

Well-being in Ageing Societies. The Case of Germany

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International Workshop: “Well-being in Ageing Societies: Perspectives from China, Germany and Japan”, 23-25 October 2013, Beijing

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?

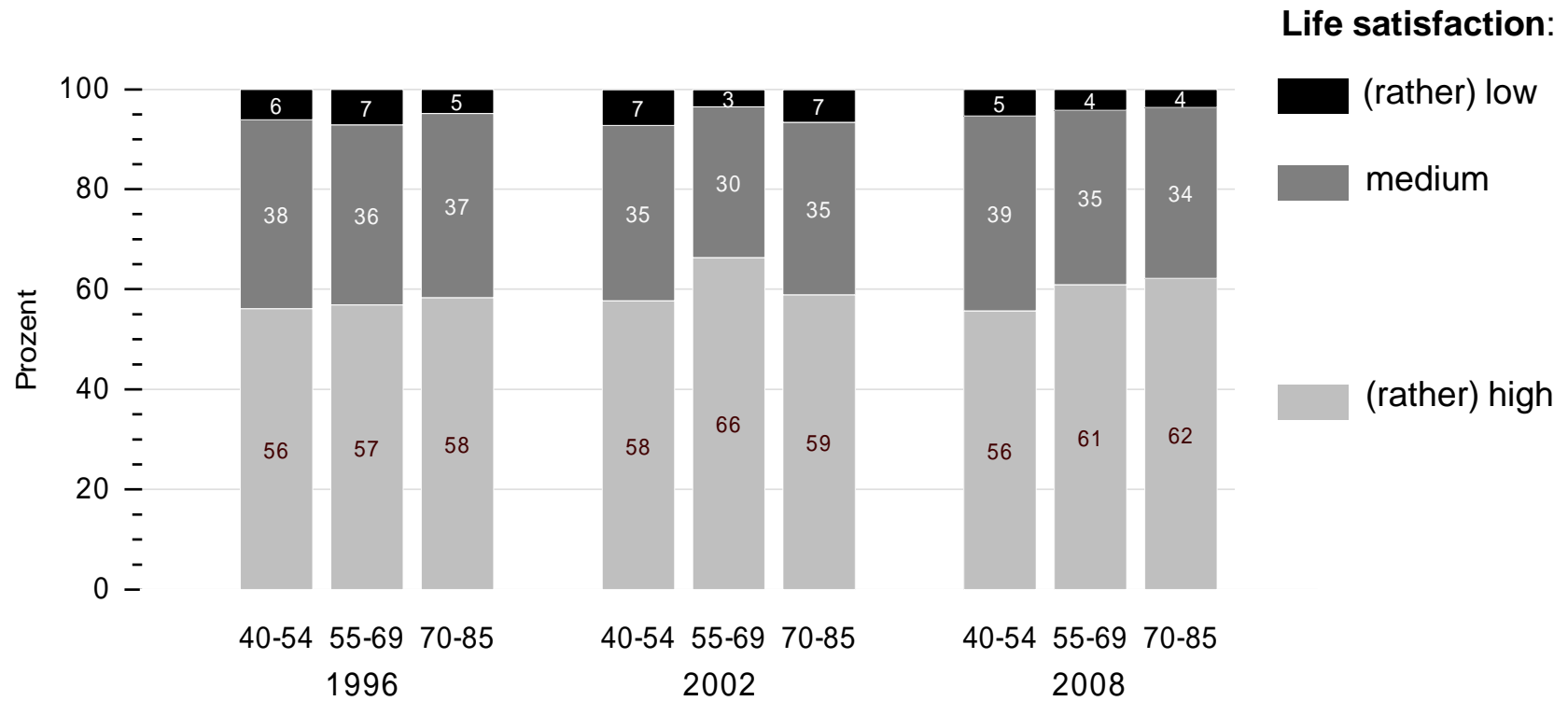
(3) Policies Affecting Well-Being

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?

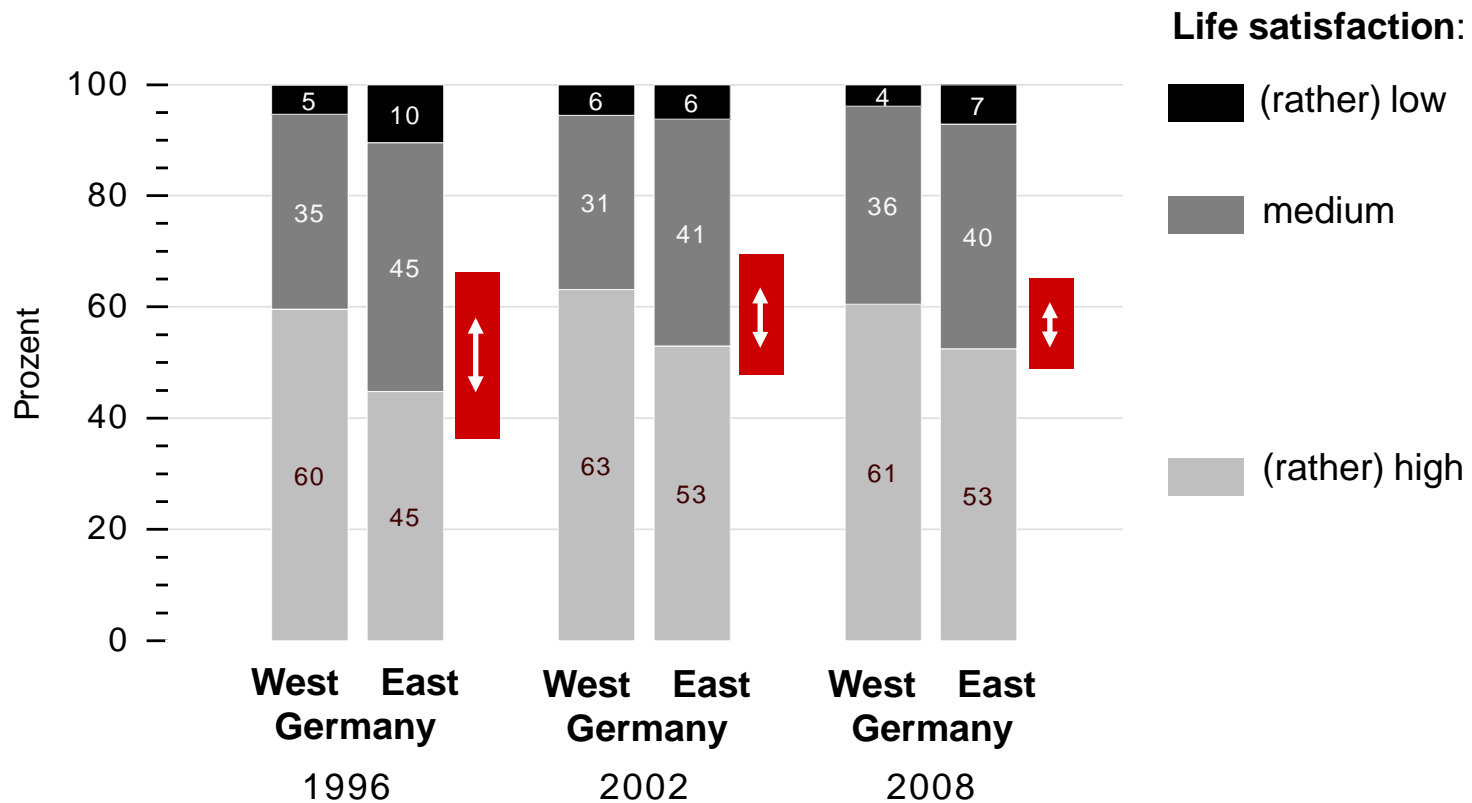
Demographic Trends in Germany

- **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).

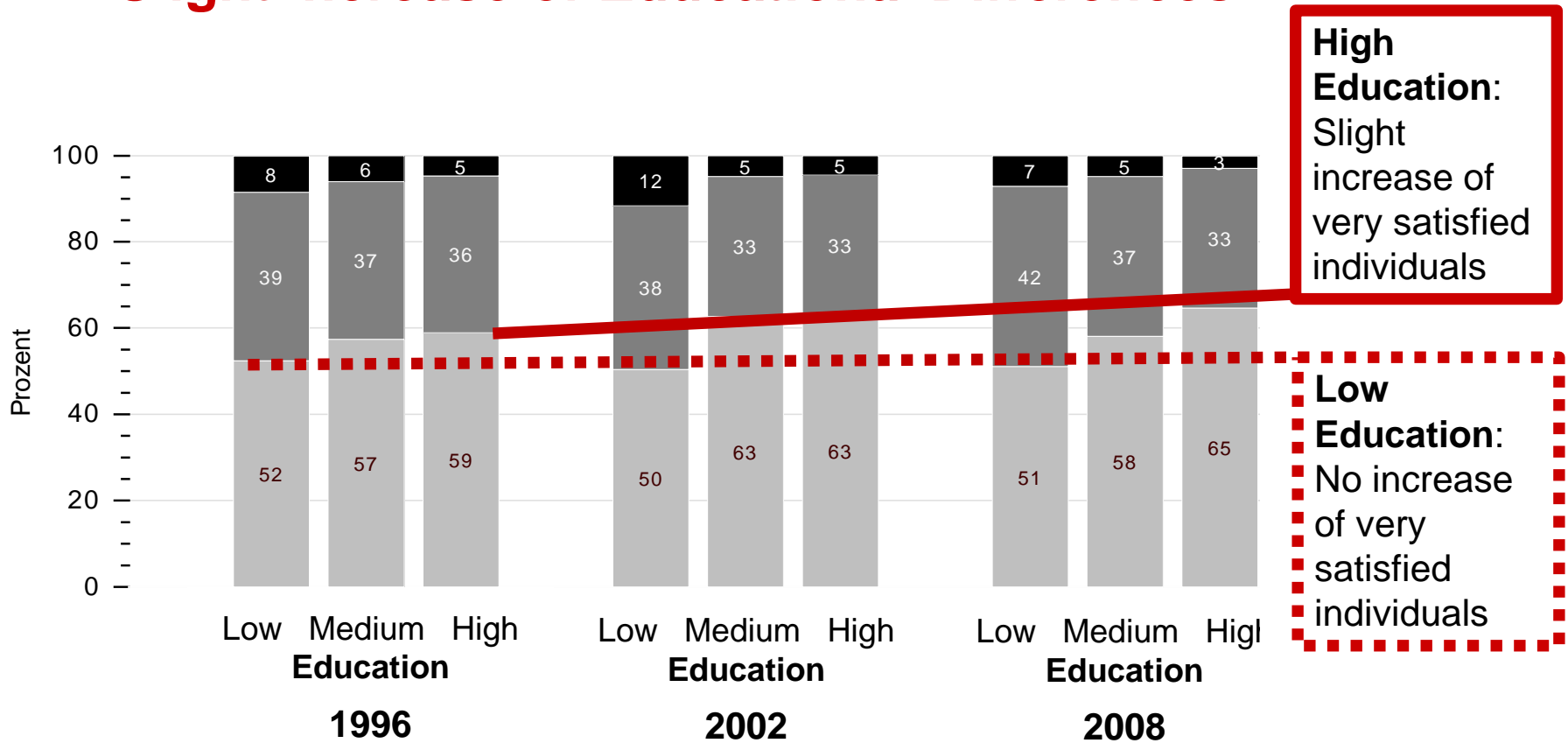
Well-Being over the Life Course in Germany: High and Stable over Time



Well-Being over the Life Course in Germany: Decrease of Regional East-West Differences



Well-Being over the Life Course in Germany: Slight Increase of Educational Differences



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?).

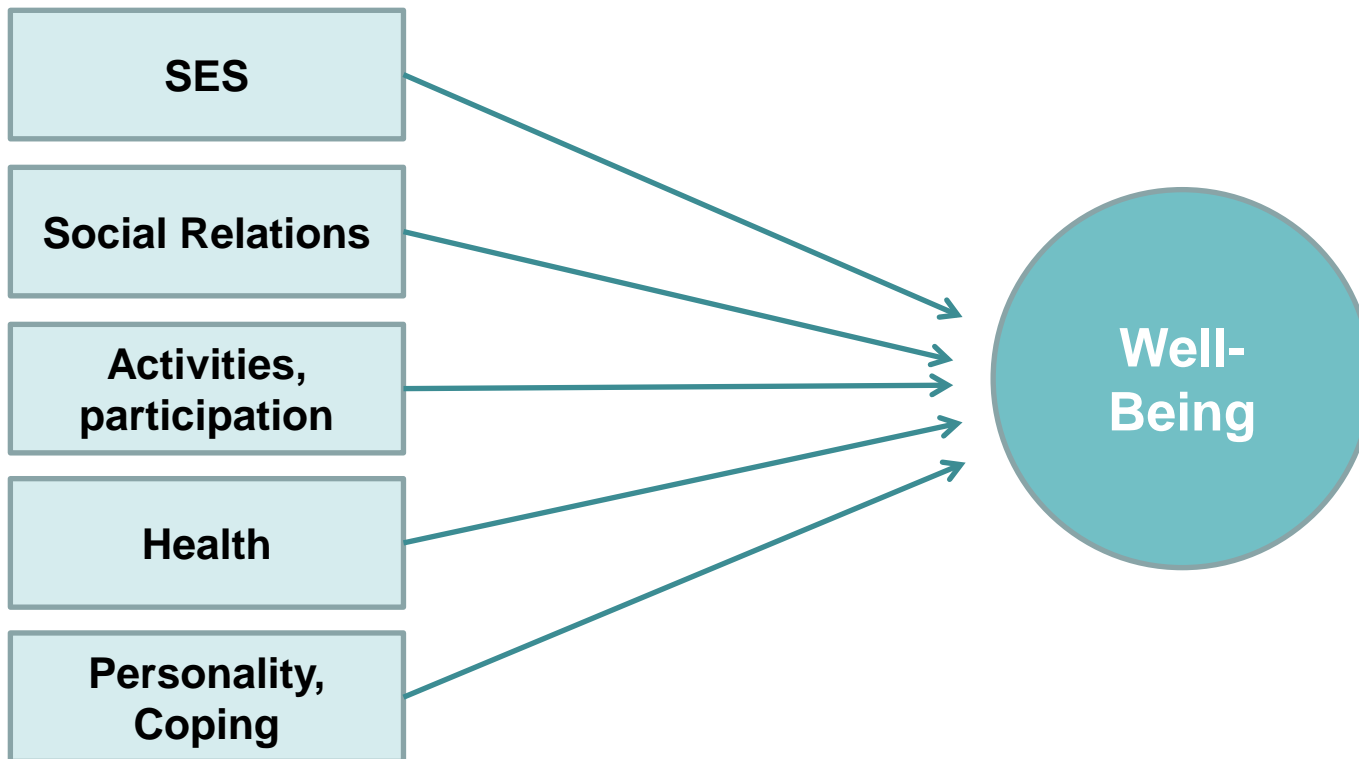
(4) Health

Over the life course increasing association with well-being.

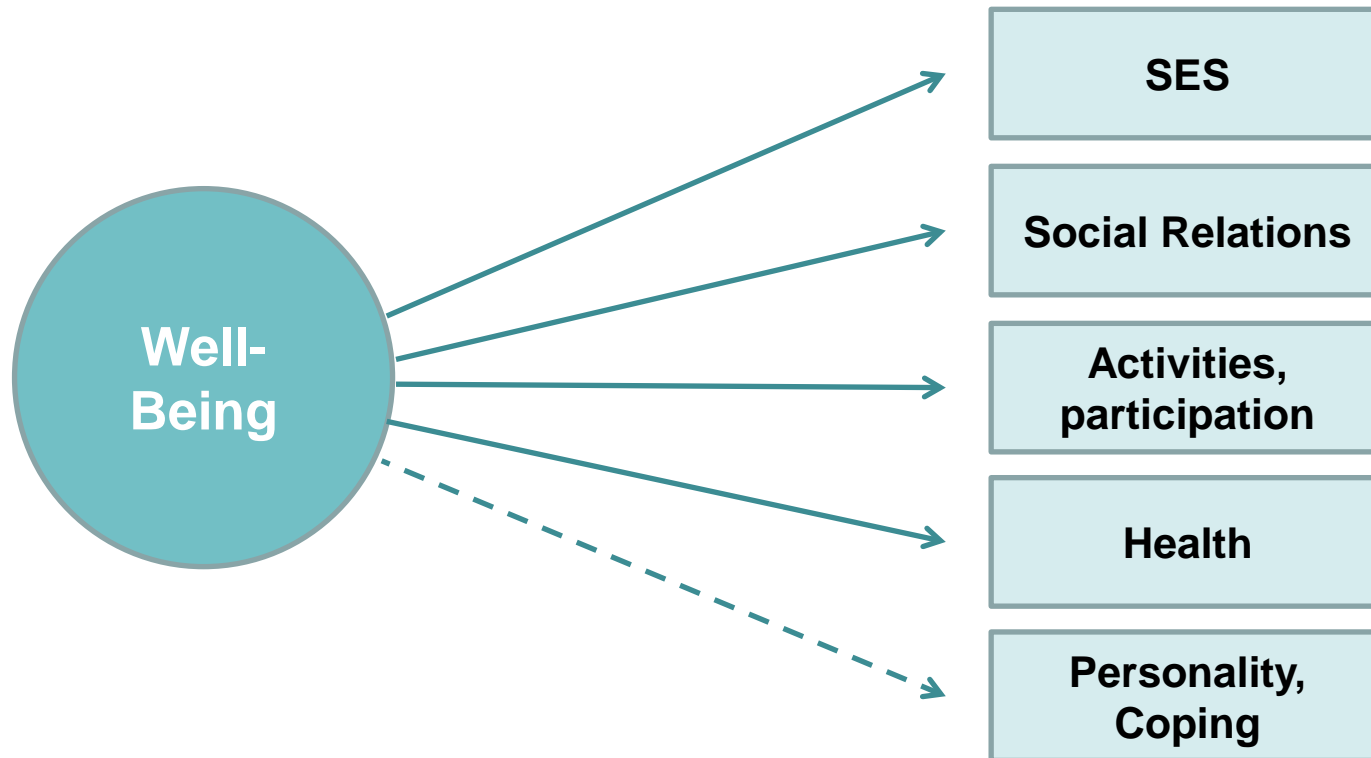
(5) Personality and Coping

Personality and personal resources highly important for well-being.

The Traditional View: Factors Affecting Well-being over the Life Course



...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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