

# Social Indicators and Indicator Systems: Tools for Social Monitoring and Reporting

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## Two Basic Functions of Social Indicators:

- **Measurement and Monitoring of Wellbeing and Social Progress**

- ⇒ (comparative) monitoring of changes in living conditions and the quality of life:

- is the quality of individual life and societies getting better or worse across time?
    - how is life in one society, region, city compared to other societies, regions ...

- **Monitoring of General Social Change**

- ⇒ (comparative) monitoring of structural changes and progress in modernization

- how do social structures change across time
    - what are the structural differences between societies, regions etc.

## Social Reporting

- ⇒ major application of social indicators (research)
- ⇒ monitoring + analysis + interpretation
- ⇒ based on aggregated data & microdata analysis
- ⇒ specific advantages and disadvantages of official and non-official approaches
- ⇒ plurality of approaches and activities needed, including science based social reporting

## Social Indicators and Social Reporting: Knowledge for Whom and What?

- to inform and enlighten citizens and the general public  
⇒ part of 'democratic infrastructure'
  - to provide expert knowledge for political elites, administrations and governments
  - to provide information for research and education
- ⇒ overall: creation and supply of knowledge for the continuous selfreflection of societies

## Basic Requirements of Constructing a System of Social Indicators

### Key Questions:

- ⇒ how to choose a limited number of subjects / dimensions of measurement from an unlimited social universe?
- ⇒ how to organize the measurement and monitoring processes?

### Key Elements of an Indicator System:

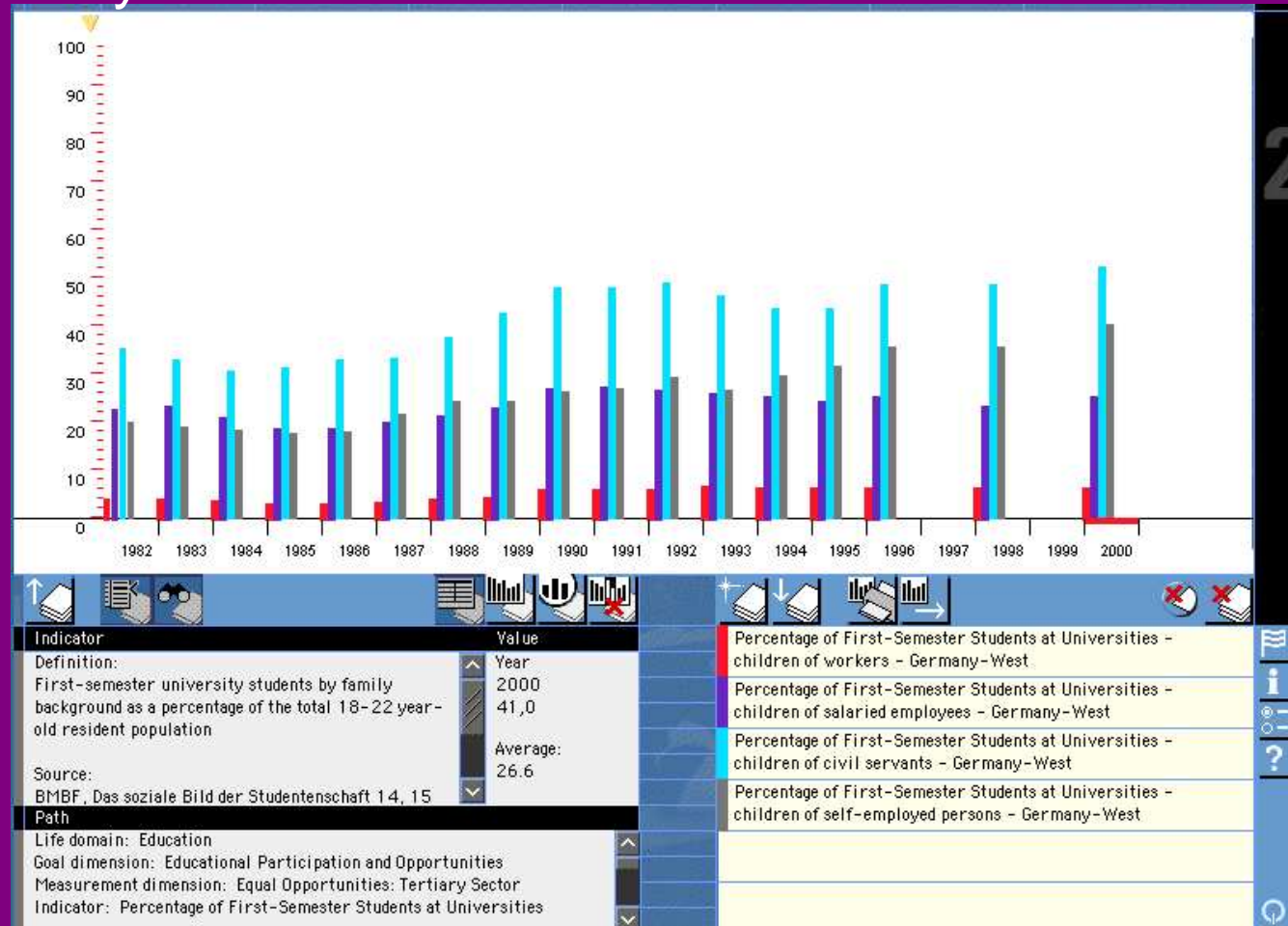
- ⇒ framework or rationale needed to identify and justify the selection of dimensions of measurement to be addressed
- ⇒ system architecture needed to set up the basic structure and to define procedures of measurement

### Formal Criteria to be respected by constructing a system of (social) indicators:

- ◆ comprehensiveness
- ◆ consistency
- ◆ non-redundancy
- ◆ parsimoniousness

## German System of Social Indicators

- created in the 1970's
- 14 life domains
- ca. 400 indicators
- ca. 3000 time series
- from 1950 onwards as far as data available
- Digital Information System Disi 2.1 (bilingual)
  - free download
- selection of 83 'key-indicators' (www)



## Why Do We Need Social Monitoring and Reporting at the European Level?

- process of European integration creates needs for more and better comparative information on social structures and conditions
- improvement of living conditions and the quality of life are among the main political goals of the European Union
- Maastricht treaty requests the presentation of social reports
- key role of social indicators and reporting in European social policy: benchmarking, best practice, open coordination
- post Lisbon process places new emphasis on social indicators to be used to monitor advances in goal attainment
- recent enlargement increases heterogeneity and inequality within the European Union

## European System of Social Indicators

### Overall Objective:

- to develop a theoretically as well as methodologically well-grounded set of social indicators to be used to monitor quality of individual life and societies as well as changes in the social structure at the European level

### General Properties and Requirements:

- science based, theory and concept driven approach
- comprehensive and integrated system
- use of most appropriate - valid and reliable - indicators
- use of best available databases and ensuring cross-national comparability

### Final Product:

- EUSI - Electronic European Information System Social Indicators



## Data, Policy and Concept Driven Approaches of Indicator Construction

- ◆ **Data Driven**

Data ⇒ Indicators ⇒ Classification of Indicators  
e.g. Eurostat's „list of social Indicators“

- ◆ **Policy Driven**

Policy concerns ⇒ policy objectives ⇒ Indicators ⇒ Data

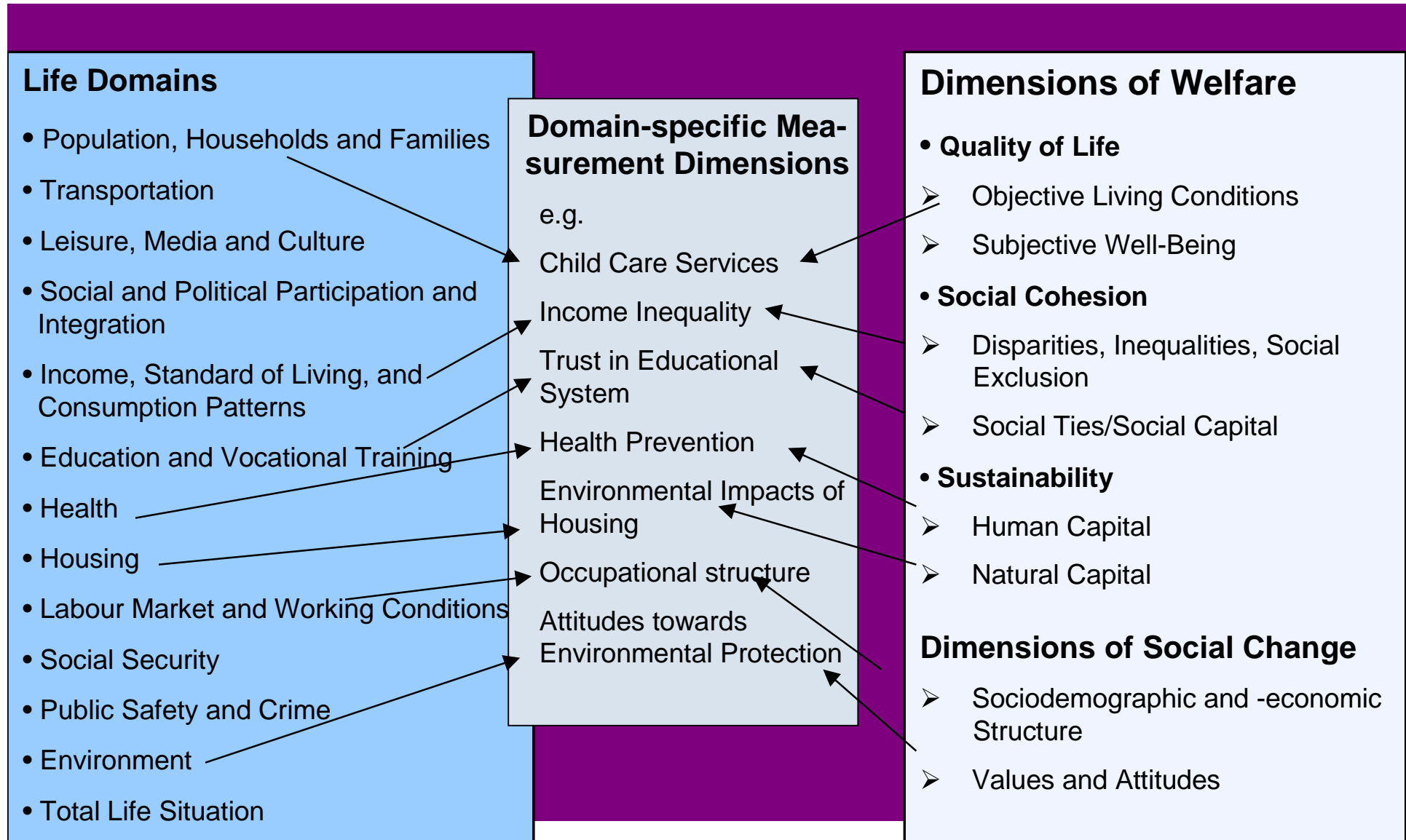
e.g. „Common Indicators Relating to National Strategies for Safe and Sustainable Pensions“ by Indicators Subgroup of the EU –Social Protection Committee

- ◆ **Concept Driven**

Concept ⇒ Measurement Dimensions ⇒ Indicators ⇒ Data  
e.g. European System of Social Indicators (EUSI)

	<b>Welfare Measurement</b>	<b>Monitoring Social Change</b>
<b>Individual Level</b>	<p><i>Quality of Life</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- living conditions</li> <li>- subjective well being</li> </ul>	<p><i>Values and Attitudes</i> e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- postmaterialism</li> <li>- gender roles</li> <li>- party preferences etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Societal Level</b>	<p><i>Quality of Society</i></p> <p><i>Sustainability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- preservation of natural and human capital</li> </ul> <p><i>Social Cohesion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduction of disparities, inequalities, exclusion</li> <li>- strengthening of relations and ties</li> </ul>	<p><i>Social Structure</i> e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demographic</li> <li>- social class</li> <li>- employment etc.</li> </ul>

# Life Domains & Measurement Dimensions



## Some Additional Elements of System's Architecture

- Indicators:  
objective (outcomes, resources, conditions, inputs)  
and subjective (outcomes)
- Coverage  
EU15 - Member States + Norway, Switzerland, Czech Republic,  
Hungary, Poland, Japan, United States  
  
new EU member states are being included successively
- Periodicity of Observation  
Starting point of time-series: 1980; year by year observations as far  
as data are available
- Level of Regional Disaggregation: NUTS-1 or similar level as far  
as meaningful and data are available
- Data Sources: **Aggregated Data:** for example EUROSTAT – Data-  
bases; **Microdata:** for example ECHP, LIS, Eurobarometer, ISSP,  
World-Value-Surveys, European Social Survey

## Data Sources Used for the European System of Social Indicators

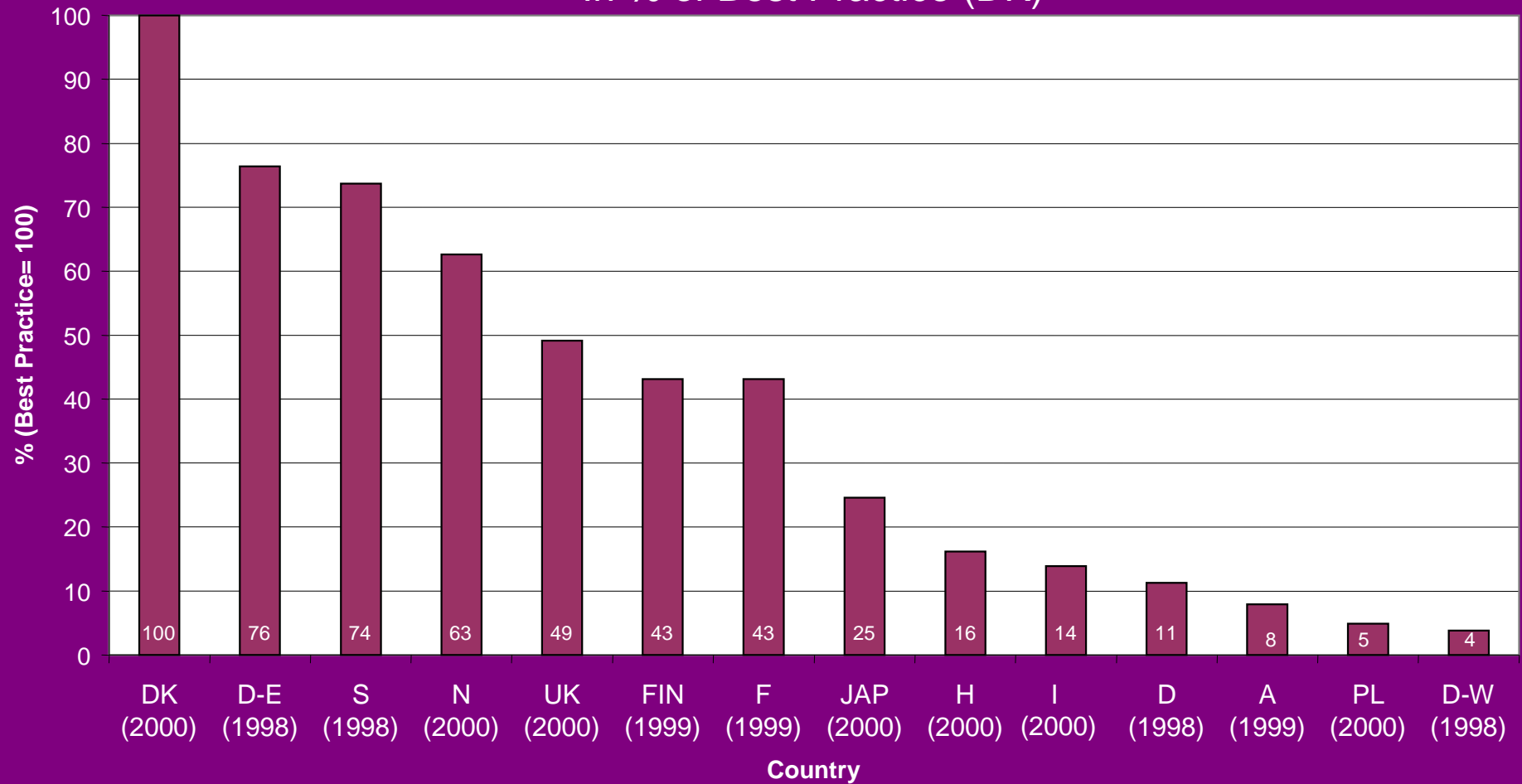
### Aggregate data from official national and supra-national statistics (examples):

- Eurostat / European Commission:
  - New Cronos Database
  - Demographic Statistics
  - Labour Force Surveys
  - Household Budget Surveys
  - European System of Integrated Social Protection
  - Statistics (ESSPROS)
- Council of Europe, Demographic Data Base
- UNESCO/ OECD/ Eurostat Data on Education
- WHO – Health for All Database
- OECD Health Data
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- European Environment Agency (EEA)

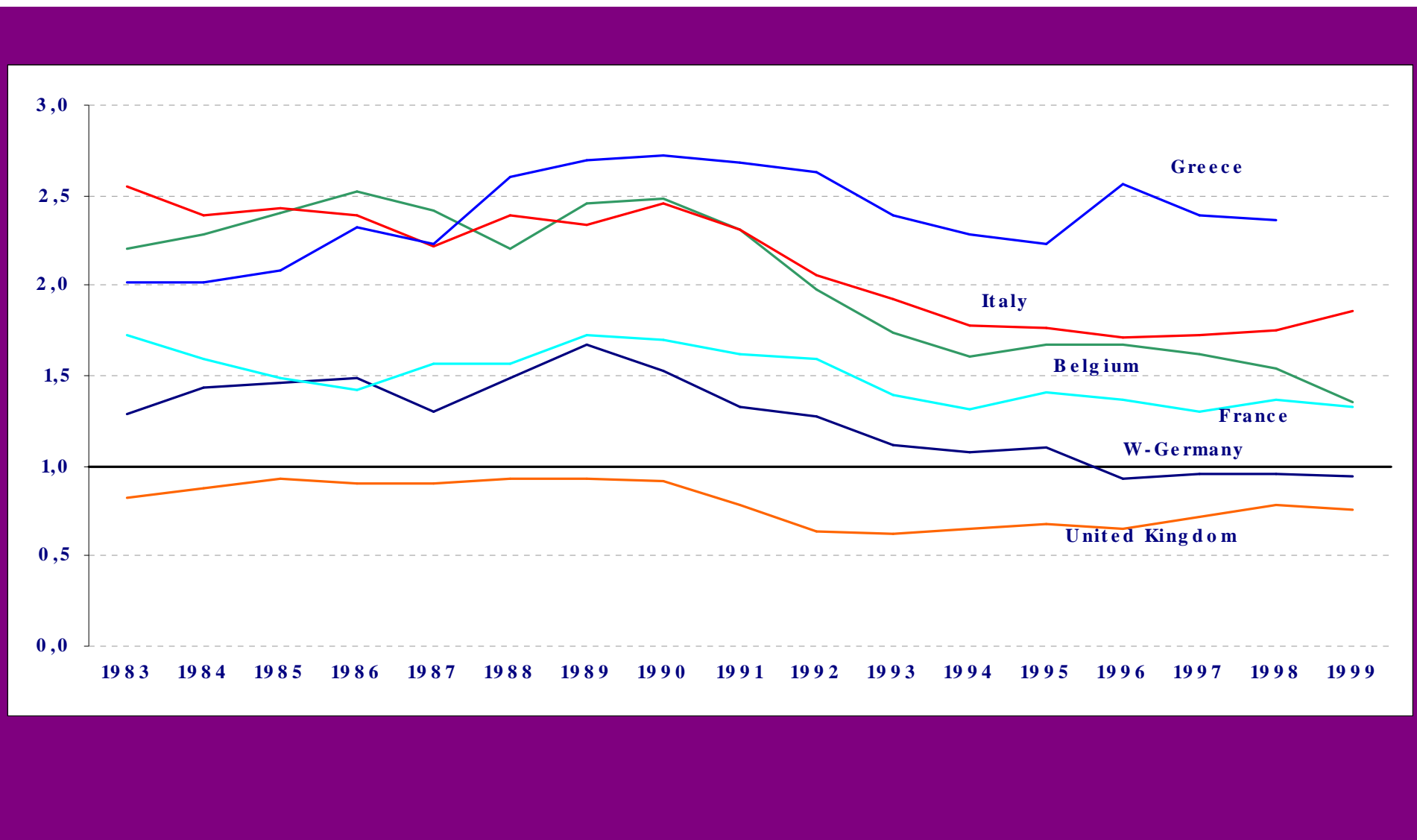
### Microdata from international surveys (examples):

- Eurostat / European Commission:
  - European Community Household Panel (ECHP)
  - Eurobarometer Studies
  - Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (CEEB)
  - Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CCEB)
- World Values Survey (WVS)
- European Values Study (EVS)
- International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)
- European Social Survey (ESS)
- European Survey on Working Conditions
- Euromodule

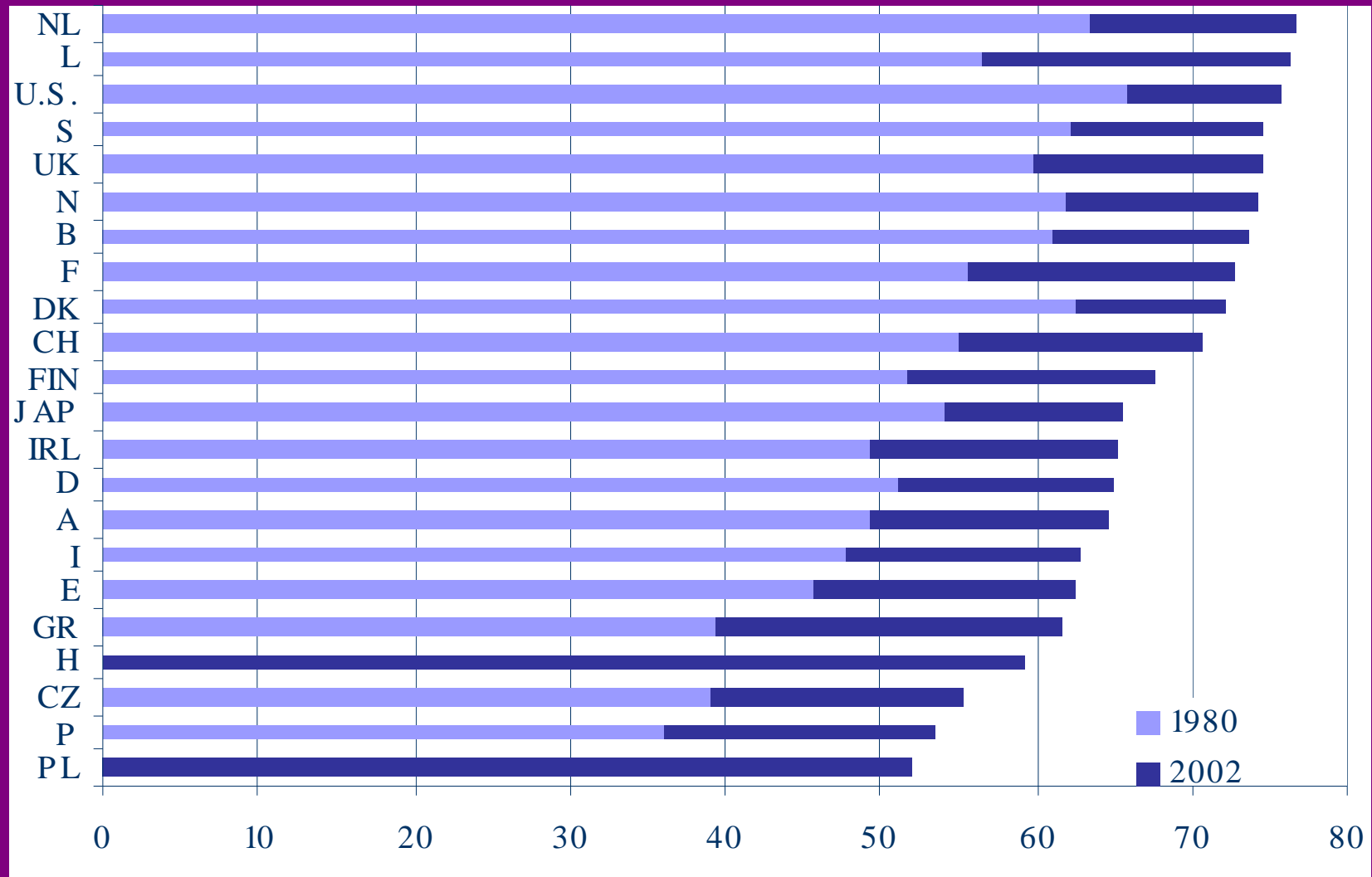
### Coverage of Child Care Services for Children Aged less than 3 Years In % of Best Practice (DK)



Dimension: Disparities, Inequalities and Social Exclusion  
Life Domain: Labour Market and Working Conditions  
Indicator: Ratio of Unemployment Rates of Women and Men



Dimension: Demographic and Socio-economic Structures  
Life Domain: Labour Market and Working Conditions  
Indicator: Employment in the Service Sector (in %)

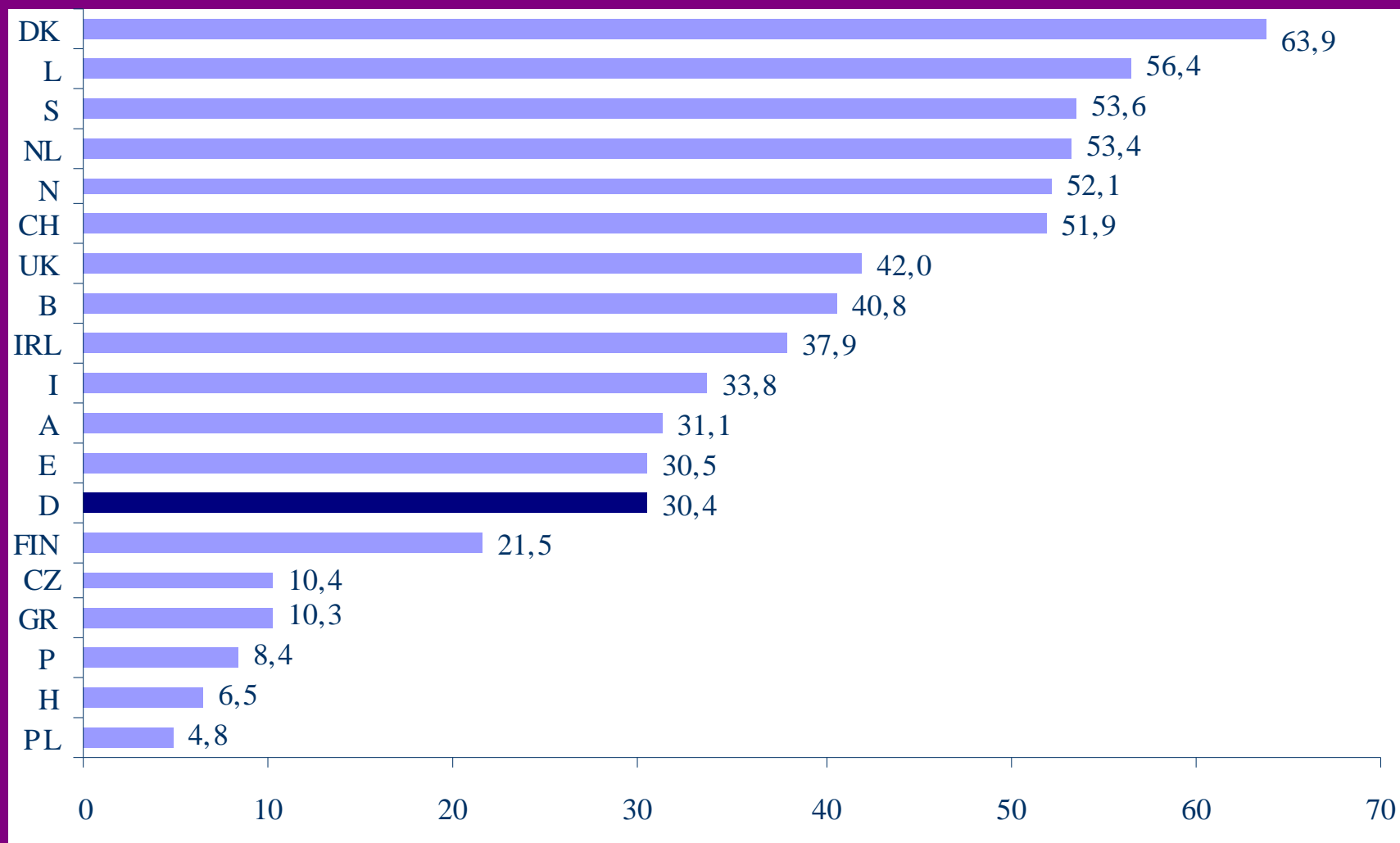




Dimension: Subjective Well-being

Life Domain: Income, Standard of Living and Consumption Patterns

Indicator: Possibility to live comfortable on present income (in %)

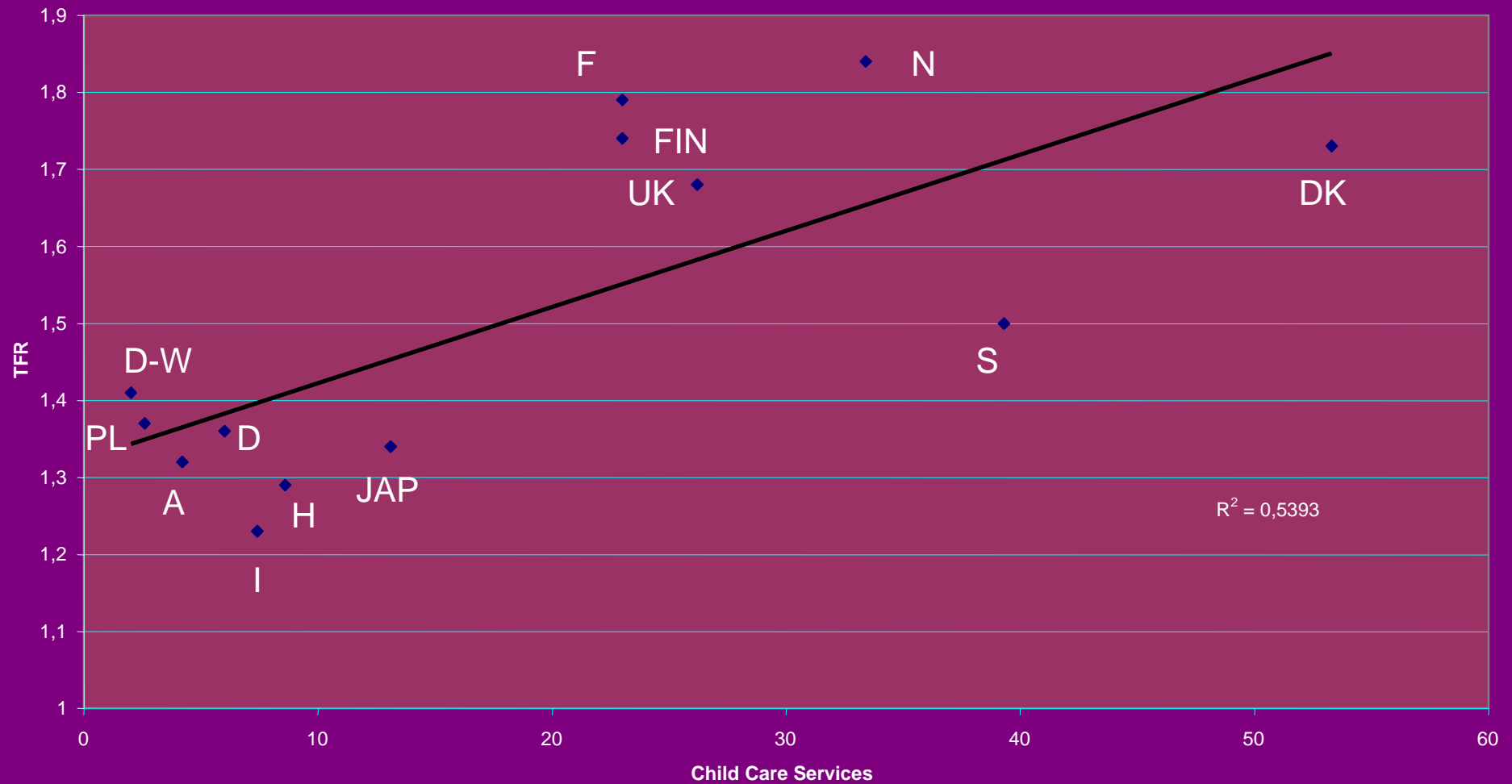


Database: European Social Survey 2002 / 2003

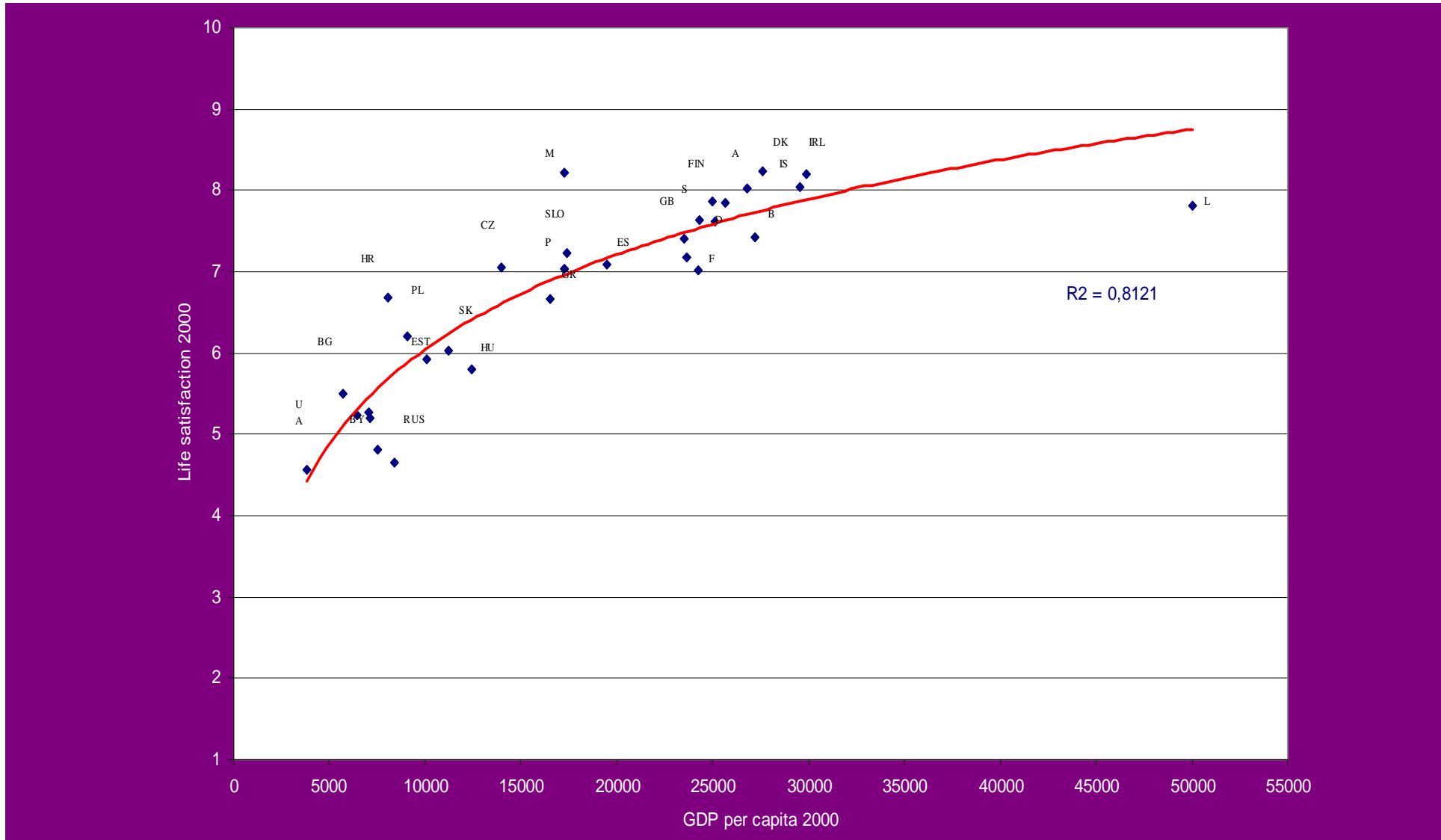
## Potential Uses and Applications:

- Tool for Comparative Research
  - descriptive background information for various kinds of analysis
  - database for the comparative charting and analysis of social change
  - database to be used to test macro-sociological hypotheses
  
- Tool for General Social Monitoring and Reporting
  - comparative information on current state and changes of individual living conditions, wellbeing and societal quality
  
- Tool for Policy Making
  - information on goal achievement
  - information on convergence and divergence
  - information on best practice: benchmarking
  - identification of deficiencies and need for action

### Total Fertility Rate by Supply of Child Care Services

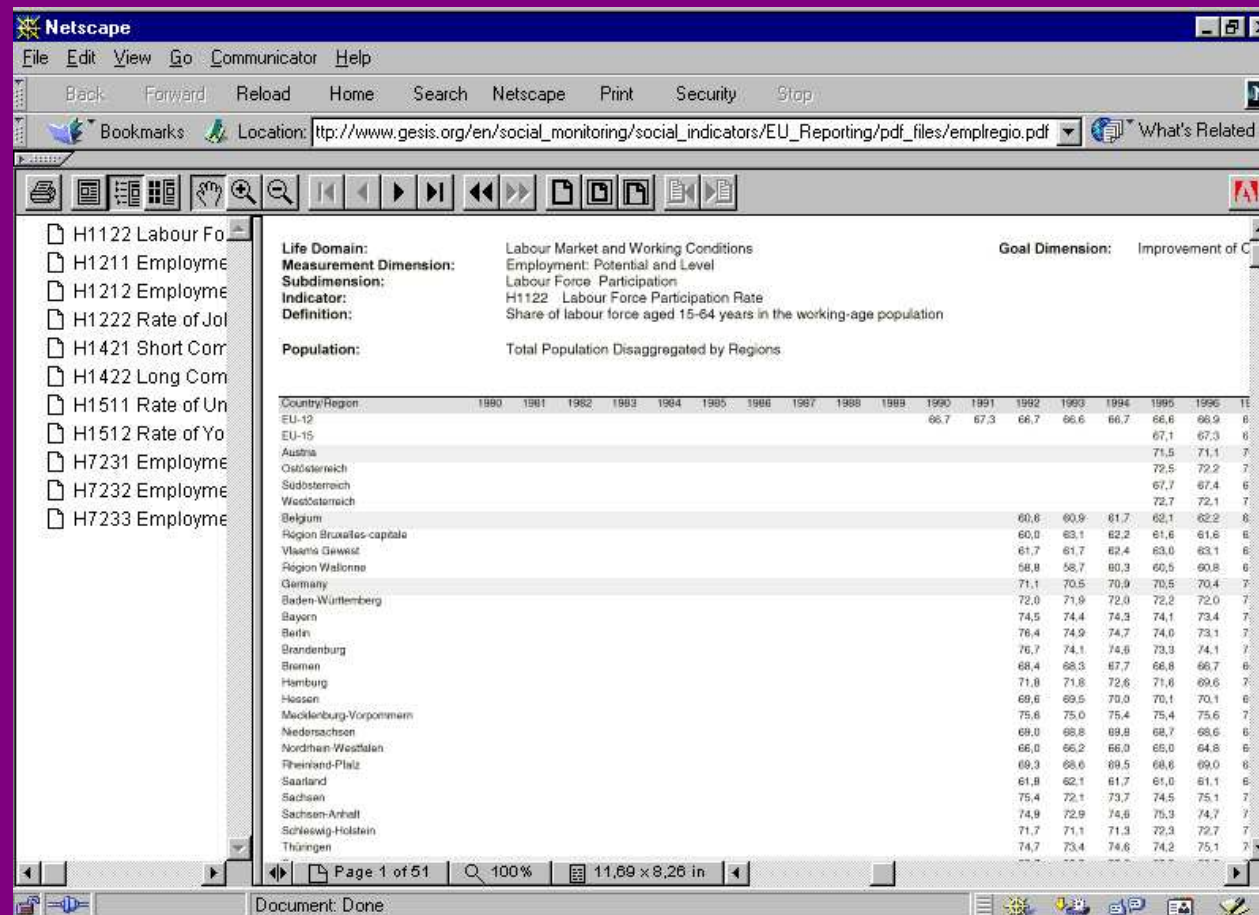


# Life Satisfaction by GDP per Capita (PPP)



## Two Major Forms of Giving Access to the Data:

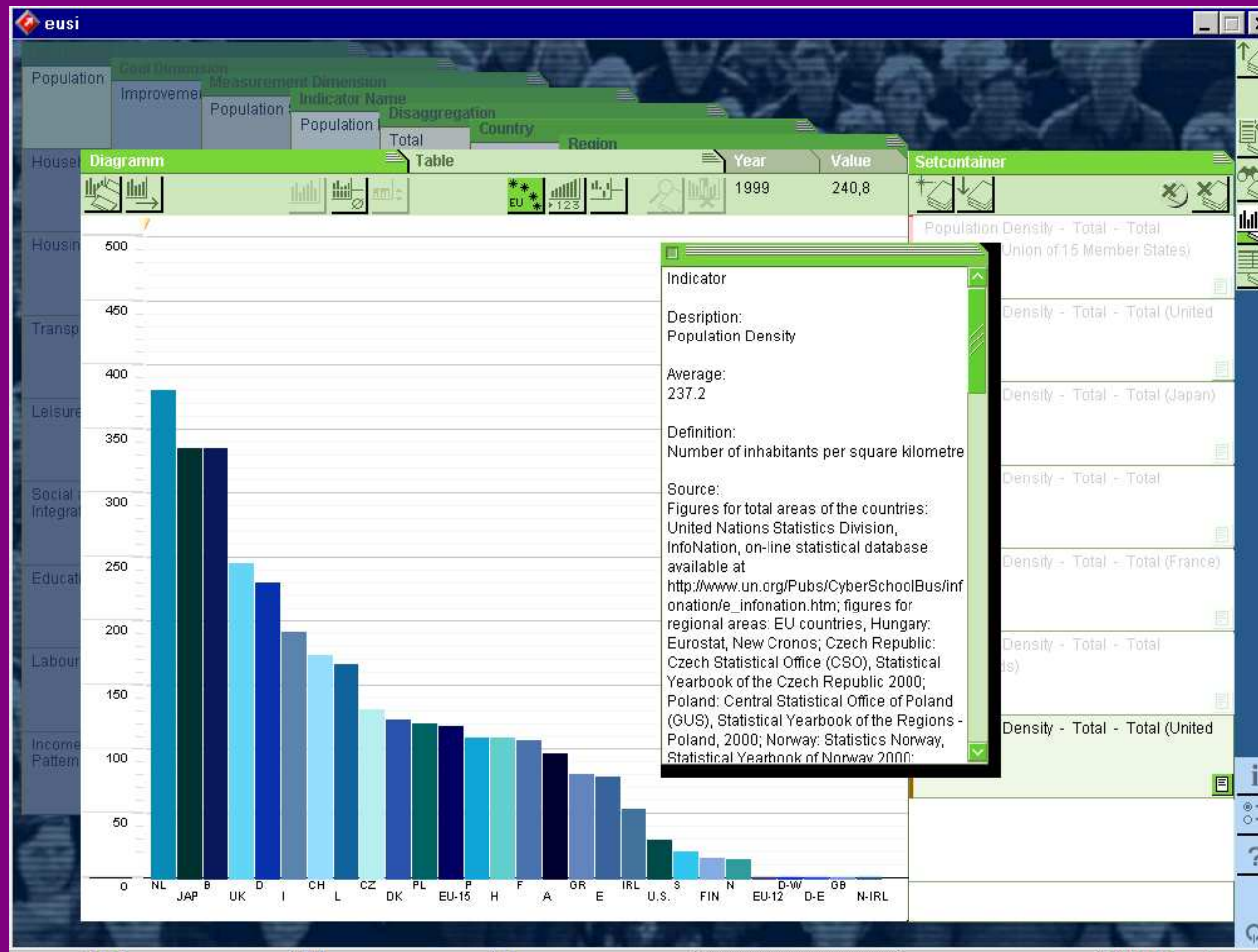
- Website: [www.gesis.org/en/social\\_monitoring/social\\_indicators/EU\\_Reporting/eusi.htm](http://www.gesis.org/en/social_monitoring/social_indicators/EU_Reporting/eusi.htm)



**Life Domain:** Labour Market and Working Conditions  
**Measurement Dimension:** Employment: Potential and Level  
**Subdimension:** Labour Force: Participation  
**Indicator:** H1122 Labour Force Participation Rate  
**Definition:** Share of labour force aged 15-64 years in the working-age population  
**Population:** Total Population Disaggregated by Regions

Country/Region	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	TE
EU-12	66.7	67.3	66.7	66.6	66.7	66.6	66.9	6
EU-15							67.1	6
Austria							71.5	7
Österreich							72.5	7
Südtirol							67.7	6
Westtirol							72.7	7
Belgium				60.6	60.9	61.7	62.1	6
Région Bruxelles-capitale				60.0	63.1	62.2	61.6	6
Vlaams Gewest				61.7	61.7	62.4	63.0	6
Région Wallonne				58.9	58.7	60.3	60.5	6
Germany				71.1	70.5	70.9	70.5	7
Baden-Württemberg				72.0	71.9	72.0	72.2	7
Bayern				74.5	74.4	74.3	74.1	7
Berlin				76.4	74.9	74.7	74.0	7
Brandenburg				76.7	74.1	74.6	73.3	7
Bremen				68.4	68.3	67.7	66.8	6
Hamburg				71.8	71.8	72.6	71.6	7
Hessen				69.6	69.5	70.0	70.1	6
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern				75.6	75.0	75.4	75.4	7
Niedersachsen				69.0	68.8	69.8	68.7	6
Nordrhein-Westfalen				66.0	66.2	66.0	65.0	6
Rheinland-Platz				69.3	68.6	69.5	68.6	6
Saarland				61.8	62.1	61.7	61.0	6
Sachsen				75.4	72.1	73.7	74.5	7
Sachsen-Anhalt				74.9	72.9	74.6	75.3	7
Schleswig-Holstein				71.7	71.1	71.3	72.3	7
Thüringen				74.7	73.4	74.6	74.2	7

- Electronic European Information System Social Indicators (Prototype)
  - ⇒ Planned: Web-based Electronic Information System



EUSI Domains **totally** or in part completed (by end of 2004):

- **Population, Household and Family**  
ca. 140 Indicators
- **Housing**  
ca. 50 Indicators
- Education and Vocational Training
- **Labour Market and Working Conditions**  
ca. 160 Indicators
- Income, Standard of Living, and Consumption Patterns
- Health
- Total Life Situation