinking (Grade 12)
6. Rate of Illicit Drug Use (Grade 12)

*Educational Attainment Domain*

1. Reading Test Scores (Ages 9, 13, and 17)
2. Mathematics Test Scores (Ages 9, 13, and 17)

*Community Connectedness*

1. Rate of Persons who have Received a High School Diploma (Ages 18-24)
2. Rate of Youths Not Working and Not in School (Ages 16-19)
3. Rate of Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment (Ages 3-4)
4. Rate of Persons who have Received a Bachelor's Degree (Ages 25-29)
5. Rate of Voting in Presidential Elections (Ages 18-20)

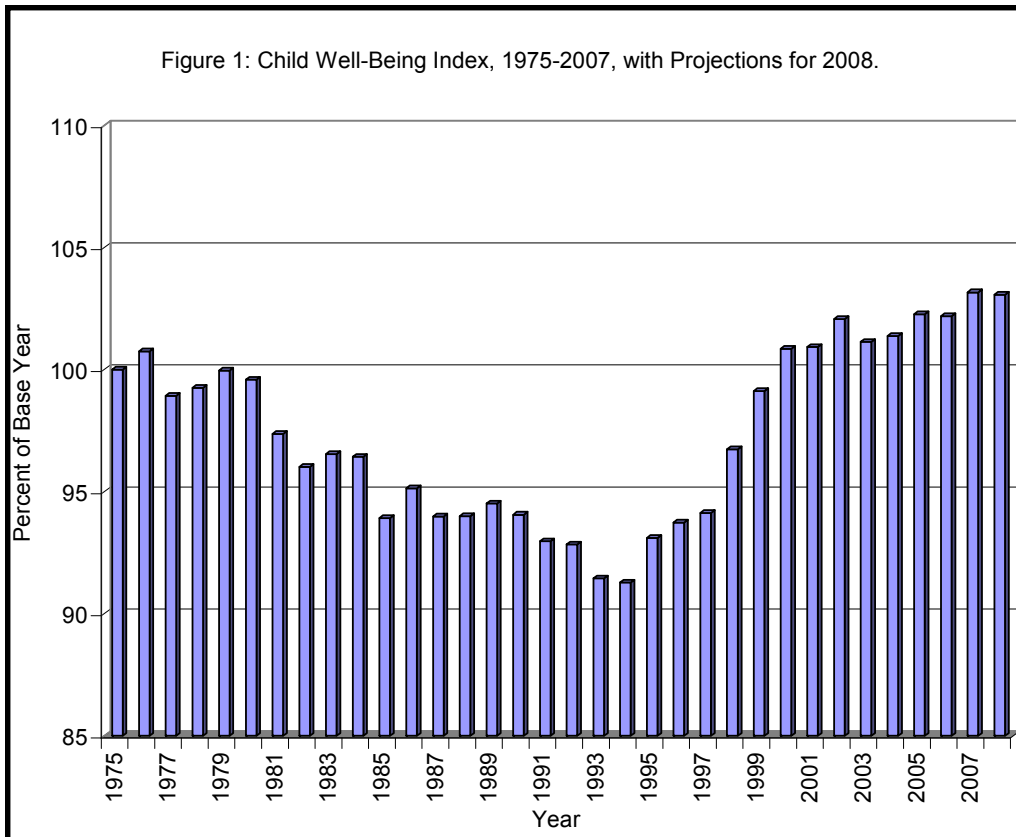
*Social Relationships Domain*

1. Rate of Children in Families Headed by a Single Parent
2. Rate of Children who have Moved within the Last Year (Ages 1-18)

*Emotional/Spiritual Well-Being Domain:*

1. Suicide Rate (Ages 10-19)
2. Rate of Weekly Religious Attendance (Grade 12)
3. Percent who report Religion as Being Very Important (Grade 12)

Taken together, changes in the performance of these 28 Key Indicators and the seven Domains into which they are grouped provide a view of the changes in the overall well-being of children and youth in American society. Each Domain represents an important area that affects well-being/quality of life: economic well-being, health, safety/behavior, educational attainment, community connectedness (participation in major social institutions), social relationships, and emotional/spiritual well-being. The performance of the nation on each indicator also reflects the



strength of America's social institutions: its families, schools, and communities. All of these Key Indicators either are well-being indicators that measure outcomes for children and youths or surrogate indicators of the same. For additional information on the CWI, see our peer-reviewed publications in *Social Indicators Research*, Land, Lamb, and Mustillo (2001), Land, Lamb, Meadows, and Taylor (2007) and the article on the statistics of composite indicator construction by Hagerty and Land (2007).

Each year, we report updated values of the CWI through the most recent years. Figure 1 from our 2009 Report shows the record of changes in the overall Composite CWI from 1975 through 2007 with projections for 2008.

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## II. Anticipated Impacts on the Composite CWI

For the overall Composite CWI, we anticipate a decline of about 2 to 3 percent from its recent peak in 2007-2008 to a low point in 2010. This will bring the CWI down to just above the 100 at which it is set in its base year 1975.

This overall decline in the CWI will occur through several of the Domains of the CWI and their Key Indicators. As indicated above, however, the overall decline in the CWI will be driven most directly by a decline in the Family Economic Well-Being Domain Index, to which we turn our attention.

## III. Impacts on Family Economic Well-Being

Figure 2 shows an expected trajectory of the Family Economic Domain Index from the year 2007, the last year for which data were available at the time of the Report in mid-2009 on the Key Indicators of this Domain, through 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.

This expected trajectory is based on the assumption that the current economic decline will be in the form of a severe recession, on the order of that of 1981-1982, and not a depression that lasts several years.

In particular, the scenario depicted in Figure 2 and the associated Key Indicators for this Domain Index given below assumed that the U.S. civilian unemployment rate in the downturn peaked at an annual level of 9.5 percent in 2009 (a prediction that was quite accurate) and then has a slow recovery through 2010-2012. In Section VI below, we describe how the trajectory depicted in Figure 1 could be affected if the recession becomes extended in time.

Figure 2. Family Economic Well-Being Index, 1975-2007, with Projections for 2008-2012.

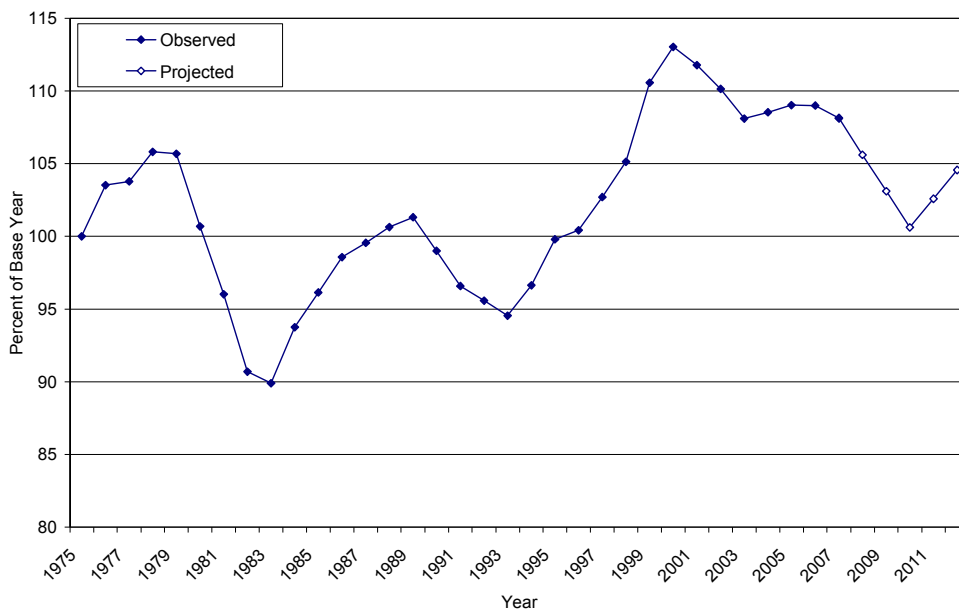


Figure 2 shows that the Family Economic Domain Index is expected to decline from a recent peak of 109 to a low point of just above 100 in 2010. This low will be reached in 2010 rather than 2009 because of lags in the impact of recessions on the Key Indicators in the Family Economic Well-Being Domain. Carrying our projections out through the years 2011 and 2012, we then expected to see a slow recovery in the Family Economic Domain Index.

**Importantly, however, since the Family Economic Well-Being Domain Index has an initial value of 100 in 1975, this scenario implies that it will have declined, for all practical purposes, to its level of 35 years earlier. Thus, the current recession will wipe out the gains, particularly since the late 1990s, of this 35-year-period.**

The Family Economic Well-Being Domain Index is comprised of four Key Indicators: the poverty rate for all families with children, the secure parental employment rate (children living in families with at least one parent with secure employment), median annual income for all families with children, and the rate of children living in families with some form of health insurance. To interpret the changes over time in the Family Economic Well-Being Index shown in Figure 1, we next report the corresponding expected changes in each of these component Key Indicators for the years 2008-2012.

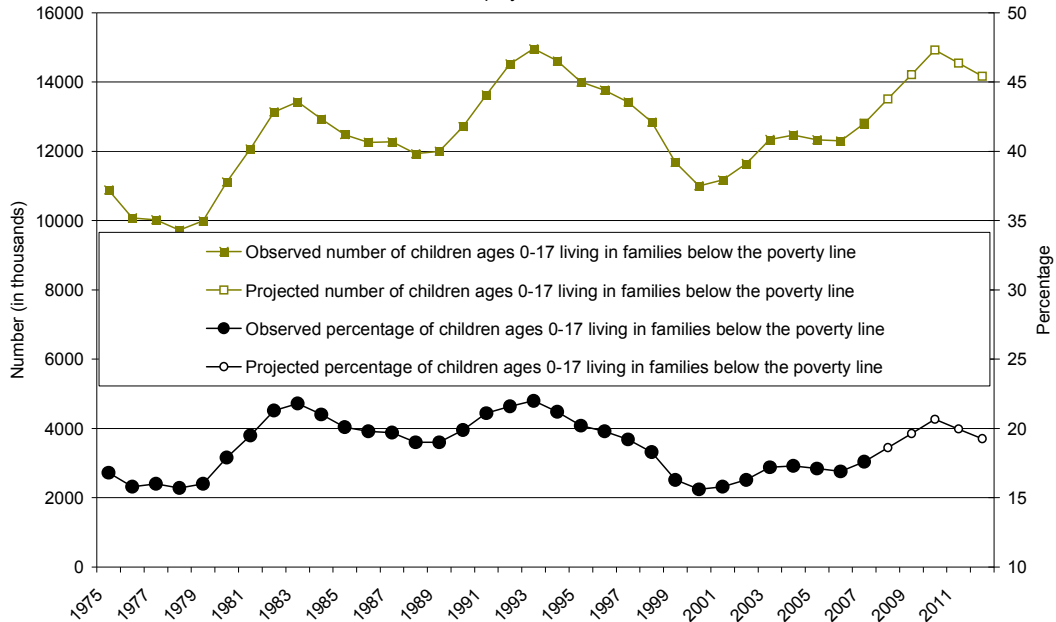
Figure 3 gives the over time and expected trajectories for the first of these four Key Indicators, the percentage of children ages 0 to 17 living in families classified as having incomes below the official poverty line as set each year by the U.S. Census Bureau. While this official poverty line is somewhat arbitrary and has been critiqued widely and frequently for not providing an adequate accounting of levels of poverty, its important attribute for the CWI is not its level but rather its trend over time and across the years. That is, even if alternative definitions of poverty lines would yield different estimates of the percentage of children living in families with poverty level incomes, their trends over time in terms of ups and downs from year to year would likely be quite consistent with those given by the official poverty line and exhibited in Figure 3.

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To assist in the interpretation of the extent of population impacts of the expected upturn in this poverty rate during the current recession on the economic well-being of families with children, Figure 3 also contains a chart of the corresponding trend in the number of children living in families with incomes below the official poverty line.

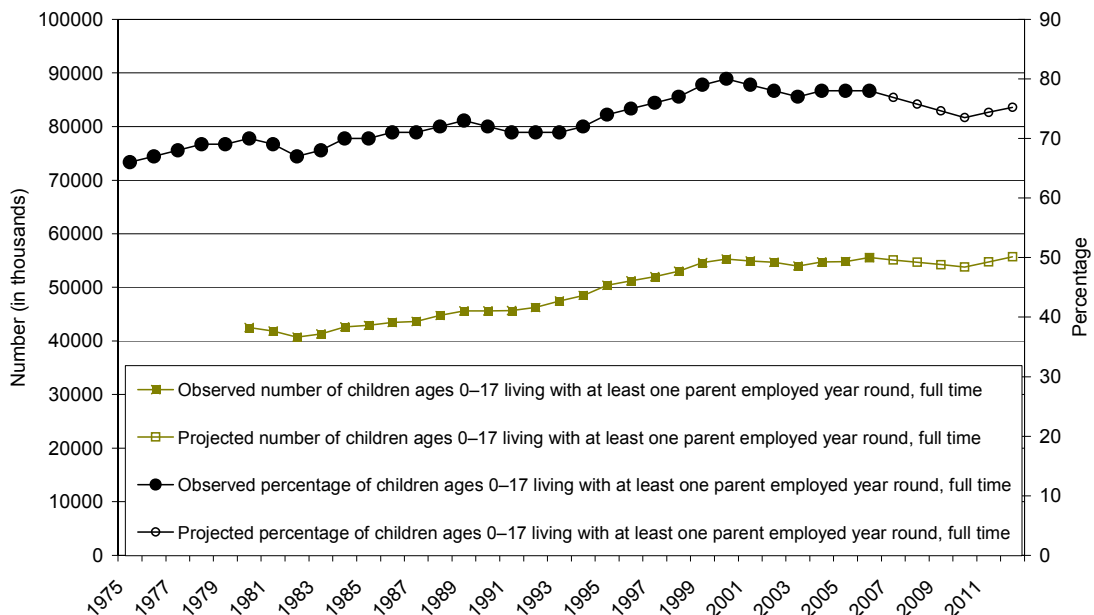
Figure 3. Number or percentage of children ages 0-17 living in families below the poverty line, 1975-2007, with projections for 2008-2012.



**Specifically, it is expected that the percentage of children living in families with at least one parent employed full time, year round, will decline from a recent peak of 78 percent in the years 2004-2006 to about 73 percent in 2010. There will be a corresponding decrease in numbers of children in families with at least one parent employed full time of about 1,760,000.**

The historical and expected trajectories of the third Key Indicator in the Family Economic Well-Being Index, median annual family income in constant 2007 dollars, are given in Figure 5. In addition to median family income for all families with children ages 0 to 17, the figure also gives the corresponding charts of the median annual incomes of single-parent families, both female-headed and male-headed. Median incomes of all three types of families with children are expected to decline during the current recession.

Figure 4. Number or percentage of children ages 0-17 living with at least one parent employed year round, full time, 1975 or 1981 to 2006, with projections for 2007-2012.

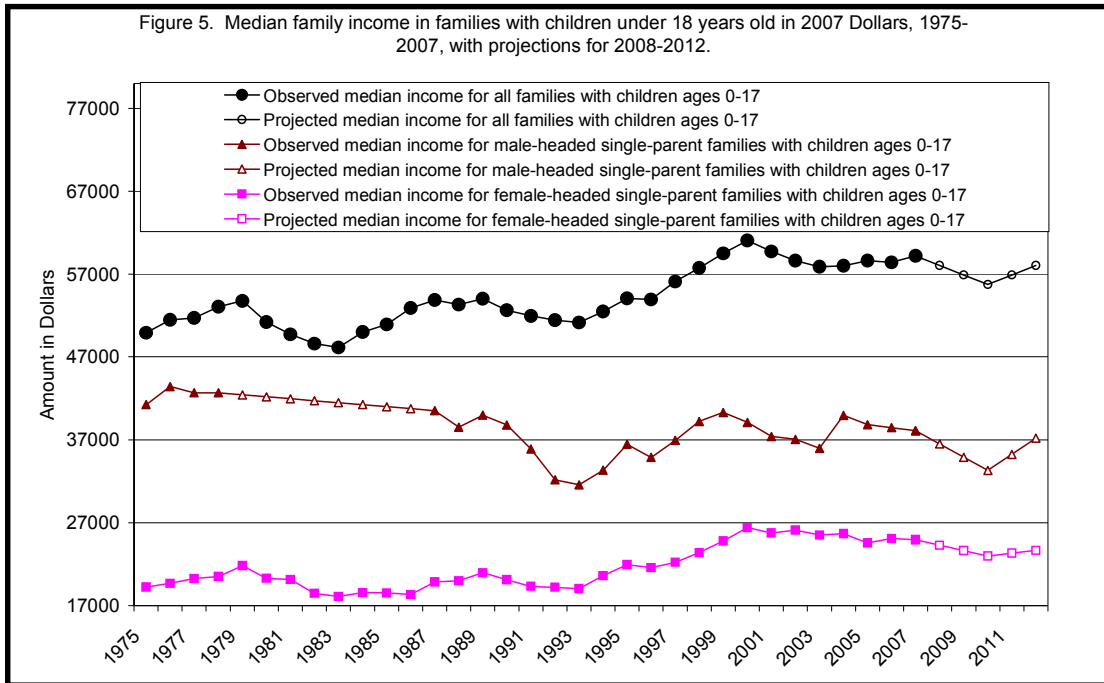


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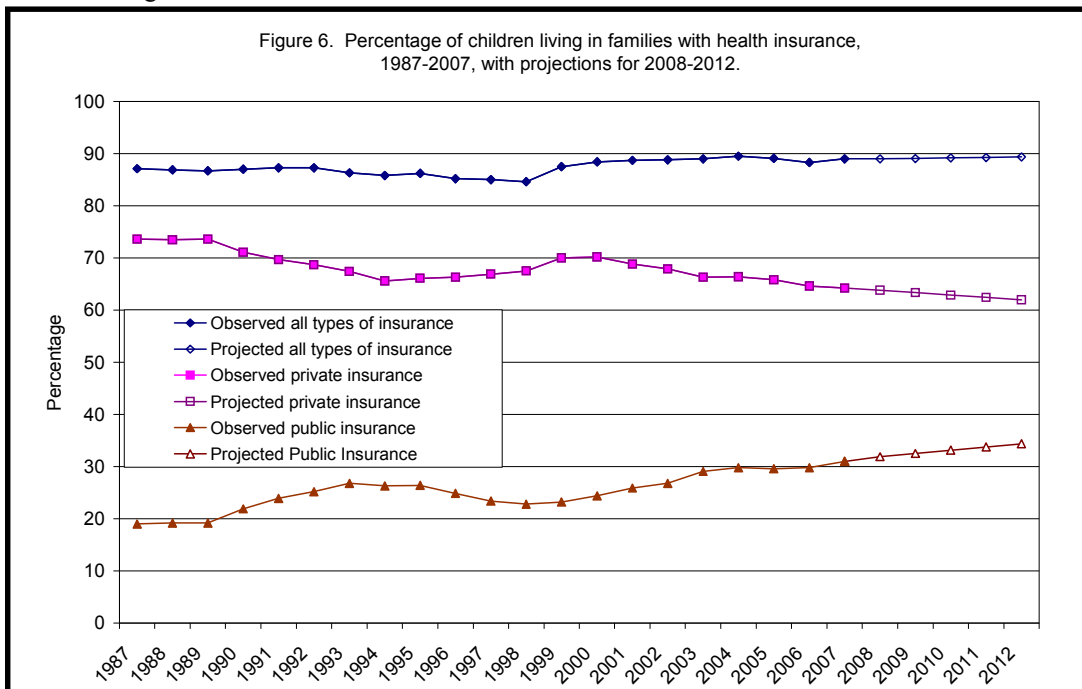
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**For all families with children, it is expected that median annual income will decline from just over \$59,000 in 2007 to about \$55,700 in 2010.**

**For children in female-headed single-parent families, median annual income is expected to decline from a peak of just over \$25,000 in 2006 to about \$23,000 in 2010.**

The fourth Key Indicator in the Family Economic Well-Being Domain Index is the rate (percentage) of children living in families with some form of health insurance. This is an important indicator of children's access to health care, and therefore of the material well-being of children, trends in which the Economic Domain Index seeks to measure. Data on this indicator series are available back to 1987 rather than the 1975 base year for most of the CWI indicators. Figure 6 shows the historical and expected trajectories of three versions of this indicator: the percentage with all types of health insurance (which is used in the CWI), the percentage with private health insurance, and the percentage with public health insurance. The median annual income of male-headed single-parent families will be even more severely impacted, declining from about \$38,500 in 2006 to about \$33,300 in 2010. This is largely a consequence of more severe job losses for males than females during a recession.



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**Of all of the Key Indicators in the Family Economic Well-Being Domain, the health insurance indicator will be the least negatively impacted by the current recession. The main reason is that health insurance coverage for children is substantially impacted by public programs, such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and other community health care programs.**

**Thus, the percentage of children in families with some form of health insurance likely will remain relatively stable at just under 90 percent, as in recent years.**

**In addition, the trend towards substitution of publicly-funded health insurance programs for children for private-sector funding likely will continue and perhaps even accelerate during the recession because working families may lose access to private health insurance plans.**

#### **IV. Impacts on Other Domains and Indicators**

In brief, there is little doubt that the Great Recession will have very substantial negative impacts directly on the Family Economic Well-Being Domain of the CWI and its component Key Indicators. As noted above, impacts of the recession on other Domains and Key Indicators will be less direct and less severe and they may be counterbalancing in some cases. And, as noted previously, because these secondary impacts are based on a historical record of only three prior recessionary periods since 1975, our analyses are more tentative and stated qualitatively in terms of expected directions of impacts, not in terms of magnitudes. Specifically, in our 2009 Report, we cited expected impacts on the following 12 Key Indicators and 5 Well-Being Domains.

First, in the Health Domain, one Key Indicator is the rate of overweight children and adolescents. As we noted in the first annual CWI report in 2004, this indicator has been on an increasing long term upward trend since the 1970s. In addition, there may well be a "recession obesity" impact during 2008-2010. That is, if parents are less able to afford healthy food options for their children during the current recession and instead turn to low-cost fast-food, this indicator may show an additional increase in overweight and obese children above the increasing trend line.

Second, in the Safety/Behavioral Domain, considerable vigilance should be given to the potential for substantial negative consequences of the recession for the rates of violent crime victimization (ages 12-19) and offending (ages 12-17). Not only will families and their teenage children be stressed by the consequences of the recession for their economic well-being, but these consequences may accumulate within certain neighborhoods and cities and lead to increased crime victimization and offending. These impacts may also be multiplied as local and state governments, due to cutbacks in tax receipts and public funding, are forced to reduce police personnel and programs that are targeted towards juvenile crime reduction and prevention.

Third, in the Community Connectedness Domain, the Key Indicator that most directly will be negatively impacted by the recession is the rate of youths ages 16 to 19 who are not working/employed and not attending school. This is a very important indicator of the extent of non-participation of youths in the economic and educational institutions of the society. Especially for the ages of 16 to 19, which are beyond the age of mandatory school attendance, an increase in this rate signals a rise in the size of the population of teenagers who, by virtue of their lack of connections to the economic or schooling institutions, are at greater risk of participation in criminal activities.

Two other Key Indicators in the Community Connectedness Domain may be affected by the economic recession: The rate of Pre-Kindergarten enrollment (ages 3-4) may decline as communities are forced to cut back on schooling opportunities due to budget pressures. On the other hand, the lack of employment opportunities for young adults may lead to an increase in higher education enrollments and thus the rate of young adults who have received a Bachelor's Degree (by ages 25-29) may increase.

Fourth, in the Social Relationships Domain, recessions ordinarily slow the rate of residential mobility of families and the associated breaking of ties of children to friends, families, and neighborhoods. However, the current recession has a much more substantial housing finance crisis than previous recessions. This will be associated with increases in residential mobility and the corresponding negative

impacts on social relationships of children in families who lose their residences and either move or become homeless. On balance, the reduced rate of residential mobility of families and children typical of recessions thus will be tempered by the impacts of the housing crisis. In addition, the crush of the financial and employment crisis on family structures also should result in an increase in the rate of family breakdowns and thus of the rate of children living in families headed by a single parent.

Fifth, the Emotional/Spiritual Domain also will show the imprint of the economic recession. The economic and social stresses cited above generally will impact negatively on emotional well-being, and this may lead to an increase in the suicide rate (ages 10-19). Counterbalancing this, however, is the increase in participation in religious services and in the assessed importance of religious beliefs that has been characteristic of past recessions. Through their social bounding and emotional counterbalancing effects, increase in these indicators may be associated with restraints of increases in the suicide rate.

#### **V. A Diversity of Impacts**

The focus of the CWI is on statistical indicators of child and youth well-being at the national level. Accordingly, all of the economic and social impacts cited above have been for the nation as a whole. Beneath these national level indicators and associated impacts, there will be a diversity of impacts across the U.S. We cite two important variants of this diversity.

To begin with, there will be much geographical diversity of impacts. Some local communities and some of the 50 U.S. states will be impacted much more severely and negatively by the recession than the national averages. Specifically, some local communities and states will experience civilian unemployment rates in the 12 to 20 percent range - levels that define economic depressions, not recessions. In these communities and states, the negative impacts on child well-being cited above will be much more severe than the national averages. There also will be some communities and states that will be less severely impacted than the national averages.

In addition, there will be a diversity of impacts across race/ethnic and socioeconomic lines. In prior studies of the CWI and the temporal changes in child well-

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being across the last quarter of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century that it measures, we have found that when the general trend is one of improving child well-being, children from those racial and ethnic groups, socioeconomic strata, and communities that have lesser economic resources often experience rates of improvement in well-being that are above the national average. On the other hand, the reverse is true when the general trend is one of declining child well-being. That is, when the general trend is one of deteriorating child well-being - as will be the case during the 2008-2010 period - children from racial and ethnic groups, socioeconomic strata, and communities that have lesser economic resources and reserves experience rates of deterioration that are greater than the national average.

#### **VI. Methodology of the Projections and the Range of Potential Impacts of the Economic Downturn**

As indicated at the outset of this special emphasis report, the levels of the expected impacts on Domains and Key Indicators cited above are based on an assumption, shared among many economic forecasters, that the current economic downturn will be in the form of a severe economic recession similar to that of 1981-82, with the monthly civilian unemployment rate peaking in the 9 to 11 percent range and a duration of two to three years. If, however, the recession turns into an extended period of economic collapse lasting more than three years, then the negative impacts on child well-being cited above would become much more severe. Indeed, at that point, just as there were lasting negative birth cohort effects in the 20th century on "children of the Great Depression," as documented by sociologist Glen Elder, we would anticipate that there would be similar extensive negative impacts that children experiencing the Great Recession today would carry with them well into the 21st century.

A second assumption on which our anticipated impacts, as described above, are based is that the negative consequences of the current economic downturn are not accompanied by other major economic, demographic and social changes that lead to a cascade of negative consequences for child well-being. A confluence of several sources of societal changes occurred in the early 1980s and accounts for the fact

that the 1981-1982 economic recession was the leading event in a long recession/decline in child and youth well-being that - as shown in Figure 1 - lasted into the early-1990s. In brief, the economic recession of the early 1980s occurred at the same time as other major economic and demographic changes. This included economic restructuring - the decline of the "rust belt" heavy industrial sectors of the economy to be replaced by the beginnings of the economy - and the demographic succession of the World War II generation of parents by their Baby Boomer children as parents, with all of the changes in family structures (e.g., more single-parenting) and childcare that they wrought. If the current economic downturn again coincides with similar economic, demographic, and social changes, then the anticipated impacts described above could again cascade into a prolonged downturn/long recession in child and youth well-being.

Based on these two assumptions, the projections reported above were calculated as weighted averages of the historical records of impacts (changes from peak to valley) on the Key Indicators in the CWI during the 1981-1982, 1990-1991, and 2001-2002 recessions, with the 1981-1982 recession weighted twice as much as the last two. As noted previously, this weighting is based on the diagnosis by many analysts that the current economic downturn is the most severe in a quarter century and more like the first of these three previous recessions than the last two. The particular scenario of the recession that we utilized for the projections reported in this report assumes that the U.S. civilian unemployment rate in the current downturn peaks at an annual level of 9.5 percent in 2009 and then begins a slow recovery through 2010-2012. As noted previously, since employment and income levels rebound slowly during a recovery period, this scenario still implies that the most severe impacts of the downturn on child and youth well-being will occur in 2010, which is the focal year we have used for many of the impacts reported above.

Granting the foregoing two assumptions as the basis for calculation of the anticipated impacts described above, we close by emphasizing that they are based on a particular scenario of the civilian unemployment cycle for the current recession. The actual course of the economic downturn is not deterministic and we are not infallible forecasters. Thus, in addition to

the foregoing two provisos under which the projections described above have been developed, we note that, as with any demographic, economic, or social projection or forecast, there are bands of uncertainty around the projections.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

The comprehensive, composite view of well-being taken by the CWI leads to crosswalks and comparisons among the various dimensions tapped by its indicators. This analysis of interdependencies and interactions among indicators and dimensions of child and youth well-being alerts us to a number of negative consequences of the Great Recession. There is a high probability that there will be some reversal of decades-long improvements. It is important for citizens, parents, and community and political leaders to be aware of these potential deteriorations so that actions at all levels of society can be taken for their amelioration.

This analysis illustrates a kind of activity in which researchers in social indicators/quality-of-life studies should increasingly be able to engage - namely, not just the charting of past levels and changes in well-being, but the anticipation, the forecasting of likely impacts of major societal events such as expansions and contractions in the economy thereon.

~ Kenneth C. Land

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**Happy Birthday, Wolfgang!**  
**A Tribute to Sinet's Corresponding Editor**  
**Wolfgang Glatzer on Passing his 65th Birthday**



We all hope to become wiser in time without losing our sense of humour. Possibly Wolfgang Glatzer may have achieved this feat in his lifetime. From an early age, Wolfgang was certain that he wanted to become a sociologist and never regretted the decision. Born in Borowiec, then a little German village of three hundred souls in Silesia, Poland, he decided to make his career in the 'innovative future' of sociology. In 1966, aged 22 years, he set off in his ancient VW beetle for Frankfurt where he enrolled at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University. As one of his first-year assignments, Wolfgang recalls he presented a seminar to 700 students. Little did he know that he would stand there again as Professor Dr. Glatzer.

Frankfurt was an exciting place to be in the 1960s. His fellow students were political activists and he was taught by sociologists from the critical Frankfurter school, the likes of Adorno, Habermas and Horkheimer. However, Wolfgang found his most important mentor in his namesake, Professor Wolfgang Zapf, the founder of the European social indicators movement. The younger Wolfgang was to follow in Professor Zapf's footsteps to become a leader of the second generation of social indicators researchers based in Europe.

In spite of the turbulence surrounding him at university in the late 1960s, Wolfgang obtained his first degree in sociology from the J W Goethe University in 1972 and went on to earn his doctoral degree from the University of Mannheim in 1978. After completing teaching and research assignments at a number of German universities and abroad, Wolfgang returned to take up the chair of sociology at the J W Goethe University in Frankfurt in 1984, where he has taught for the past 25 years.

There are a number of parallels in the careers of the two generations of Wolfgangs involved in social indicators research. Like Professor Zapf, the younger Wolfgang has devoted his life to documenting German and European quality of life. Like his predecessor, Glatzer decided to cross the Atlantic to learn about the American approach to quality of life studies. In 1982, he paid a visit to Stanford University in California.

I first met Wolfgang while on sabbatical in Frankfurt in 1987. When I looked him up in his office in the sociology department, he spontaneously invited me to lunch to continue our conversation on the future of social indicators research, which appeared to be in jeopardy. Wolfgang had just returned from a high-profile symposium led by Frank Andrews on 'Whatever happened to

Social Indicators Research?'. Together with Heinz-Herbert Noll, he had presented a state-of-the art paper on Social Indicators and Social Reporting in Germany. I went away with the full set of symposium papers that was later published in the *Journal of Public Policy* 9(4) in 1989. The rest is history. Since that time Wolfgang has played an important role in keeping social indicators research alive and well. And he has awakened passion in the next generation of young researchers to follow suit.

Since the 1980s, Wolfgang Glatzer has emerged as one of the driving forces in the new social indicators movement. He has invested much energy in documenting social change and the transformation of Germany and Europe in a series of social reports compiled together with his mentor, Professor Wolfgang Zapf, and other European scholars. He chaired the Social Indicators division of the German Sociological Association between 1989 and 1995 and currently serves on the International Sociological Association's Research Committee 55 Social Indicators. He is a founding member of the international research group on comparative charting of social change. For many years, Wolfgang has convened the European track for ISQOLS. Over time, this track has built a solid reputation for monitoring quality of life during the enlargement of the European Union. Wolfgang has a special flair for organisation (he knows when to delegate). He has hosted numerous scientific meetings including the 25th Day of Sociology celebrated in Frankfurt in 1990 and our 5th ISQOLS conference in 2003. While on sabbatical in 2005, Wolfgang hosted a fascinating conference that brought together social scientists from America and Europe to discuss differences and commonalities in the approach to studying QOL on either side of the Atlantic.

Wolfgang Glatzer's main research interests focus on social and cultural change, quality of life and social indicators, and household production and technology. Among his over 130 publications, are contributions to handbooks, social reports, and the history of sociology and the social indicators movement. He serves on the editorial boards of all three of the quality-of-life journals affiliated to ISQOLS, *Social Indicators Research (SIR)*, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, and *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, and is co-editor of the Springer Social Indicators Research Series. Wolfgang has produced two books in the series: Volume 15 entitled 'Rich and Poor', based on the international social indicators meeting on social inequality which he convened in Berlin in 2000, and Volume 24 that presents the proceedings from the ISQOLS conference Wolfgang hosted in Frankfurt in 2003. Apart from scholarly works, Wolfgang has also penned more accessible popular articles that have contributed to the public discourse on how best to establish the 'good society'. This was the topic of the 30th German Sociology Congress held in 2000, which attracted a lively debate documented by Wolfgang's in a SIR article published the following year.

Readers will know Wolfgang best as the corresponding editor for SINET and as Past-President of ISQOLS. As president of ISQOLS (2003-4), Wolfgang initiated the revision of the society's by-laws and introduced a number of reforms that have strengthened the organisation. In 2003, Wolfgang hosted the 5th ISQOLS conference, a milestone that indicated our society had come of age. Thanks to Wolfgang's talent as fundraiser, the meeting provided a platform for engaging the new generation of social indicators researchers including colleagues from Eastern Europe and devel-

*(Continued on next page.)*

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oping countries. This was probably the first scientific quality-of-life meeting to give the floor to a banker (rather than an economist) to speak to us on the relationship between money and happiness! At that time, no one was throwing eggs at the men in the pinstripe suits.

Wolfgang's approach to quality-of-life studies is a very balanced one that acknowledges the importance of both subjective and objective indicators measured at the level of the individual, household and society. His concern has been to document quality of life in mainstream society as well as among the socially excluded, and in good and difficult times. His published work is testimony to his effort to see the whole picture. In his introduction to the 5th ISQOLS conference (SINET 2003, No. 74 & 75), Wolfgang challenged us to cover all topics of QOL in our research: the bright and inspiring such as music as well as the ultimate human predicament of death, and not to shy away from dilemmas - questions such as 'are equal standards of living a requisite for equitable QOL worldwide?'

One of the most gratifying moments in Wolfgang's career must have been when he was invited to be the honorary president at the international QOL conference 'Towards Quality of Life Improvement' held in Wroclaw (Breslau), Poland, in 2005. The meeting celebrated an integrated Europe and the coming together of scholars in East and West with a shared passion for QOL studies. It was also a homecoming for the scholar whose roots were in a little village to the north of Wroclaw that for many years had been on Eastern side of the European divide. Reflecting on his childhood in Silesia, Wolfgang in his opening address paid tribute to the contribution to quality of life of lasting personal friendships across social divides.

Most of us know Wolfgang as a congenial colleague who loves life beyond science and goes out of his way to make others feel good about themselves and happy. It is no coincidence that Wolfgang is co-editor of a journal devoted to family studies. He believes in the importance of family life; he has been happily married to his wife Veronika for over 40 years and has two adult children.

Last year, ISQOLS held its meeting in Florence. It was the first time we convened in a European city since Wolfgang hosted us

in Frankfurt in 2003. In Florence, Wolfgang showed me a piece he'd written on the personal meaning of happiness. I was touched that he had chosen something related to the conference I'd hosted for ISQOLS three years earlier. Wolfgang's example cited the wonder experienced by a colleague when facing the ancient blue Quastenflosser or coelacanth specimen (1.64m long), the living-fossil fish that 'walks,' discovered off the Eastern Cape coast of South Africa in 1938. The point Wolfgang makes is that everyone will have his or her own personal happiness experience. While we scientists might think that better social conditions will promote improved quality of life, it is the small things in life - the most personal - that bring joy and happiness. Which brings me to a little discovery I'd like to share with SINET readers: apparently there is a tiny yellow flower that goes by the name of the 'Glatzer' rose (*trollius europaens*). It is commonly found not only in the county of Glatz in Silesia but also in other parts of the world. On Wolfgang's website, there is a praise poem which lauds the Glatzer bloom as the golden flower of happiness. Maybe we owe much to the Glatzer in our midst for the flowering of research on social indicators and the good life.

This year Wolfgang Glatzer will continue his life's work as Emeritus Professor at his university in Frankfurt. We hope Wolfgang will continue to inspire the third and fourth generation of young social indicators researchers and share with us his enthusiasm for quality of life - both scientific and applied - for many years to come.

~Valerie Møller

## SINET WEBPAGE

SINET has a homepage entry on the World Wide Web. It is located on the homepage of the Department of Sociology at Duke University and thus can be accessed by clicking on Department Publications on the address of that page, namely, <http://www.soc.duke.edu> or by typing in the full address <http://www.soc.duke.edu/resources/sinet/index.html>. The homepage for SINET contains a description of the Contents of the Current Issue as well as of Previous Issues. In addition, it has Subscription Information, Editorial Information, Issue-Related Links, and a link to the homepage of ISQOLS, the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies. The Issue-Related Links button has links to World Wide Web locations of data for the construction, study, and analysis of social and quality-of-life indicators that have been identified in previous issues of SINET. When you are surfing the Web, surf on in to our homepage.

## Call For Papers Applied Research in Quality of Life The Official Journal of the International Soci- ety 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>. Manuscripts should be directed to the relevant Section Editor of the Editorial Review Board. If an appropriate Section Editor can not be identified, direct the manuscript to the current Editor in Chief, Alex Michalos.

# SOCIAL INDICATORS AT THE XVII ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY, JULY 11-17, 2010, GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN-RESEARCH COMMITTEE 55 TIMETABLE OF SESSIONS AND EVENTS

ISA World Congress of Sociology, 11-17 July, 2010 Sociology on the move				Research Committee on Social Indicators RC55-timetable Programme Coordinator: Heinz-Herbert Noll			
	8.30-10.30 h	10.45-12.45 h		13.45-15.15 h	15.30-17.30 h	17.45-19.45 h	20.00-22.00 h
<b>Mon 12th</b>			<b>B R E A K</b>		<b>Session 1</b>  <i>Social Indicators of Progress in Societies</i>  Organizer and Chair: Valerie Moller	<b>Session 2</b>  <i>Social Indicators of Subjective Well-Being and Happiness (I)</i>  Organizer and Chair: Ruut Veenhoven	<b>Session 3</b>  RC 55 Business Meeting
<b>Tues 13th</b>		<b>Session 4</b>  <i>Reciprocity, Social Ties and Well-Being: Indicators and Comparative Studies</i>  Organizer and Chair: Ming-Chang Tsai	<b>B R E A K</b>		<b>Joint Session RC11/RC55</b>  <i>Worlds of Differences: Qualities of life for Older People in Developed and Developing Countries</i>  Organizers and Chairs: Jaco Hoffman and Valerie Moller	<b>Session 5</b>  <i>Inequality, Insecurity and Well-Being: Indicators and Analyses (I)</i>  Organizer and Chair: Christian Suter	
<b>Wed 14th</b>		<b>Session 6</b>  <i>Social Indicators and Policy Making</i>  Organizer and Chair: Ming-Chang Tsai	<b>B R E A K</b>		<b>Session 7 Joint Session RC55/RC11</b>  <i>Older People's Contributions to Societal Well-being</i>  Organizers and Chairs: Wolfgang Glatzer and Sara Arber	<b>Session 8</b>  <i>Social Indicators of Migration and the Integration of Migrants</i>  Organizer and Chair: Rob Bijl	
<b>Turs 15th</b>		<b>Session 9</b>  <i>Social Indicators 'On the Move'</i>  Organizer and Chair: Heinz-Herbert Noll	<b>B R E A K</b>		<b>Session 10 Joint Session RC55/RC24</b>  <i>Sustainability and Quality of Life: Concordant or Conflicting Goals of Societal Development?</i>  Organizers and Chairs: Heinz-Herbert Noll and Mercedes Pardo	<b>Session 11</b>  <i>Round Table: The "Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi"-Report: Views from a Social Indicators Perspective</i>  Organizer and Chair: Heinz-Herbert Noll	<b>Session 12</b>  <i>Social Indicators of Subjective Well-Being and Happiness (II)</i>  Organizer and Chair: Ruut Veenhoven
<b>Fri 16th</b>		<b>Session 13</b>  <i>Inequality, Insecurity and Well-Being: Indicators and Analyses (II)</i>  Organizer and Chair: Christian Suter	<b>B R E A K</b>		<b>Session 14 Joint Session RC55/RC53</b>  <i>Assessing Children's Quality of Life</i>  Organizers and Chairs: Heinz-Herbert Noll and Doris Bühler-Niederberger	<b>Session 15</b>  <i>Social Indicators of Subjective Well-Being and Happiness (III)</i>  Organizer and Chair: Ruut Veenhoven	<b>RC 55 Common Dinner</b>
<b>Sat 17th</b>			<b>B R E A K</b>	(13.45-15.15 h)	(15.30-17.30 h)		

**THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR  
QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDIES:  
HEADQUARTERS AND WWW HOMEPAGE**

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 2006 membership fees are US\$75 for regular members and \$50 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.

The ISQOLS central office recently moved to new physical and virtual locations. Please note the new addresses:

International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS)  
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# SINET

## Social Indicators Network News

### Subscription Information

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

## Social Indicators Network News

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