

16th Conference „Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe“

Quality of Life in Europe at Risk?

Effects of the pandemic, climate change and green transition

Villa Vigoni, Lovenno di Menaggio, October 10-12, 2022

Call for Papers

Life and public debates in European and other societies around the globe are currently dominated by two different occurrences, which are challenging ordinary people, economies, institutions and governments alike: the Covid19-pandemic and the long-term climate change. Both events as well as related policy measures will entail diverse impacts of different sorts: known and unknown, obvious and hidden, short-term and long-term, and hopefully not only negative, but also positive impacts to some extent at least.

The 16th conference „Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe“ addresses current and potential future effects of the pandemic and climate change – inclusive effects of related policy measures – on citizens’ quality of life in European societies. Suspecting that the high level of quality of life in Europe may be at risk and under pressure, the conference aims to review empirical evidence on recent changes in life quality in its various dimensions in Europe as well as to gain insights of how respective changes are associated with the pandemic and related regulations, climate change and the so-called green transition policies, which are underway in various European countries and the EU as a whole.

Negative direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic on quality of life are rather obvious. Direct impacts concern first of all threats to and risks for individual health and life. Indirect impacts usually include intended or unintended consequences of policies and regulations, such as measures of social distancing, economic lockdowns, the temporary closing of schools or restricted access to public spaces, to name just a few. Available results of pertinent social monitoring activities indicate declines in quality of life and well-being in its various dimensions due to the pandemic at least in the short term, while the study of longer-term effects is still outstanding.

The ways in which climate change as well as anti-climate-change policies may affect people’s quality of life seem to be less obvious and more difficult to grasp. This is to some extent because climate change will most likely unfold its full effect only in the future and is not yet really noticeable in everyday life of Europeans, although e.g. heat-waves and flooding are frequently interpreted as outcomes or indications of an ongoing climate change. Currently, anticipations of future impairments of life quality may thus be more prevalent than direct negative impact of climate change itself.

More obvious and directly perceptible are eventual quality of life impacts – negative and positive – resulting from climate-change mitigation policies, which have already been implemented or are currently being set up in many European countries or by the European Union in terms of a so-called „green transition“. These policies cover a whole range of measures such as the pricing of CO2 emissions, building regulations, regulations in farming and agriculture, the shutdown of coal-fired power stations etc., but also measures addressing people in their roles of citizens and consumers directly. The latter include first of all requests as well as „nudges“ concerning attitudinal and

behavioral changes towards life styles, which are supposed to be less materialistic, less consumption driven, more sustainable and less harmful for the global climate. Examples include the expectation to reduce short- and long-distance mobility, particularly by air and car, or the consumption of meat. Thus, in the recent past, the former emphasis on quality of life and individual well-being seems to have increasingly been replaced by calls for a more sustainable living in terms of „sufficiency“. On the other hand, evidence shows, that the quality of life of Europeans is currently still strongly associated with material well-being in multiple terms, and income and consumption continue to be strong drivers of subjective well-being as numerous studies have shown.

The observation of a potential conflict between traditional understandings of quality of life and climate change or anti-climate-change policies raises the question if and in which ways high levels of well-being can be sustained without „costing the earth“.

We invite contributions, which – among others – address one or more of the following issues:

- empirical evidence on recent changes in life quality in its various dimensions – objective and subjective – and across population groups in Europe;
- short- and longer-term impacts of the pandemic, climate change and the so-called green transition on quality of life and well-being in European societies; contributions analyzing the impacts of the mega drivers of recent changes separately or in combination are equally welcome!
- behavioral impacts of the pandemic relevant for people’s well-being, like e.g. socializing;
- changes in attitudes or value orientations, e.g. in terms of importance ratings of various – more or less material – life domains and respective differences across population groups and generations;
- recent shifts in the importance of material well-being (in terms of income, consumption, wealth etc.) in determining subjective well-being;
- evidence concerning indications that consumption-based life styles tend to be replaced by less materialistic life styles and/or willingness of citizens to change consumption patterns of various goods and amenities (e.g. cars, meat, air travel, long-distance travel, leisure activities);
- attitudes towards climate change and different sorts of anti-climate-change policies;
- anticipations of future impairments (or improvements) of life quality due to climate change and/or climate-change mitigation policies.

We invite papers using national as well as cross-national perspectives, whilst comparative approaches are particularly welcomed.

As always, we are also inviting contributions presenting new initiatives, projects and releases for a session on „recent developments in European social monitoring and reporting“.

The **deadline for submissions is May 15, 2022**. Please submit your abstract (no more than 300 words) to Dr. Heinz-Herbert Noll (hh.noll@t-online.de).

Decisions about the acceptance of submissions will be made by the conference committee: Jeroen Boelhouwer (SCP, The Hague), Carla Collicelli (CNR, Rome), Peter Farago (formerly FORS, Lausanne), Tadas Leončikas (Eurofound, Dublin), Heinz-Herbert Noll (formerly GESIS, Mannheim), Christian Suter (University Neuchatel), István György Tóth (TARKI, Budapest)

For information on previous conferences see: <http://www.tarki.hu/villa-vigoni-conferences>

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