Well-being in Ageing Societies.
The Case of Germany

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General Questions of the Workshop

(1) Well-Being over the Life Course
   How do well-being, satisfaction, and happiness change over the life course in China, Japan, and Germany?

(2) Factors Affecting Well-Being over the Life Course
   What are the individual, economic, and societal factors that affect well-being, satisfaction, and happiness of older adults in China, Japan, and Germany?

(3) Policies Affecting Well-Being
   Which societal institutions, cultural frameworks and social policies help to enhance the well-being, satisfaction, and happiness under conditions of population ageing in China, Japan and Germany?
Demographic Trends in Germany

- **German population grows older**
  Birth rates are low (below the replacement rate), life expectancy grows.

- **German population declines**
  Despite immigration, German population is shrinking.

- **German workforce grows older**
  There is a shift from younger and middle aged workers to older workers (50 to 64 years of age).

- **Number of very old people increases**
  In the age group 65+, the fastest growing segment is the age group 80+.

- **Regional diversity in population ageing**
  Population ageing is more pronounced in East-Germany and rural areas (due to lower birth rates and migration within Germany).
Well-Being over the Life Course in Germany: High and Stable over Time

Life satisfaction:
- (rather) low
- medium
- (rather) high

Tesch-Römer, Wiest, Wurm 2010
Well-Being over the Life Course in Germany: Decrease of Regional East-West Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>West Germany</th>
<th>East Germany</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>60 (rather high)</td>
<td>45 (rather high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>63 (rather high)</td>
<td>53 (rather high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>61 (rather high)</td>
<td>53 (rather high)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Life satisfaction:
- (rather) low
- medium
- (rather) high

Tesch-Römer, Wiest Wurm 2010
Well-Being over the Life Course in Germany: Slight Increase of Educational Differences

High Education: Slight increase of very satisfied individuals

Low Education: No increase of very satisfied individuals

Tesch-Römer, Wiest Wurm 2010
Factors Affecting Well-Being over the Life Course

(1) Socio-Economic Factors
   Educational status, income, prestige: stable, but small association

(2) Social Relations
   Being married, (inter-generational) family ties, and friends: stable association. But: social relation imply responsibilities and conflicts.

(3) Activities and Participation
   Medium level of activities beneficial (implications for work?).

(4) Health
   Over the life course increasing association with well-being.

(5) Personality and Coping
   Personality and personal resources highly important for well-being.
The Traditional View: Factors Affecting Well-being over the Life Course

- SES
- Social Relations
- Activities, participation
- Health
- Personality, Coping

Well-Being
…With a Little Twist:
Well-being Affects Development over the Life Course
Some Policy Challenges in Ageing Societies I

(1) Work and Retirement Regulations in Germany
   Pension reforms have led to a rising retirement age. Employment rates have increased in the last 20 years, most notably for older workers, but also for younger age groups. Future challenges: Productivity and innovation with ageing workforces.

(2) Income and the German Pension System
   Pension entitlements for people with long term full time employment will remain comfortable, while for other types of occupational biographies, pension entitlements will be considerably lower. Future challenges: Prevention of old age poverty.

(3) Health and the German Health Care System
   In Germany, there is some evidence for compression of morbidity. However, this might change in the future (e.g. because of obesity trends). Nevertheless, health expenditures continue to increase. Future challenges: Sustainability of health care system.
Some Policy Challenges in Ageing Societies II

(4) Frailty and the German Long-Term Care System
Wide acceptance of long-term care insurance in the population, but apparent problems (e.g. benefits for people with dementia, quality of care, shortage of skilled personnel). Future challenges: Sustainability of long-term care system and recruitment of professionals.

(5) Family and Social Integration in Germany
Family relations are of high quality and very reliable in Germany. However, the percentage of people without children increases in younger cohorts. Volunteering seems to be tied to occupational opportunities (decrease in volunteering rates after transition into retirement?). Future challenges: Supporting social integration via networks outside the family.
How do Policies Affect Well-Being?

(1) Effects of Policies on Well-Being
What policies affect well-being (life satisfaction, happiness, depressive symptoms) in the population?

→ Policies strengthening democracy, societal solidarity, social security. However: Ambivalent effects of policy changes?

(2) Effects of Well-Being on Society
What are the societal consequences of well-being changes in the population (e.g. what are the effects of policies which make the population happier/unhappier)?

→ Population well-being in turn affects societal cohesion and productivity. However: Effects of purely pacifying policies?
Thank you very much for your attention!

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