

Age 16 - 65: Life courses from school to retirement

Initial Survey 1969: Structur Analysis of German High Schools („Gymnasium“)

Students (age 16)

Survey within classes, n = 3240 students, 121 classes, 68 high schools (Gymnasium) in North Rhine-Westphalia. Questions: achievements, interests, aspirations and life plans, family, relationship to parents, attitudes, activities, sociometric inventory. Additional: Intelligence-Structure-Test (4 subscales of Amthauer's IST)

Parents

n = 2646
SES, formal education, style of raising children, aspirations for children, attitudes.

Teachers

n = 2680
pedagogical principles, socio-demographic characteristics, evaluation of students' abilities

Directors

(n=68)
school characteristics and regional contexts

Data available at GESIS Data Archive for the Social Science: ZA0600 (students), ZA0942 (sociometric data), ZA0639 (parents), ZA0640 (teachers), ZA0996 (directors)

Principal Investigators: Hans-Joachim Hummell, Michael Klein, Maria Wieken-Mayser, Rolf Ziegler (University of Cologne, Research Institute for Sociology)

Document analysis of school files resp. re-survey of students (1981/1982)

Rekonstruktion of student's educational pathways and success during upper secondary education

Data: ZA1440: Principal Investigators: Heiner Meulemann, Maria Wieken-Mayser, Willi Wiese (University of Cologne, Research Institute for Sociology)

Four follow-ups: 1984/1985, 1997, 2010, 2019

Age 30 (1984/85)

n=1987 (61.3%)

Face-to-Face

Transition from youth to adulthood.

Retrospective survey of life courses:

detailed educational and occupational career, family foundation process: partner, children.

Additional questions concerning: biographical self-definition, centrality of life spheres, goals and contentment, attitudes (e.g. politics, religion)

Data: ZA1441

Age 43 (1997)

n=1596 (49.3%)

CATI

Identity maintenance during adulthood.

Life courses:

Continuation of occupational career and private life course.

Additional questions concerning:

Social self-identification, coping strategies, attitudes: replication of most questions from first follow-up (age 30).

Data: ZA4228 (cumulative dataset)

Age 56 (2010)

n= 1301 (40.2%)

CATI

Prospective aging study.

Life courses:

Continuation of occupational career and private life course; planning for retirement, empty nest and old age;

Additional questions concerning:

Social self-identification, health, financial situation, leisure activities, volunteer work, attitudes: replication of most questions from former follow-ups.

Data: ZA5648 (cumulative dataset)

Age 65 (2019)

Start of field work: July

CATI

Transition to retirement.

Life courses:

Continuation of occupational career and private life course, pathways into retirement;

Additional questions concerning:

Social self-identification, health, financial situation, leisure activities, volunteer work, vocational continuities, realization of plans for retirement, attitudes: replication of most questions from former follow-ups.

The cumulative dataset will be made available 2020

Panel attrition		n	1969	1985	1997	2010
1969	Initial Survey of students (age 16)	3240	100%			
	No address	241	7.4			
	No interview (different causes)	1012	31.2			
1985	Respondents (age 30)	1987	61.3	100%		
	Refusal address storage (1985)	142	4.4	7.1		
	Lost (technical reasons)	1	0.0	0.1		
	Deceased (n=26), unable to answer (n=4)	30	0.9	1.5		
	No address	39	1.2	2.0		
	No telephone number (despite letters)	69	2.1	3.5		
	Passive refusal (no interview during 6 months fieldwork)	23	0.7	1.2		
	Active refusal	88	2.7	4.4		
1997	Respondents (age 43)	1595	49.2	80.3	100%	
	Refusal address storage (1997)	8	0.2	0.4	0.5	
	Deceased (n=43), ill: unable to answer (n=3)	46	1.4	2.4	2.9	
	Passive refusal (no interview during 6 months fieldwork)	63	1.9	3.2	4.0	
	Active Refusal	92	2.8	4.6	5.8	
2010	Respondents (age 56)	1301	40.2	65.5	81.6	
	Refusal address storage	6	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5
2019	Adresses and telephone numbers (age 65) so far	(1143)	(35.2)	(57.5)	(71.7)	(87.6)

Over the years we lost about 60 percent of the initial sample, which leads to a small success bias.

But: From the beginning we had a selective sample: At the end of the 1960s only 20 percent of the 15-years old visited a Gymnasium, among them only a minor proportion from lower social classes. Now the sample is just a little bit more selective.

Not a big problem, because we are not very interested in means and percentages but in mechanisms and dynamics at work during the life course.

More than 100 publications. Some examples:

Meulemann, H. & K. Birkelbach. 2018. Ein Leben im öffentlichen Dienst – Zufriedenheit gegen Einkommen? S. 107–131 in: *Lebensbedingungen in Deutschland in der Längsschnittperspektive*. Ed.: M. Giesselmann, K. Golsch, H. Lohmann, & A. Schmidt-Catran. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Becker, D.; Birkelbach, K. 2018. Social mobility and subjective well-being revisited: The importance of individual locus of control. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 54, 1–20.

Birkelbach, K. & H. Meulemann (eds.). 2017. *Lebensdeutung und Lebensplanung in der Lebensmitte. Vom Gymnasium bis zur Planung des Ruhestands*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

Gasser, B. 2017. Hohe prognostische Validität der Mathematiknote für das spätere Berufsprestige. Eine longitudinale Analyse anhand des Kölner Gymnasiastenpanels. In: *Zeitschrift für ökonomische Bildung* (6), 62–80.

Neumeyer, S. & H. Meulemann. 2017. Wer kommt nach ganz oben? Leistung und askriptive Merkmale beim Eintritt in Führungspositionen. S. 285–317 in: *Lebensdeutung und Lebensplanung in der Lebensmitte*. Ed.: K. Birkelbach & H. Meulemann (Hg.): Wiesbaden: Springer.

Weber, A. 2017. Lebenszufriedenheit im Lebensverlauf: Allgemein, privat und beruflich. S. 19–48 in: *Lebensdeutung und Lebensplanung in der Lebensmitte*. Ed.: K. Birkelbach & H. Meulemann: Wiesbaden: Springer.

Wawrzyniak, B. 2015. Entry into the postparental phase of the family life cycle. *Comparative Population Studies* 40 (1), 31–48.

Becker, D. 2013. The impact of teachers' expectations on students' educational opportunities in the life course: An empirical test of a subjective expected utility explanation. *Rationality and Society* 25 (4), 422–469.

Birkelbach, K. & H. Meulemann. 2013. Christian Socialization during Youth and Christian Convictions from Early to Late Midlife. *Journal of Religion in Europe* 6 (4), S. 399–427.

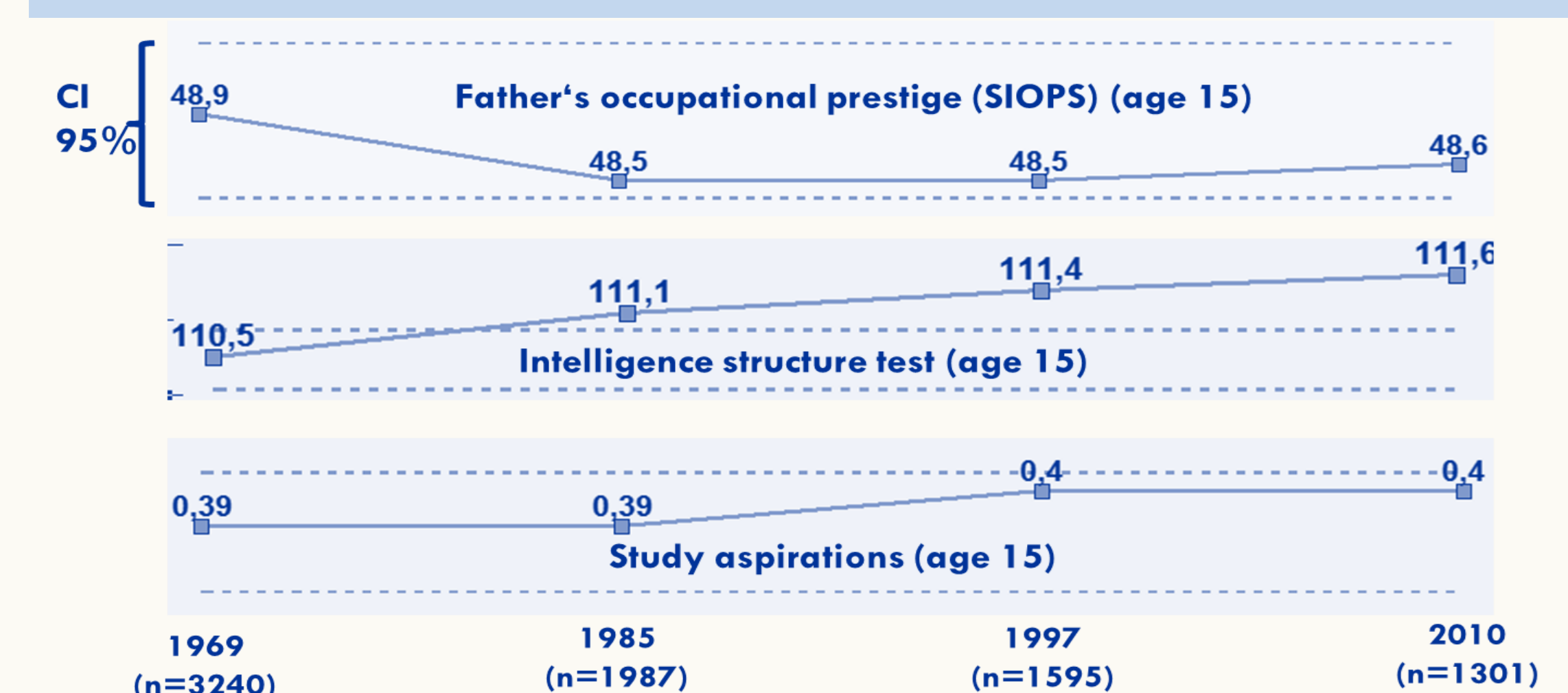
Birkelbach, K. 2012. Teacher Evaluations over the Life Course: Valid Prognosis or Self-fulfilling Prophecy? S. 167–187 in: *Sociology and the Unintended. Robert Merton Revisited*. Hrsg. A. Mica, A. Peisert, & J. Winczorek. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang.

Meulemann, H. K. Birkelbach, & Otto Hellwig (eds.). 2001. *Ankunft im Erwachsenenleben*. Opladen: Leske+Budrich.

Birkelbach, K. 1998. *Berufserfolg und Familiengründung. Lebensläufe zwischen institutionellen Bedingungen und individueller Konstruktion*. Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.

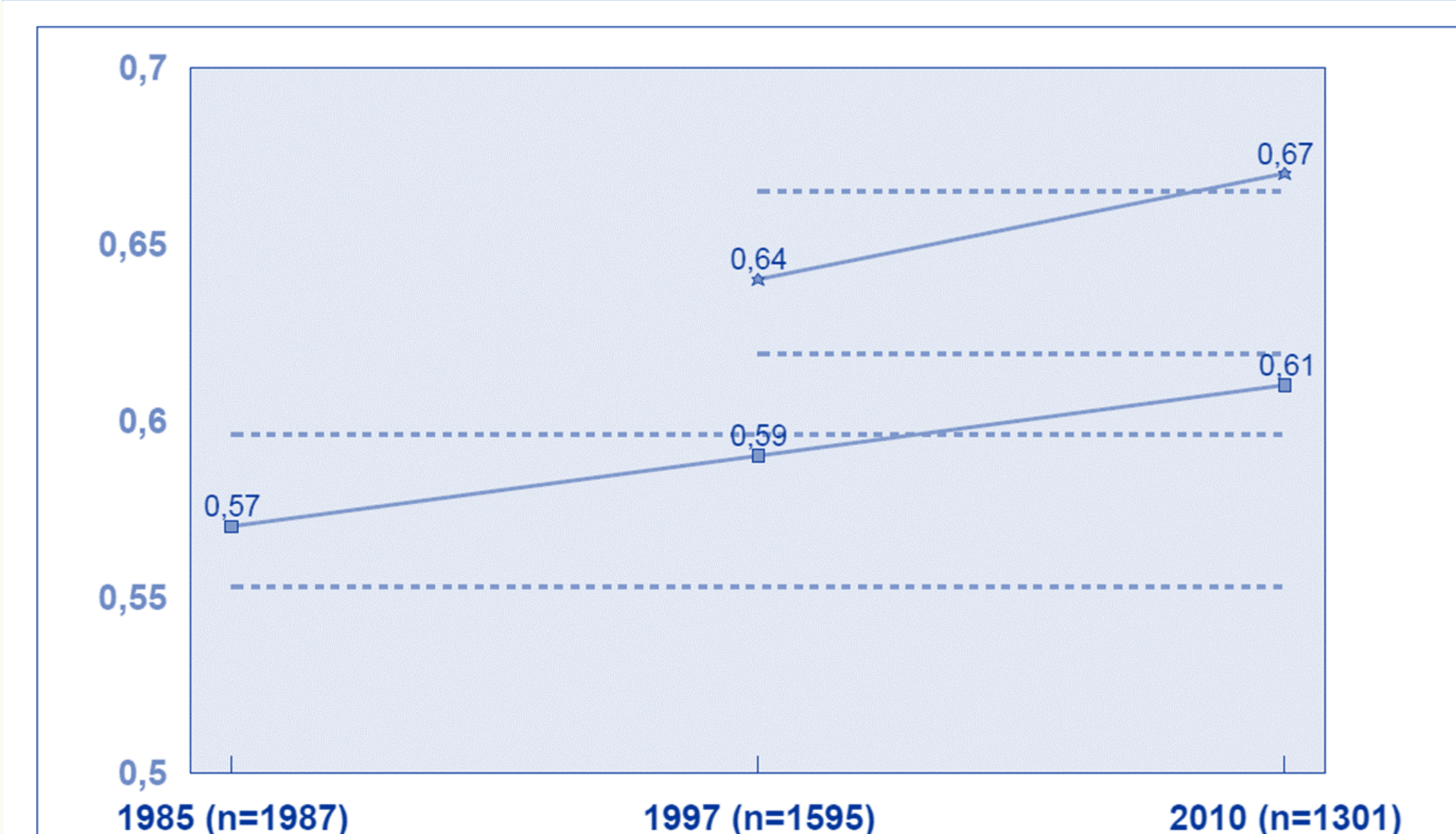
Bias through panel attrition?

Starting conditions over the waves



Also reviewed: average grade class 10, teacher's evaluation, gender, parents' social class : No difference

Finished academic studies successfully 1985, 1997 2010: Bias?



Also reviewed: SIOPS, income, unemployment, partner, children, attitudes: political interest, postmaterialism, religious attitudes

<https://www.iss-wiso.uni-koeln.de/de/forschung/projekte/das-koelner-gymnasiastenpanel>

The current follow-up "Nach der Lebensmitte – eine vierte Wiederbefragung ehemaliger 16-jähriger Gymnasiasten zu Lebenserfolg und Erfolgsdeutung im 65. Lebensjahr" is funded by the DFG for 3 years. Principal investigators are Klaus Birkelbach (University of Duisburg-Essen) and Heiner Meulemann (University of Cologne), project collaborators are Veronika Witt (Cologne) and Christian Sondergeld (Duisburg-Essen).

The field work will be done by student interviewers in the CATI-Lab of the Institute of Sociology and Social Psychology (ISS) of the University of Cologne from July to September 2019.

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