

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 2008 INDEX OF ECONOMIC FREEDOM

As globalization touches all corners of the universe, this report concludes that the world is becoming a better place. Globalization has sparked economic freedom and economic freedom is stimulating the economic basis of QOL. The world is becoming a better place, despite some backward sectors.

How is freedom defined? The report states: "An individual is economically free who can fully control his or her land and property." (p.39)

Documentation of economic freedom for 162 countries by summing scores on ten economic indices provides the fourteenth issue of the Economic Freedom Index. It shows progress since 1995, but little recent growth.

Kim R. Holmes, Edwin J. Feulner, Mary Anastasia O'Grady. 2008. *The 2008 Index of Economic Freedom*. New York: Dow Jones & Company, Inc, and Washington: The Heritage Foundation. (\$24.95, phone 1-800-975-8625)

Methods

The volume includes essays on methodology, economic "fluidity," the problem of narrowing the economic gap, the effects of globalization in improving well-being, regional economic freedom, and the detailed picture of economic freedom of the 162 countries.

The following definitions of variables to be measured and composed into the Index are quoted from pages 40-41 of the text:

Business freedom is the ability to create, operate, and close an enterprise quickly and easily.

Trade freedom is a composite measure of the absence of tariff and non-tariff barriers that affect imports and exports of goods and services.

Fiscal freedom is a measure of the burden of government from the revenue side..

Government size is defined to include all government expenditures, including consumption and transfers.

Monetary freedom combines a measure of price stability with an assessment of price controls.

Investment freedom is an assessment of the freer flow of capital, especially foreign capital.

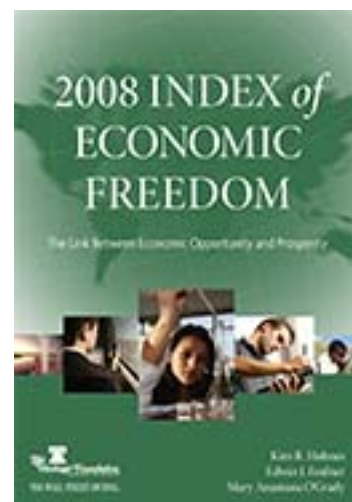
Fiscal freedom is a measure of banking security as well as independence from government control.

Property rights is an assessment of the ability of individuals to accumulate private property, secured by clear laws that are fully enforced by the state.

Freedom from corruption is based on qualitative data that assess the perception of corruption in the business environment, including levels of governmental legal, individual and administrative corruption.

Labor freedom is a composite measure of the ability of workers and businesses to interact without restriction by the state.

Measure or indices for each variable are given in the text. Each is scored from 0 to 100 and the final index is a summation of the ten. The authors and their associates then compose the Index from 10 equally weighted factors, each developed as a measure 0 to 100. They assembled a mass of data for each of the ten factors and present the methodology, spelled out by William W. Beach and Tim Kane.



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SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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Results

European countries rank highest in economic freedom, with the Americas following. Lowest in the scale is the Sub-Saharan Africa; see Table 1.

Table 1

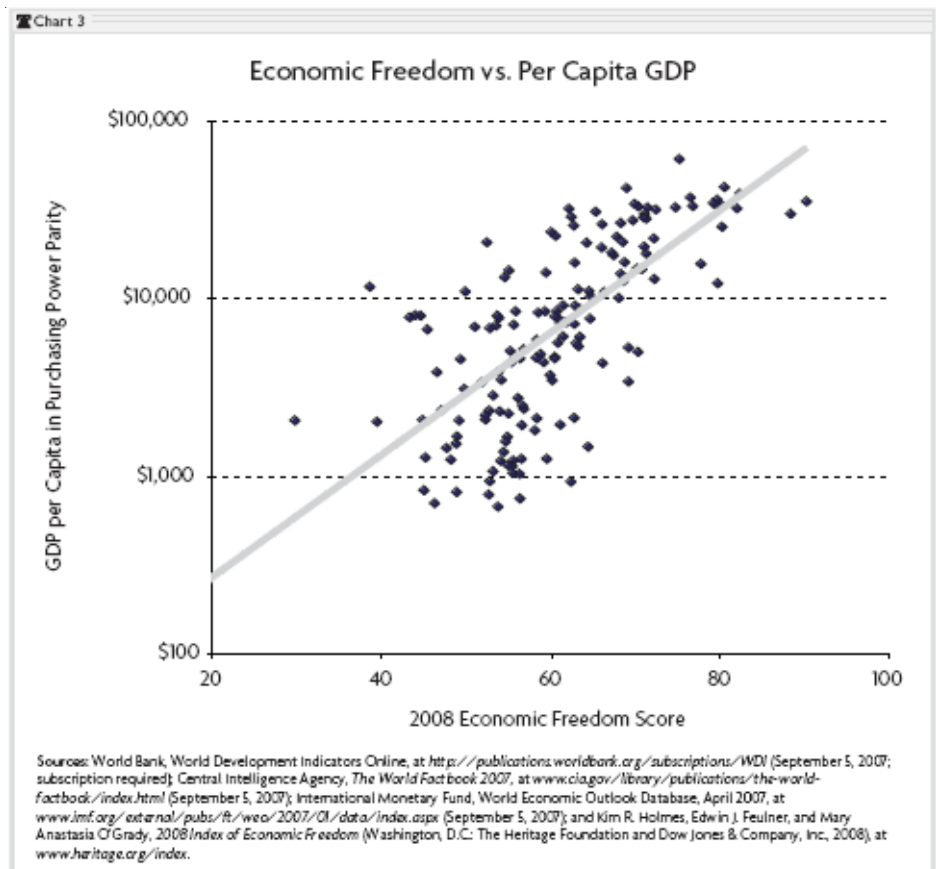
2008 Economic Freedom and Performance by Region

	Average Economic Freedom Score		Population	GDP per Capita (PPP)*	GDP 5-Year Growth Rate*	Unemployment Rate*	Inflation Rate*
	Simple	Weighted*					
Asia-Pacific	58.7	54.4	3,616,976,439	\$6,361	7.6	6.3	5.0
Europe	66.8	63.1	799,629,184	\$20,282	3.9	7.4	5.0
Americas	61.6	67.0	879,292,883	\$20,568	3.0	6.9	4.5
Middle East/N. Africa	58.7	54.4	311,473,781	\$7,508	4.6	13.4	7.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	54.5	55.5	633,132,970	\$2,137	5.0	13.2	29.0
World	60.3	57.4	6,240,505,257	\$9,775	6.1	7.5	7.5

*Weighted by population.
Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators Online; Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2005*; International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook* database, April 2006; and Kim R. Holmes, Edwin J. Feulner, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady, *2008 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2008), at www.heritage.org/index.

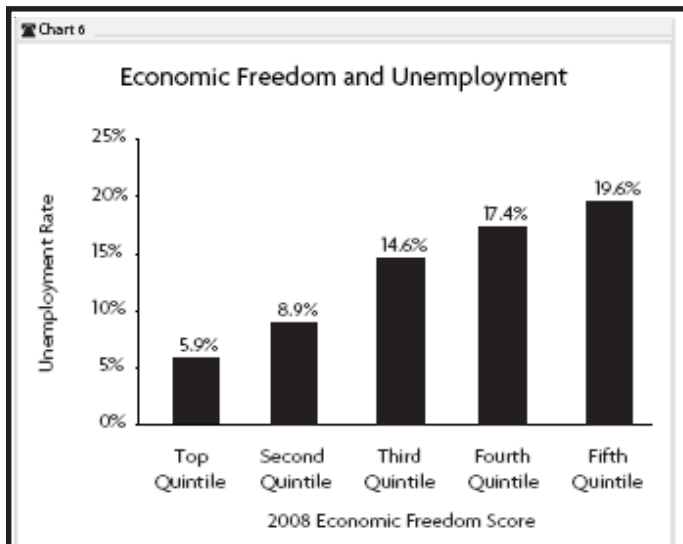
Global economic freedom, at 60.3 percent, has increased 2.6 percentage points since 1995 – rather slow progress. Asian colonies of the former British Empire lead in economic freedom. However, half of the 20 freest economies are in Europe. Good economic performance results from economic freedom. Economic freedom thrives under democratic institutions. Commitment to economic freedom as a national policy stimulates sustainable prosperity. Such an environment should augment the QOL.

As the accompanying graphs illustrate, economic freedom goes hand in hand with per capita gross domestic product. However, half of the world population, 3.39 billion are in the fourth quintile of economic freedom. This quintile includes India and China. As these two giants open their economies to greater freedom, the rise in global prosperity will be spectacular.

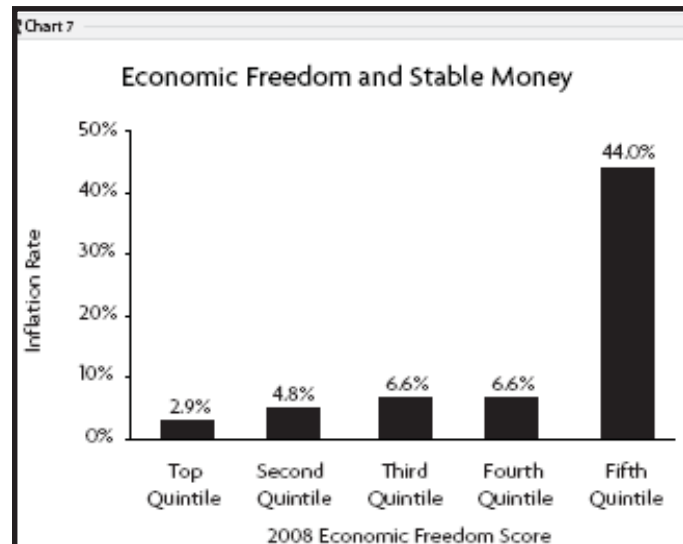


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Unemployment and inflation rates are higher in regions of lower economic freedom, as shown in the charts.



Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators Online, at <http://Publications.worldbank.org/subscriptions/WDI> (September 5, 2007; subscription required); Central intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 2007, at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html (September 5, 2007); International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April, 2007, at www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2007/01/data/index.aspx (September 5, 2007); and Kim R. Holmes, Edwin J. Feulner, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady, 2008 Index of Economic Freedom (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2008), at www.heritage.org/index.



Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators Online, at <http://Publications.worldbank.org/subscriptions/WDI> (September 5, 2007; subscription required); Central intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 2007, at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html (September 5, 2007); International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April, 2007, at www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2007/01/data/index.aspx (September 5, 2007); and Kim R. Holmes, Edwin J. Feulner, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady, 2008 Index of Economic Freedom (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 2008), at www.heritage.org/index.

The complete of rankings of the world's nations by the Index is given below.

Ranking the World by Economic Freedom

Rank	Country	Percentage Freedom	Rank	Country	Percentage Freedom	Rank	Country	Percentage Freedom
1	Hong Kong	90.3	58	Jordan	63.0	115	India	54.2
2	Singapore	87.4	59	Bulgaria	62.9	116	Rwanda	54.1
3	Ireland	82.4	60	Saudi Arabia	62.8	117	Cameroon	54.0
4	Australia	82.0	61	Belize	62.8	118	Suriname	53.9
5	United States	80.6	62	Mongolia	62.8	119	Indonesia	53.9
6	New Zealand	80.2	63	United Arab En	62.8	120	Malawi	53.8
7	Canada	80.2	64	Italy	62.5	121	Bosnia & Herzegc	53.7
8	Chile	79.8	65	Madagascar	62.4	122	Gabon	53.6
9	Switzerland	79.7	66	Qatar	62.2	123	Bolivia	53.2
10	United Kingdom	79.5	67	Colombia	61.9	124	Ethiopia	53.2
11	Denmark	79.2	68	Romania	61.5	125	Yemen	52.8
12	Estonia	77.8	69	Fiji	61.5	126	China	52.8
13	Netherlands	76.8	70	Kyrgyz Republi	61.1	127	Guinea	52.8
14	Iceland	76.5	71	Macedonia	61.1	128	Niger	52.7
15	Luxembourg	75.2	72	Namibia	61.0	129	Equatorial Guinea	52.5
16	Finland	74.8	73	Lebanon	60.9	130	Uzbekistan	52.3
17	Japan	72.5	74	Turkey	60.8	131	Djibouti	52.3
18	Mauritius	72.3	75	Slovenia	60.6	132	Lesotho	51.9
19	Bahrain	72.2	76	Kazakhstan	60.5	133	Ukraine	51.1
20	Belgium	71.5	77	Paraguay	60.5	134	Russia	49.9
21	Barbados	71.3	78	Guatemala	60.5	135	Vietnam	49.8
22	Cyprus	71.3	79	Honduras	60.2	136	Guyana	49.4
23	Germany	71.2	80	Greece	60.1	137	Laos	49.2
24	Bahamas, The	71.1	81	Nicaragua	60.0	138	Haiti	48.9
25	Taiwan	71.0	82	Kenya	59.6	139	Sierra Leone	48.9
26	Lithuania	70.8	83	Poland	59.5	140	Togo	48.8
27	Sweden	70.4	84	Tunisia	59.3	141	Central African R	48.2
28	Armenia	70.3	85	Egypt	59.2	142	Chad	47.7
29	Trinidad & Tob	70.2	86	Swaziland	58.9	143	Angola	47.1
30	Austria	70.0	87	Dominican Rep	58.5	144	Syria	46.6
31	Spain	69.7	88	Cape Verde	58.4	145	Burundi	46.3
32	Georgia	69.2	89	Moldova	58.4	146	Congo, Republic	45.2
33	El Salvador	69.2	90	Sri Lanka	58.3	147	Guinea Bissau	45.1
34	Norway	69.0	91	Senegal	58.2	148	Venezuela	45.0
35	Slovak Republi	68.7	92	Philippines, The	56.9	149	Bangladesh	44.9
36	Botswana	68.6	93	Pakistan	56.8	150	Belarus	44.7
37	Czech Republic	68.5	94	Ghana	56.7	151	Iran	44.0
38	Latvia	68.3	95	Gambia, The	56.6	152	Turkmenistan	43.4
39	Kuwait	68.3	96	Mozambique	56.6	153	Burma (Myanmar	39.5
40	Uruguay	68.1	97	Tanzania	56.4	154	Libya	38.7
41	Korea, South	67.9	98	Morocco	56.4	155	Zimbabwe	29.8
42	Oman	67.4	99	Zambia	56.4	156	Cuba	27.5
43	Hungary	67.2	100	Cambodia	56.2	157	Korea, North	3.0
44	Mexico	66.4	101	Brazil	55.9			
45	Jamaica	66.2	102	Algeria	55.7			
46	Israel	66.1	103	Burkina Faso	55.6			
47	Malta	66.0	104	Mali	55.5			
48	France	65.4	105	Nigeria	55.5			
49	Costa Rica	64.8	106	Ecuador	55.4			
50	Panama	64.7	107	Azerbaijan	55.3			
51	Malaysia	64.5	108	Argentina	55.1			
52	Uganda	64.4	109	Mauritania	55.0			
53	Portugal	64.3	110	Benin	55.0			
54	Thailand	63.5	111	Ivory Coast	54.9			
55	Peru	63.5	112	Nepal	54.7			
56	Albania	63.3	113	Croatia	54.6			
57	South Africa	63.2	114	Tajikistan	54.5			

Economic Freedom Category
80-100% Free
70-79.9% Mostly Free
60-69.9% Moderately Free
50-59.9% Mostly Unfree
0-49.9% Repressed

Conclusion

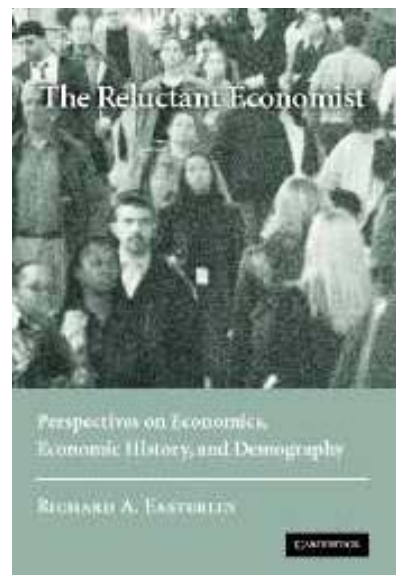
In brief, this report makes a strong case for the argument that people desiring better lives, enhanced QOL, will adopt economic freedom, provided their political system is sufficiently democratic to respond to their needs.

DICK EASTERLIN'S RELUCTANCE

I have had this book on my shelf to review for some time. It is a collection of essays on the topics in its subtitle, namely economics, economic history, and demography

Easterlin, Richard A. 2006 *The Reluctant Economist: Perspectives on Economics, Economic History, and Demography*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The volume commences with Easterlin's intellectual autobiographical essay, *The Reluctant Economist*, on which the title of the book is based. In this essay, Easterlin indicates that he was not initially a reluctant economist, indeed, that he was an enthusiastic Keynesian economist in the beginning. Rather, the reluctance he references stems from the research philosophy forged at the hand of his mentor, Simon Kuznets, the third Nobel laureate in economics, namely, that insight into empirical reality is the touchstone of achievement. By comparison, the field of economics today is mostly driven by theoretical elaboration, model building, in which empirical reality enters, if at all, chiefly in the form of "stylized facts." Through training and inclination, Easterlin is much more of an empirical social scientist, having made important contributions to the fields of economic history and demography as well as economics. This clash of his personal life history, training, and inclination with the state of the art in contemporary economics is what produces Easterlin's reluctance.



Other chapters in the volume address important topics and questions in the three general areas identified in the subtitle:

Is Economics Growth Creating a New Postmaterialistic Society

Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?

Kuznets Cycles and Modern Economic Growth,

Industrial Revolution and Mortality Revolution: Two of a Kind?

How Beneficent is the Market? A Look at the Modern History of Mortality

An Economics Framework for Fertility Analysis

New Perspectives on the Demographic Transition

Does Human Fertility Adjust to the Environment? Population Change and Farm Settlement in the Northern United States

America's Baby Boom and Bust, 1940-1980: Causes and Consequences

Preferences and Prices in Choice of Career: The Switch to Business

Comment

Dick Easterlin will long be cited in social indicators/quality-of-life research for his framing and analysis in the early 1970s of one of the fundamental motivating questions of the field: Does income buy happiness? He has returned to this question from time to time over the years, and his original research article on the topic literally has motivated dozens of subsequent studies. The chapter of the question of whether economic growth is creating a postmaterialistic society in this volume comes closest to the question. But individuals in our field will benefit from reading, browsing, and studying the various essays of this volume. They illustrate and embody Dick Easterlin's faithfulness to the calling of a Kuznetsian approach to economics, demography, and related social sciences to develop insights into empirical reality. They also illustrate the wide-ranging and impressive scholarship that Dick brings to bear on the analysis of important questions, a scholarship that is as comfortable with historical, demographic, and sociological approaches to analysis as it is with the apparatus of economic theory.

THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CHILD INDICATORS CONFERENCE

Child Indicators: Diverse Approaches to a Shared Goal

June 26-28, 2007
Chicago, Illinois

Organized by International Society for Child Indicators and hosted by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago

About ISCI

The ultimate purpose of the International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) is to contribute to improving the well-being of the world's children. A specific goal of ISCI is, first, to develop a network dedicated to improving measures and data resources, rigorous analysis of the data, exploration of theoretical issues, presentation of information, and the dissemination of information about the status of children. A second goal is to enhance the capacity of the field, especially for countries that are in the initial stages of producing child well-being indicators. Third, we seek to identify and develop ways to facilitate the dissemination and application of indicators to policy and practice. For a full description, information and for joining ISCI please see www.childindicators.org

Theme of the Conference

The conference theme seeks to explore how child indicators can be used to improve the development and well-being of the world's children. The goal of the conference is to provide an opportunity for all participants to discuss relevant issues, make networks, share resources and collaborate in an effort to promote the well-being of all children using child indicators.

Call For Papers

Applied Research in Quality of Life

Call For Papers

Applied Research in Quality of Life

The conference is focused on the following sub-themes:

Theory and conceptual frameworks of child indicators

Measurement, data, and methods issues

Child indicators as measures of present or future child well-being

Dissemination of child indicators

Advocacy using child indicators

Policy development using child indicators

Children's participation in the development and implementation of indicators

Child indicators with cultural variations

Child indicators across borders

Information technology and child indicators

CALL FOR PAPERS

APPLIED RESEARCH IN QUALITY OF LIFE

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDIES

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

Authors interested in submitting manuscripts for publication should consult the website <http://ariq.edmgr.com>. 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, Michalos.



ISQOLS Board Photo, December 2007 Conference, San Diego, CA

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

A MESSAGE FROM THE ISQOLS PRESIDENT

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:

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E-mail: isqols@vt.edu

Website: www.isqols.org

Dear Colleagues in ISQOLS,

It was good to see so many of you, particularly our student members, at the ISQOLS conference in San Diego in December. Thank you Joe, Alex, Don and Mariano for giving us such an enjoyable and productive meeting.

2008 is the 'gap' year in our current 18-month ISQOLS conference cycle. It gives us the space to catch up with the latest developments in our particular disciplines by participating in gatherings of colleagues working within our specialist fields of study.

It is also 'downtime' for members of the ISQOLS executive team who are working hard behind the scenes to strengthen ISQOLS as an organisation to meet the needs of all our members around the world.

Meanwhile, Filomena Maggino and her team are busy preparing for our next ISQOLS meeting which will be held in Florence in July 2009. We hope to see you there!

Wishing you a successful 2008!

Valerie Møller

SINET WORLD WIDE WEB HOMEPAGE

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/>. 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.

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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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Social Indicators Network News

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