ORIGINAL ARTICLE

EUROPEANS DEVELOPMENT TO WELFARE AND WELL-BEING: AN OVERVIEW OF 3000 YEARS OF PROGRESS AND REGRESSION

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Abstract

According to the recommendation of famous literates to regard the own history in a time span of 3000 years these articles give a compact overview of Europeans development of welfare and well-being. When the name of Europe was introduced in Greek history it was an unknown area in the northern hemisphere that was developing to a European state ensemble when the European Union was founded after the Second World War. This process is analysed systematically in the chapters of the article. They are related to the ancient peoples of the Greeks, Romans Celts and Germanics, who left their heritage for the following generations up to day. Of tragic impact were the enemial relations between European peoples which caused millions of fatalities in wars and conflicts. But in a long process of state- and nation-building emerged a supranational unified Europe which was prepared from great Charlemagne often called the "Father of Europe". The rise of modern Europe began with economic growth in the later 18th century. The implementation of democracy was a historical step mainly in the 19th century. The emergence and differentiation of welfare states was a following step beginning in the western areas of Europe. Europeans perception of life is despite severe potentials of dissatisfaction at the top of the world. But an era-turn in the second decade of the 21th century leads into a new societal scenario with global wars and terrorism. Climate threats and societal problems, Wellbeing for all remained a severe future task for Europeans and above.

Keywords: European, Wellbeing, Progress and Regression, Development.

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this study about the history of European peoples was stimulated by the statements of two world famous literates. The German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832) proclaimed in the 17th century "Who is not taking into account the past three thousand years remains in his thinking in the dark and lives from the hand into the mouth" This thought is ancient and was already presented by the greatest Roman orator Cicero (106 BCE- 43 BCE) in the first century BCE . "Not to know what happened before the own birth means always to remain a child; what is the life of a human being, if it is not interwoven through history with ancient times". Both citations can be regarded as warnings of "historical unconsiousness".The task of the article here is to give a compact overview of the long-term history of Europeans for the last 3000 years. This implies that the article cannot go deeply into historical details but will concentrate on the significant features of the ongoing

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historical process. The reference list gives a reasonable selection of publications which contain deeper insights into the historic materials. The guiding concepts are level of living, living conditions, wealth and welfare, quality of life and well-being; they are often similar and overlapping.

From Ancient Europe to Contemporary Europe

This article looks at one thousand years BCE and two thousand years CE.2 The structure of Europe`s territories developed within the past two thousand years from the large Roman Empire to a medium number of European national states which are member of the European Union respectively belonging to the European Council. In between there was an ongoing rise and fall of empires, kingdoms and states in the history of Europe (DK 2005).

In the 1000 years BCE socio-cultural and socio-political foundations were laid for Europe. An important early influence came from the Archaic and Classical Greeks (800 BCE – 480 BCE) who created great cultural and political innovations (Lovano, 2019). In the historical literature Greece is sometimes regarded as the "Birthplace of European and Western Civilization".3 The name "Europe" is early present on the first world map of Anaximander of Miletus (610 - 546 BCE)4 where, according to the knowledge of the time, Europe, Libya (Africa) and Asia constituted the worlds continents (Scott 2021). The name "Europe" for the area in the North of the Mediterranen Sea is confirmed in the map of the famous Greek historian Herodot (484-442), where it was situated in the wide North of the Greek civilisation.

The naming of Europe goes back to antique Greek mythology. Europe was the name of the mistress of the mighty god Zeus and it is told, that her name was lent to the European territory, but this is mythology. Early Document I: Greek Civilization in the South of Europe and at the   knowledge came from the Greek early Mediterranean Sea explorer Pytheas of Massilias (380 – Source: http.//www.meer.org{ebook/herodotud-world-map-1a.jpg   310   BC) who was shipping around 330 BC to Northern areas of Europe and gave short reports about the previously unknown area (Scott 2021). From this time onward people received an imagination what the European continent looked like.

In the early awareness the area of Europe was a hidden and unexplored territory north of the Mediterranean Sea whose people were defined as "Barbarians". Barbarism is an ancient term - used up today – which was adapted from the high civilized Greeks to characterize inferior and also hostile people(s). The foreigners were preferably described as uncivilized, cruel and violent.

The unification of the whole European territorium was with the exception of the 20th century never seriously cosideredule and a cooperation of all the significant European powers did not happen. The European continent existed all the time as a multi-variety of empires, kingdoms, states and nations (Wawro 2009) which were following their national interests. A new impetus came in the middle of the twentieth century when the first supranational endeavours for European unifications happened. The creation of the European Union was officially postulated as "united in diversity" (European Union 2024), which was a suitable characterization of the European constellation at the time.

Each period of Europe developed an own historical character often in relationshiped with each other. The so-called "Birthplace" of Europe is recognized in the Archaic and Classical Period of Greece (800 BCE–323 BCE), followed by the

Roman Emire who gained dominance over some European territories and around the Mediterranean Sea. The Roman Empire went through different phases from the beginning in the Republican Rome (510 BCE-31 BCE) which developed than to the Imperial Rome (31 BCE– 476 CE). The end of the Roman Empire is perceived in the fall of West-Rome (476 CE) which was conquered at the beginning of the Germanic migration period. Germanic tribes were migrating over long distances on the European continent and thus a new pattern of peoples on European territory emerged. After these developments the Frankonian Empire of Charlemagne (768 - grew to a main power in Europe and attained at the largest size ever realized by an empire on the European continent. Charlemagne received from his admirers the name "Father of Europe5" but after his death his empire was split into three kingdoms. Another broad designed approach for a European unification was oriented towards the idea of a french-dominated Europe. Napoleon Bonapart invaded sigificant parts of the West-European territorium (1799-1804) and intended to build a "Commonwealth of European Nations" (Yepreyan 2021) under French coordinaton. The French Revolution destroyed the "old order" in France and Europe but after its downfall remained serious conflicts between European states.

It was only after the two World Wars that the negative consequences of wars were increasingly perceived as non-tolerable. Plans for more cooperation of European states became intensified. 46 European states are now included in the Council of Europe (2008), founded in 1949 to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. An international organisation has developed which includes 675 million people. More significant in respect to the unification was the European Union (EU), founded in 1957, which consists of 27 states and 448 million people (European Union 2024). The status of integration and cooperation was planned on a significant higher level than before. There are common institutions like the European parliament, the Schengen area, reducing state borders, and the Euro, which is the currency in most of the EU-member states.

States on the European continent according to EU-membership, geographic position and population size (in brackets):

Northern Europe: Sweden (10,5), Denmark (5,9), Finland (5,5);
Baltic States in the North East: Lithuania (2,7), Latvia (1,8), Estonia (1.3);
Central Europe: Germany (83,3), Poland (41,0), Czechia (10,5),
Hungary (10,2), Austria (9,0), Slovakia (5,8), Slovenia (2,1);
Western Europe: France (64,8), The Netherlands (17,6), Belgium (11,4), Ireland (5,1), Luxembourg (0,7);
South-West Europe: Italy (58,9), Spain (47,5), Greece (10,3), Portugal (10,3), Cyprus (1,2), Malta (0,5);
South East: Romania (19,8), Bulgaria 6,7), Croatia (4,0); Great Britain was founding member and left the EU in 2016;
Non-EU-members are in the West: Norway (5,4), Switzerland (8,8) and Iceland (0,36)
EU-Aspirants on the Balcan Serbia (7,1), Kosovo (3,8), Bosnia & Herze-gowina (3,2), Albania(2,8), North-Mazedonia (2,1), Montenegro (0,6);
EU-Attendants in the East are Ukraine (36,7), Moldowa (4,9)
Caucasian Region: Asserbaidschan (10,0), Georgien (3,7), Armenia (3,0)
The East-bloc are Russia (144,4), Belarus (9,5);

Among the European states some were rather stable but shrinking and growing states were usual (Olson 1982). Today the country-constellation of Europe is most often fix with the big exception of the Russian attacks on its neighbours. The development of the modern world is preferably described as globalization. In the course of globalization emerged growing interconnections and interrelationships between peoples in and around Europe. In this process Europe has become a rather active part of the world community. But the intra-european wars and conflicts abroad of Europe are disturbing a peaceful ongoing of globalization.

Geographival Benefits and Threats for the European Continent

From geological and geographic points of view Europe is the half-continent of Eurasia (Europe and Asia) but since a long time it has been recognized as a continent of its own. Its geographic position is accompanied by the climatic influence of the "Gulf Stream", which comes from the Middle American Atlantic coast and goes far into the Northern Atlantic. The Gulf Stream creates on its way a decent climate for large areas in the West of Europe. Altogether it is called a "natural heating system", which brings substantial advantages for the well-being of the European population. In the eyes of the geographic experts the geographic situation of Europe is regarded in terms of well-being as a "privileged European climate" and a "favourable environment" (Landes 1999, p. 18, 20).

In contemporary times the positive influence of the Atlantic Ocean on the European continent is threatened by the ongoing climate change (European Environment Agency 2012). The global warming process exposes Europe more than before with dangerous high temperatures which are accompanied by continually glaciers melting, landslides, flooding, forest dieback, surprising turbulent weather extremes. Together they present new threats for human beings, animals, plants and landscapes in Europe.

The Heritage of Ancient People for the European Continent

Europe is a continent, where various large populations have settled during the past three millenniums.6 The peoples at the beginning of this time have created a heritage for our modern level of living which is virulent up today. There were five big populations on European territories.7 The heritage of ancient European peoples is multifold and very different in character. To European heritages belong relicts in the infrastructure (e.g. Celtic Roads), traditiones from writing culture (e.g. Greek arts), buildings (e.g. Roman viaducts), socio-political performances (e.g. Roman Peace), and nature-people relationships (e.g. Germanic wood-management).

Celts: The Celts had created great road networks in Europe for trade and expansion, long before the Romans. … The Celts expanded their trading network throughout Europe and traded in luxury goods. During this time the Celts created the famous "Tin Road" which began in Massalia and spread to Britain and the "Amber Road" though the Moravian Gate into modern day Danzig...this roadbuilding skill was not only used for long distance trade" (Robb 2014).

Greeks: "About 2500 years ago, the Greeks created a way of life that other people admired and copied….The Ancient Greeks tried out democracy, started the Olympic Games and left new ideas in science, art and philosophy (thinking about life)." Especially Greek theatre received high recognition. "Thus the work of such

great playwrights as Sophokles and Aristophanes formed the foundation upon which all modern theatre is based". "Greeks transfered their way of life too many places."9

Romans: "The Pax Romana (Roman Peace) was a period of relative peace and stability across the Roman Empire which lasted for over 200 years." It is emphasized "This was a time of peace and prosperity in the Roman Empire". Additional is explained "The stability generated under Augustus brought a sense of satisfaction." "Rome`s citizen were relative secure and the government maintained law, order, and stability" (Goldsworthy 2014).

Germanics: "A land whose surface was probably covered by forest impressed Roman observers … Permanent towns and villages were a rarity in Free Germania. Settlements would be abandoned after a period of time and biological succession set in. This enabled a return of vegetation to something resembling its natural state. "The situation before: "Roman colonization saw the first drastic impact on the forest communities of Central Europe. It left forest free areas that did not recover from grazing".   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_forest_in_Central_Europe). The heritage in the case of the slaves, who were the biggest population in Europe, is focused on everyday life in Eastern Europe.

Above the positive heritages the negative heritages should not be overseen, e.g. the exclusion of women from politics which has its consequences from ancient world up today. However European people would be in general much poorer without the heritages which were created in ancient times, modified through the centuries and often adapted to modern societies in recent times.

Destruction of Well-Being through Wars and Pandemies

The unavoidability of death is a natural law which sets principal limits for human beings and disturbs all the the well-being of individuals. Some people are always passing away and this is usually accompanied by grief and sorrow.

In the face of death all human beings are equal, yet it makes a significant difference how people come to death (Boes M./Rosenbrock H. 2015). Sometimes people accept death as a natural event but often deth occurs by man-made fatalities e.g. war, conflict, terror, aggression and accident. Usually the figures for deaths in wars include military personell and war-time related civilians.

In the thousand years BCE many battles happened between Greeks, Romans and surrounding countries. Big battles on European territory were fought from Romans and Celts culminating in the battle of Alesia with the defeat of the Celtic leader Vircengetorix by the Roman emperor Caesar (52 BCE). Famous fights between Roman legions and Germanic tribes occured in the Teutoburger Wald ending with the victory of Arminius the Cherusker over the legions of Varus (9 CE). The loss of soldiers from these battles is estimated to more than ten thousand soldiers and also civil people lost their lives. When later the Crusades were organized (300 CE – 600 CE) there were hundreds of battles and masses of fatalities. More than 800 conflicts were listed for the time from the 1st to the 21st century,10 The number of fatalities increased obviously in the course of the centuries which was often due to the growing technical efficiency of weapons. The wars were extremely different in respect to their duration and the number of fatalities. "Wars" in Europe include wars between European states, civil wars within European states and wars between a European state and a   non-European state that took place within Europe.

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As far as we can see more fatalities are caused due to plagues and famines than wars and conflicts in Europe. Thirty million fatalities, half of the European population were victims during the Middle Ages. Famines destroyed many lives due to the widespread scarcity of food; there were many barbaric motives for killing people in Europe's history. Witch hunt occurred during long times of the Middle Age from 450 to 1750 CE threatening mostly women. Estimations are speaking of 40000 victims. These death bringing procedures seem to have ended today but also in modern times death tolls are present. As conventional statistics show traffic fatalities add up to 20600 road fatalities in Europe in the year 2022. The number of suicides is still higher with a number of 47252 intentional self-harmed deaths in the same year in Europe. According to the WHO is Europe the most suicidal continent of the world. A number of 22009 victims from murder were counted in 2017. Altogether death is a structural phenomenon of everyday life in contemporary societies and it is a continual source of reduced well-being.

The societies in Europe of the past millenniums were for a long time unable to cope with wars and plagues but in the long run they experienced some success. Nevertheless unexpected pandemics can be sometimes virulent. In addition the benefits of the "cold war", which existed from 1946 until 2022, are lost in the recent past. The avoidance of wars was no longer successful after Russia attacked the Ukraine and caused some ten thousands fatalities, In consequence people of today are exposed to these war fights and the fear of war has grown in European populations in the third decade of the new century.

Nation-Building and Supranational Unification

Europe is composed of states and nations, which have developed more or less in the past millenium (Flora 1987). State formation was a historical process which ended up with the establishment of a central authority (government) and an administrative infrastructure (state bureaucracy) that had control over a territory and was able to defend its borders. Nation-building was above focused on the socio-political integration of the people on the foundation of a common history, common language and common values. Citizenship played a major role for defining the affiliation of people (Heather 2004). On the continent of Europe existed some dozen states and there was never a unification of the whole European territory. In the beginning the Roman Empire attained a rather large size in and out of European territories but after its fall in 476 CE it was dissolved. When the German migration period followed it was accompanied by successive reorganization of the territories in Europe.11 Where each population is situated today in Europe was to some degree decided during the migration period.

The European map from 1000 CE shows in the Middle of Europe the stabilized kingdoms of France and England and in the North the kingdoms of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. In contrast the kingdoms in the East of Europe namely Poland and Hungary were more often growing and shrinking. A few hundred years behind came the kingdom of Spain who succeeded the kingdom of Castillia and also the Tsarist Empire of Russia following the empire of Kiev. There was recent state and nation-building in Italy and especially in Germany. Both were clearly known for their territorial augmentation. Germany which is now the largest state of the European Union was unified by Prussia, in 1871. Some smaller kingdoms followed the bigger ones for example the kingdoms of Portugal, Irland, Austria (Held 1997).

Six nations were the basis for the building of the supranational organization of the European Union after World War II.

In Europe the European Union was already prepared from predecessors. The European Coal and Steel organization was a first step which was followed by several European treatises. The European Union was founded in 1957 from 6 founding members and enlarged than step by step to the current number of 27 member states. There are applicants to join the European Union on the Balcan, the Caucasus and in the Ukraine. Great Britain withdraws from the EU in 2020 but in total the European Union seems on a growing course.

Economic Growth and Levels of Living

Economic growth is the foundation of increasing levels of living. It was unique in history how the European countries developed sustainable economic growth paths after about two millenniums of stagnation. After some hundred years of preparation the phase of industrialization began with increasing productivity in the nineteenth century (Document VII).
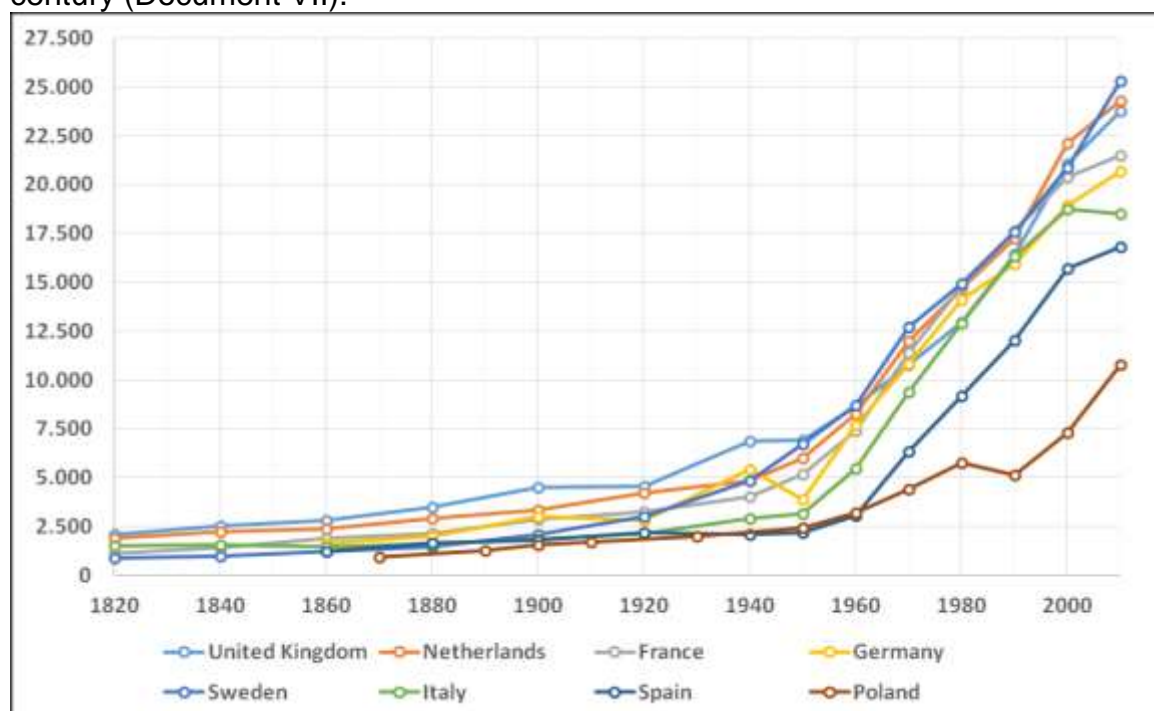
Document VII: Gross Domestic Product per Capita in Selected Countries of Europe from 1820 to 2010
Source: Van Zanden et al., 2014, p. 67

Many European countries attained a growth path and the illusion about the end of the scarcity of goods came up. Economic experts pointed into a new era of affluence: "The authors of the 19.century had promised to he people the end of scarcity with such a supply of goods, that they were able without counting that they could live according to fun and joy to afford everything to live joyful with another" (Bell, 1976 p. 360). After two hundred years of industrialization and economic growth there remained an unexpected high poverty-rate and a lot of people shared great difficulties to make ends meet in their households. The unfulfilled high expectations caused massive disappointment. Although though the goal of general affluence was

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missed significant progresses away from pre-industrial poverty were made, which improved the life of many people in Europe.

The GDP, which was used to document the growth in the past,, was exposed to serious doubts about its meaning. Instead many alternative concepts and indicators are used in the international working field of quality of life and well-being. An interesting research perspective is the comparison of indicators resulting from different well-being concepts like the Human Development Index, the Better Life Index, the Social Progress Indicators and the subjectively perceived Happiness Indicators. They seem innovative measures for the success of European countries.

Development Index (UN-ranking)	Better Life Index (OECD-ranking)	Social Progress Index (US-ranking)	Happiness Value (World -ranking)
Norway (0,957)	Norway (1)	Denmark (99)	Finland (7,8)
Ireland (0,955	Australia (2)	Germany (98)	Denmark (7,6)
Switzerland (0,955)	Iceland (3)	Austria (97)	Switzerland (7,6)
Hongkong (0,949)	Canada (4)	Japan (97)	Iceland (7,5)
Iceland (0,949)	Denmark (5)	Sweden (95)	Netherlands (7,5)
Germany (0,947)	Switzerland (6)	Italy (95)	Norway (7,5)
Sweden (0,945)	Finland (7)	Finland (95)	Sweden (7,4)
Australia (0,945)	Netherlands (8)	Iceland (95)	Austria (7,3)
Netherlands (0,944)	Sweden (9)	Belgium (94)	New Zealand (7,3)
Denmark (0,94)	United States (10)	Norway (94)	Luxembourg (7,2)

Document VIII: The Top Ten of the World Countries: Measured by four Concepts, the Human Development Index (UN), the Better Life Index (OECD), the Weighted Index for Social Progress (US-scientists), the Happiness Index (World Inventory.)
Sources: Human Development Index at United Nations (2020) (N=189); Index of Better Life at (OECD) (N=40), Weighted Index of Social Progress at Estes (2019) (N=189) p.91; World Happiness Index at Helliwell et al (2021) (N= 146) In brackets is told the number of countries included in each study.

The most successful countries measured by different social indicators in worldwide comparison are the European states. They are on the first three positions of each scale in the world context with one exception which is Australia at the Better Life Index. The Non- EU- member country Norway fulfills highest standards for their people insofar it is the top on the Human Development Index and the Human Betterment Index. It is Finland whose population is leading in respect to the subjectively reported satisfaction with life and this result is replicated in various

suveys. From 40 top positions in the indicator tabler three are 35 hold from European countries especially from North and Middle Europe. In scientific indicator approaches as in the self-reported satisfaction surveys Europe comes out as a top area of the world. Presumably it is one of the reasons for the high attraction of Europe by migrants worldwide. No country from Africa and South America is among the top ten countries for well-being indicators which is a signal for tensions from inequality in our world.

For a very long time people in Europe were living in an economically stagnating society which developed in the past centuries from the traits of a rural-feudal society through the traits of an industrial growing society to the characteristics of a post-industrial society. The rise of productivity in the course of industrialization was a main factor for economic growth and rising living standards for masses of people on Europe`s territory attained highest levels in respect to recognized well-being measures of the world. But inequality and poverty remained nevertheless structural traits of European societies and are regarded by societal experts and in the eyes of the peoples as a significant challenge for the future.

The Spread of Democracy and its Challenges

After the French Revolution in 1789 came the push to introduce democratic institutions in European nations (Schaeffer 2015). There were high expectations to attain by democratic constitutions better and more satisfying lives for all the people. The rise of democracy supported the hope for an increase of peoples influence on their well-being. Only men`s suffrage was primarily institutionalized and it took a historical fight to introduce women suffrage (Flora 1983).

The state who went ahead with women suffrage in 1906 was Finland hich indicates the progress of this nation. After the 1. World War the climate offered better possibilities for introducing women suffrage in a number of European states. Then it took until the end of the 2. World War untill another group of states followed. In 1960 the fight of women for equal electoral participation ended with the victory of women for equal voting rights "Overall satisfaction with democracy in Europe has fluctuated in cycles over the past half century. We are now at a third peak in relative dissatisfaction, with the first during the "governability crisis" of the 1970s, the second following the 1990s recession and the final phase beginning in 2009 with the "eurozone crisis" (Centre for the Future of Democracy 2020).12 The population shares in the EU who are "very satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied" with the way democracy works in their country are 47% compared with 51% for the share of people who are "not very satisfied" or "not at all satisfied" (European Union 2023). The main problem is recognized in "false and/or misleading information". A basic problem is to keep an adequate acceptance for the democratic institutions and the participation at the elections. It was in 1979 the first time and in 2024 the second time that elections for the European parliament were carried through in order to establish the main legislative body of the European Union.

But European institutions are often critizised not to take enough care for the European people. The problem of democracy in Europe is nowadays the establishment of a transnational democracy (Habermas 2004).

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The Emergence and Differentiation of European Welfare States

The concept of the welfare state was implemented in Europe in the late 18th century but social assistance was already a public concern in medieval times (Briggs 2002). An increasing number of European states adapted various welfare programs and welfare states were developed along different lines (Flora 1994). They included compulsory insurance for sickness, accidents, invalidity and old age. Germany was leading under its chancelor Bismarck (1882), followed by Denmark (1891), Belgium (1894), Switzerland and Sweden. Great Britain followed with delay and developed their own Beveridge welfare state reforms. Essentially five types of welfare-states are distinguished13: "social democratic", "conservative-corporate", "liberal, than "rudimentary" and finally the "post-socialist" countries which came after the 1990 turn with the dissolution of the Sovjet Union. The goals of the established welfare states find its expression mainly in three tasks, which are all related to the well-fare of peoples: sustaining self-sufficiency for the people, reducing poverty and modifying inequality.

Category of Welfare states	Satisfaction Level 2013	Satisfaction Level 2023
(1) Social democratic Welfare States	8,0 - 7,8	7,8 - 7,5
(2) Conservative Welfare States	7,8 - 7,0	7,6 - 7,0
(3) Liberal Welfare States	7,4 - 7.3	7,6 - 6,1
(4) Rudimentary Welfare States	7,1 - 6,2	7,4 - 6,5
(5) Post-socialist Welfare States	7,3 - 4,8	7,7 - 6,1

Document X: Peoples average Satisfaction with Life (Eleven Point Scale) in EU-member States for different Categories of European Welfare States

Sources: Eurostat Archive (2015) : Quality of Life in Europe-facts and view- overall life satisfaction. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?oldid" p.2 and Life Satisfaction in European Countries (2024): https://query.no/life-satisfaction-in european-countries/p.

The countries are attributed to the following welfare state categories according to their welfare state organization:

Social democratic are Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden.
Conservative-corporativist are Austria, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, France
Liberal are Ireland and the United Kingdom.
Rudimentary are Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Malta, Cyprus
Post-socialist is Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Bulgaria
The non-EU-members Switzerland, Norway are and Iceland not included into this comparison. All three are situated in the top area of life satisfaction.
The data in table X support the following statements:
Life satisfaction of the people in the EU-member countries were in 2013 (8,0 - 4,8) more unequal distributed than in the year 2022 (7,9 – 5,6), having the same countries at the top (Finland) and at the end (Bulgaria) of the life satisfaction scale. Inequality of life satisfaction between the countries was reduced in this time.

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In both years 2013 and 2022 the people in the four social democratic welfare states in Europe attained the top values on the life satisfaction scale. It can be said that these welfare states did not only promise to support the well-being of their people but they realized this goal in the eyes of their peoples.

The five types of welfare states constitute a hierarchy of five levels of life satisfaction .The ranges of life satisfaction were in the year 2022 for the social democratic types (7,9 to 7,5), the conservative types (7,9 to 6.5), the liberal types (7,4 to 6,7), the rudimentary types (7,7 to 6,5) and the post-socialist types (7,7 to 5,6). The satisfaction levels of the five types of welfare states were in 2013 clearly seperated but in 2022 the welfare state types were in some cases overlapping with their life satisfaction.

In the first decades of the new century the year 2013 represents a pre-crisis year and the year 2022 stands for a top crisis year. The interesting question is here how the life satisfaction of the five types of welfare states developed. The social democratic and the conservative welfare states have lost satisfaction between 2013 and 2022 (with the exception of Austria). It seems that only if the people's satisfaction is high they lose more or less satisfaction. Whereas the French people lost only a little bit (from 7,1 to 7,0) the German people lost among the conservative welfare states the highest amount of its life satisfaction (from 7,3 to 6,5).

Interestingly the rudimentary and the post-socialist welfare states did not lose satisfaction in the comparison of the years 2013 and 2022 moreover they increased the satisfaction of their peoples. The south European rudimentary welfare states with Italy (life satisfaction 2013 to 2022: 6,6 to 7,2), Spain (6,9 to 7,1) and Portugal (6,2 to 7,0) attained higher values in 2022 than in 2013. Among the post-socialist welfare states there are cases which show an extremely increase of life satisfaction especially Romania (7,2 to 7,7) and Poland (7,3 to7,7) which means they jumped to the highest level.

All in all it is obviously that people in European welfare states tend to keep privileged positions despite some losses of life satisfaction. In European countries a big majority of people tells to be more satisfied with their life than dissatisfied (Ortiz-Ospina E. and Roser M. 2024). This is not the case for many people in other parts of the world. The European amount of life satisfaction is despite its inequalities and losses exceptional high in the world. But quality of life research has shown that countries and people are characterized by many facets. Life satisfaction is one main indicator but for a deep-going measurement in respect of country details a battery of indicators would be more appropriate and informative.

Europeans Perceptions of Everyday Life

There is much possibility to explore the subjective state of a nation's population. In a short overview it is necessary to make selections and the preferences here are for the comprehensive indicator ". Overall satisfaction with life" and the indicator for the total household economy their "Ability to make ends meet".

Satisfaction with life is a comprehensive measure for the complex of personal life components. Astonishingly the measurement of satisfaction with life leads for man and women in various to approximately the same average values. This is however the result of rather different satisfaction degrees for men and women in the various segments of life which add up in each group to the same average

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satisfaction. But usually different life satisfactions according to the different lifestyles are typical for most population subgroups.

In Europe the younger ones are more satisfied with life than the older ones but the very old ones are the least satisfied. European-wide it is monitored that the higher the education of a person the higher is their life satisfaction. The influence of the income level on life satisfaction is often demonstrated as strong: the lower the household income the lower is the life satisfaction. The highest dissatisfaction occur unemployed people especially if there is a longer duration of unemployment. Health impairments are as well accompanied from a significant loss of satisfaction far below the average of life satisfaction of healthy people. This overview is stemming from subjective answers from the year 2015 but they are reliable and were tested often with similar results. Therefore the pattern described here is expressing a representative picture of Europeans subjectively felt inequality.

An interesting question in relation to challenging inequalities in the European populations is related to the management of the private households who are taking care for income and consumption. A question sometimes used in the European questionnaires asks if people are making ends meet easily or if households are making ends meet with more or less difficulties. The answers show the position of individuals between wealth and poverty. Derived from the answers to this question a six level hierarchy is built which shows the subjective evaluation of private household management in Europe.

People are making ends meet in their private household. The hierarchy of the levels of household management for all Europeans show that the highest percentage (30%) of Europeans people "make ends meet fairly easily", People in the categories above (easily management) and below (management with some difficulty) contain together 46 % of the European people. All three middle categories together constitute a broad center of the middle of society.

The top category are people who make ends very easily which is close to luxury, Their volume is higher than the lowest category which makes ends meet with great difficulty. More people define themselves in a wealthy world than in a impoverished world.

The differences between the countries Europeans are huge: For example in Denmark the group of people making ends meet "very easily" is bigger than any other category in the country whereas in Bulgaria the biggest group are the people, who are making meet ends "with great difficulties". There are strong discrepancies between the countries and within the countries. The open question is what socio-economic differences are tolerated in the long run by the European people(s) and what discrepancies will lead to conflict and protest.

The Era Turn into the Complex Future of the 21st Century

Quality of life-studies and well-being publications flourished in the first two decades of the 21st century and before (see f.e. Alber 2008, Land et al 2012, European Commission 2013, Michalos 2014, Holtmann 2014, Ahrend/Dubois/Mezger 2015, European Union 2015, European Social Survey 2015). But on the background of emerging wars and pandemics the perspectivce of well-being research was adapted: Instead of the older perspective "Quality of Life Improvement" (Ostasiewicz 2006) the newer perspective was now called "Aleviating World Suffering" (Anderson 2017). These titles express exemplary the challenge

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change in the new century which went from the "improvement" of living conditions to the "alleviation" from misery. Different approaches of goal setting and societal management became necessary.

In principle the subjectively quality of life is always a mixed constellation of dark and bright sides of life which both appear in globally and locally dimensions. In the course of time the components of well-being varied significantly.

In the third decade of the 21st century the conditions and perceptions of life in Europe lost the advantages the foregoing time characterized as cold war (Westad 2017) and the diagnosis of a time change arose due to a multiplicity of threats. Main components of the multiple threat constellation were the Russian-Ukrainian war; terrorist activities all over the world, the climate change and its destructive consequences, the Corona pandemic and its longtime impairments; the world wide migration process and its special impact on Europe; fake news based on AI and Internet disturbed societal communication processes; a severe housing shortage was running over a long time; fears of inflation came up; a reduction of economic growth lead to dissatisfaction with the economic and political system; the established welfare states are often critizised for their volume and some of their new programs. Components like these problems constitute multiple threat constellations in the eyes of parts of the population and some experts. The result of representative survey is that dissatisfaction is most often shared from strong minorities but seldom the majority of the population.

Many people in Europe are still satisfied with their life and like multipe benefits which are offered in modern societies. Advantages for majorities of European populations are: yearly relaxing vacations; daily meals at home and occasionally in restaurants. regular monthly payments from work and retirement, secure provision of energy and electricity, clean water provision with cold and warm water, sewage disposal and WC systems, the possession of a car according to one's own choosing, a personal outfit according one's own decision, original personal self-presentation, safe public transportation, recreational areas, social support from relatives and friends, last but not least shopping possibilities and entertainment, All these provisions are not self-understanding and are threatened for minorities. The basic provisions have to be planned, created, renewed and cared for. As long as Europeam people can be sure that these provisions work in a sufficient manner then a majority will be satisfied.

As previously shown the Europe of today is without doubt an attractive continent and this is confirmed in respect to the measurement of human development, betterment of life and social progress. The subjectively perceived quality of life is leading worldwide for the majority of the European population. However significant parts of the European population do not participate at the decent standards of wealth and wellbeing and therefore the problems of poverty and misery are still challenging. Coming generations will need substantial improvements to attain well-being for all.

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