

A system to visualize the NWI

Bearing all this in mind, the computation and the results of the NWI are not easy to understand. For a quick start and a good overview, we for the first time present a graphical tool. It features the following possibilities, on four levels:



1. The survey contains the NWI as such, in the center of the sheet, and its twenty components, presented as satellites, among them, e.g., volunteer work or the costs of air pollution.
2. By clicking on the different satellites, the definition of the component is given as well as the time series of its development.
3. On the third level, there is short description of the component and of its development.
4. For interested readers and experts, the forth level shows some information on the statistical methods and calculations, in order to keep the index transparent.

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das Stilbüro (www.dasstilbuero.de) / nouhuys consult GmbH

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Links:

1. www.nationaler-wohlfahrtsindex.de
2. <http://fest-heidelberg.de/index.php/arbeitsbereiche-und-querschnittsprojekte/frieden-und-nachhaltige-entwicklung/nwirwi>
3. http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/systeme/ffu/forschung-alt/projekte/abgeschlossene/07_wohlfahrtsindex/index.html

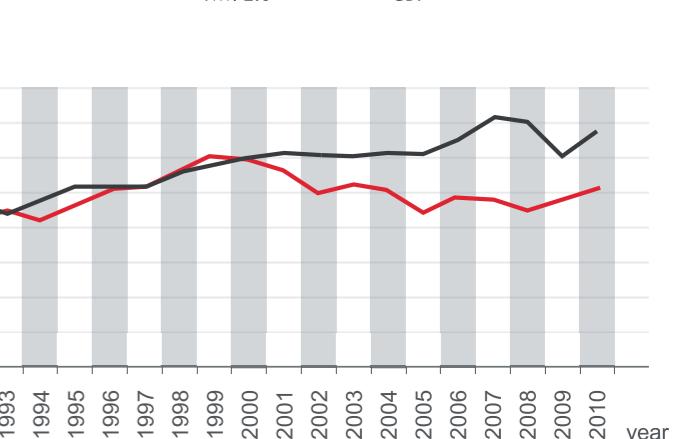


a joint project of the Environmental Policy Research Centre (FFU) of the Freie Universität Berlin (Roland Zieschank) and the Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (FEST) Heidelberg (Prof. Dr. Hans Diefenbacher, Dorothee Rodenhäuser, Benjamin Held), funded by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB)

The Visualization of the National Welfare Index 2.0 - an index beyond GDP

Empirical results with regard to the debate on a new concept of welfare

NWI 2.0 compared to GDP (Index; 2000=100)



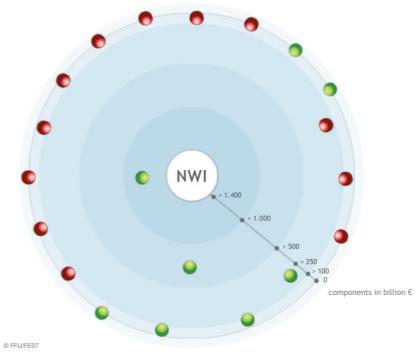
The current situation

In parts of the scientific community, in politics and the civil society, welfare as an objective gains in importance compared to a merely quantitative growth of the economy that is very often driven by public and private debt. Welfare, in our understanding, is closely linked to the entity of material and non-material components of natural, social and economic capital in a country.

Seen this way, the traditional measurement of wealth by GDP proves increasingly to be deficient. The intensive consumption of ecological resources and many environmental burdens are either not considered in the GDP or calculated in a wrong manner. In addition to this oblivion of nature, the GDP is characterized by a certain type of social complacency. It does not reflect the distribution of income within the population. Therefore, it bears no attention to increasing inequalities. As a result, the GDP in Germany signals an illusionary wealth.

The NWI as complementary information

There is a double contribution of the NWI: It is part of the scientific development of new monitoring systems that consider the social and ecological external effects of the current production and consumption patterns in a more explicit way. And it can contribute to the advancement of the social market economy towards an ecologically sustainable market economy. In both respects, there is still a lack of indices that are empirically grounded. In several countries, there had been similar efforts, e.g. in the United States or in Great Britain. Beyond France, great attention was paid to the recommendations of the Stiglitz-commission.



The new NWI 2.0 allows to compare the development of GDP and NWI between 1991 and 2012. The results are remarkable: Since the beginning of the century, the time series of GDP and NWI are diverse, especially during the latest economic crisis. In the year 2009, GDP is decreasing, whereas the NWI is going up. The main reasons are the decline of environmental costs - costs of air pollution, replacement costs for the use of non renewable resources, and the damages from CO₂-emissions. Together, these three components account for 44 percent of the positive changes. Household and volunteer work also increased. In the years after 2009, the restart of the economic cycle was accompanied by a considerable increase of damages and replacement costs in the ecological sphere.