

This is not an ADB material. The views expressed in this document are the views of the author/s and/or their organizations and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Asian Development Bank, or its Board of Governors, or the governments they represent. ADB does not guarantee the accuracy and/or completeness of the material's contents, and accepts no responsibility for any direct or indirect consequence of their use or reliance, whether wholly or partially. Please feel free to contact the authors directly should you have queries.



MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALRECHT UND SOZIALPOLITIK



# The art of meaningful international comparisons in population aging research

## Axel Börsch-Supan

Regional Conference on the Health and Socioeconomic Wellbeing of Older Persons in Developing Asia: Role of Individual and Household Data  
Manila (virtual), 7 September 2021



MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALRECHT UND SOZIALPOLITIK

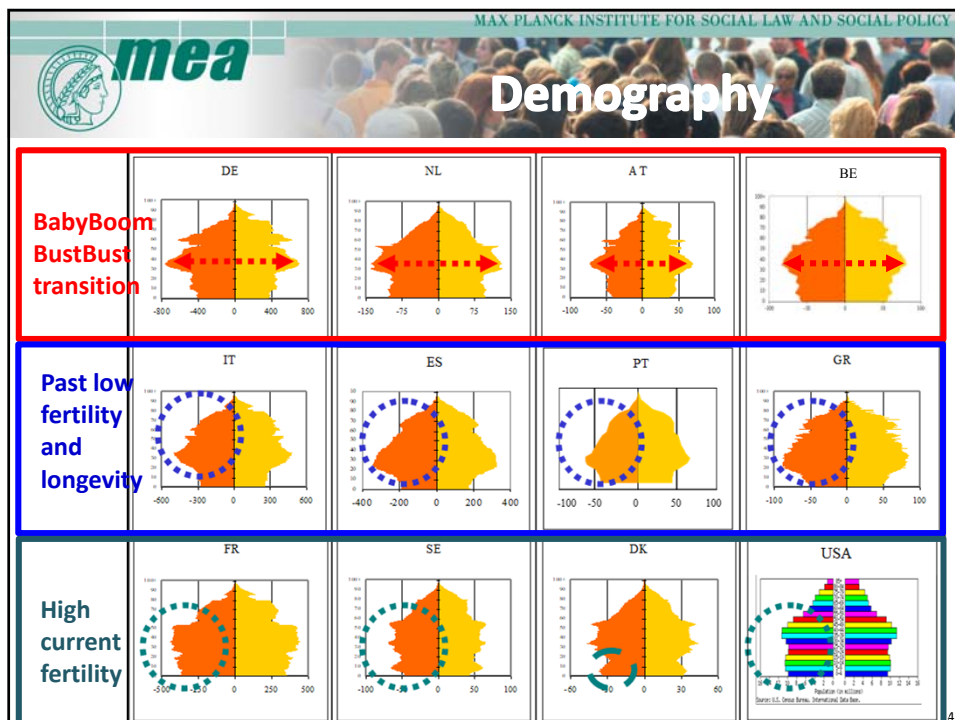
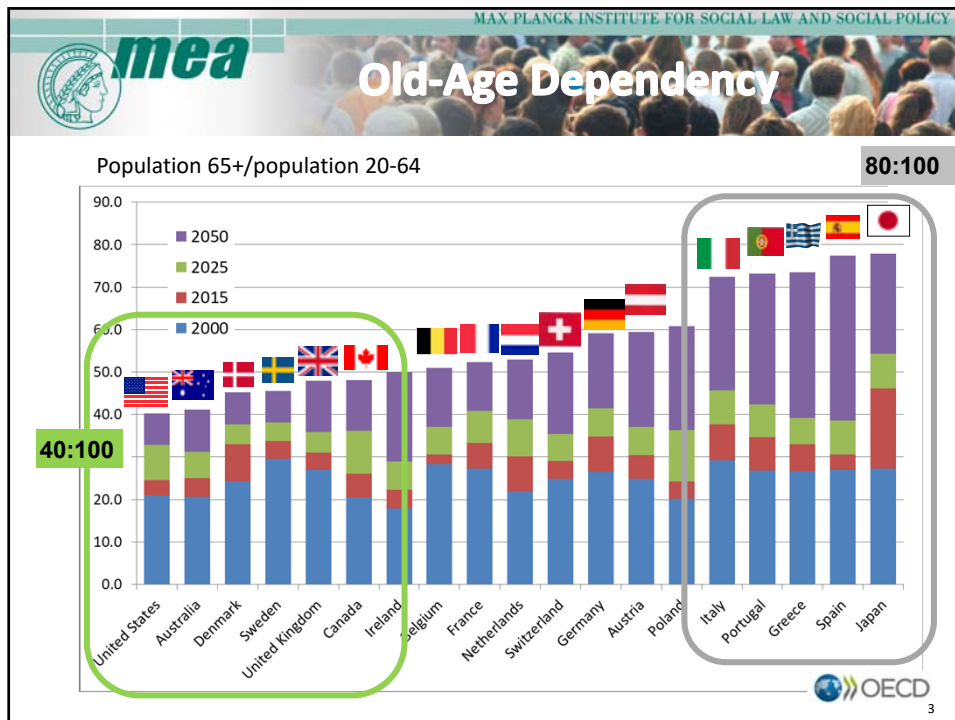


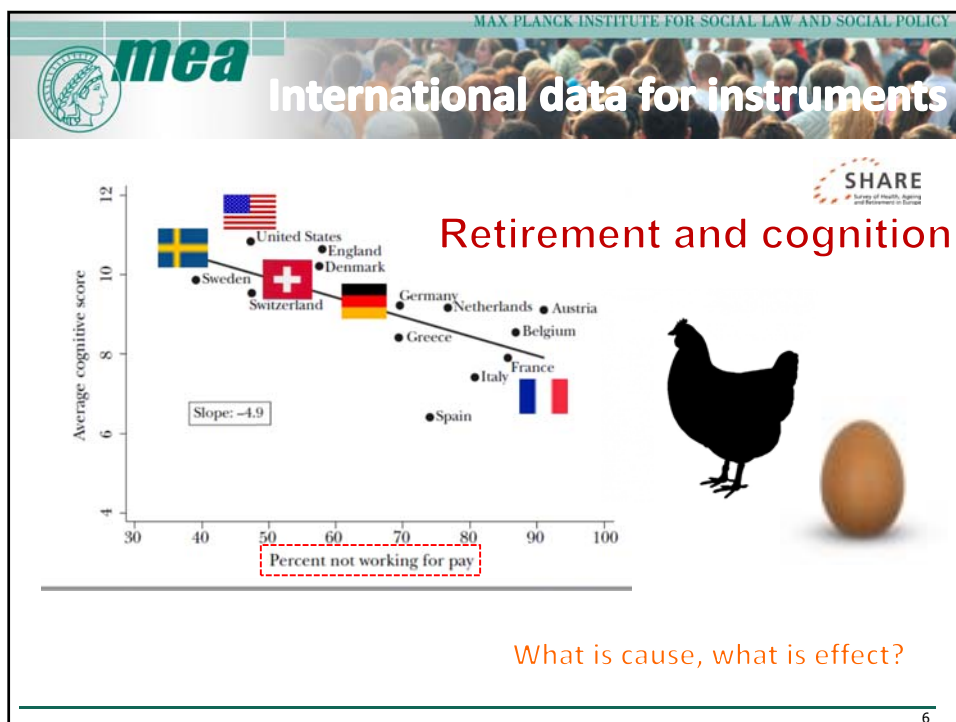
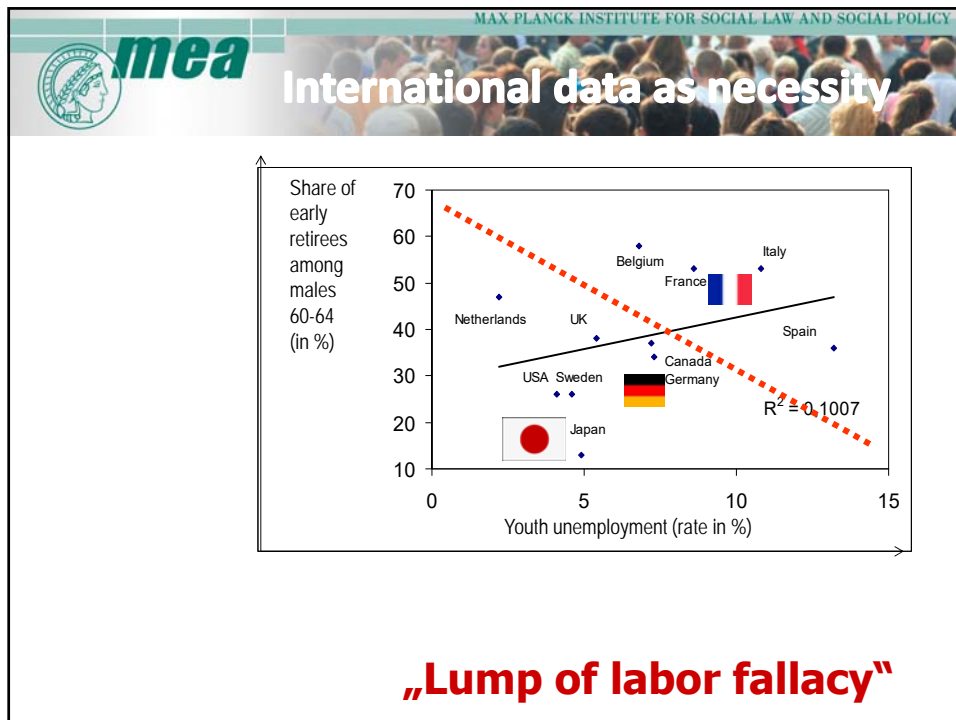
**1. The fascination of heterogeneity:  
Chances and challenges of international comparisons**

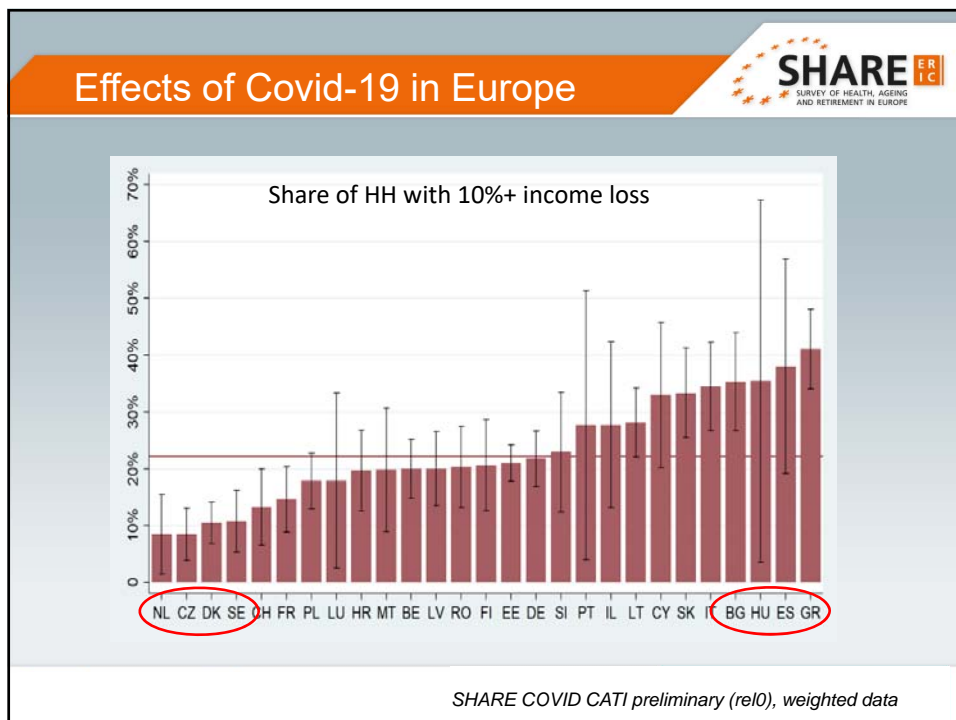
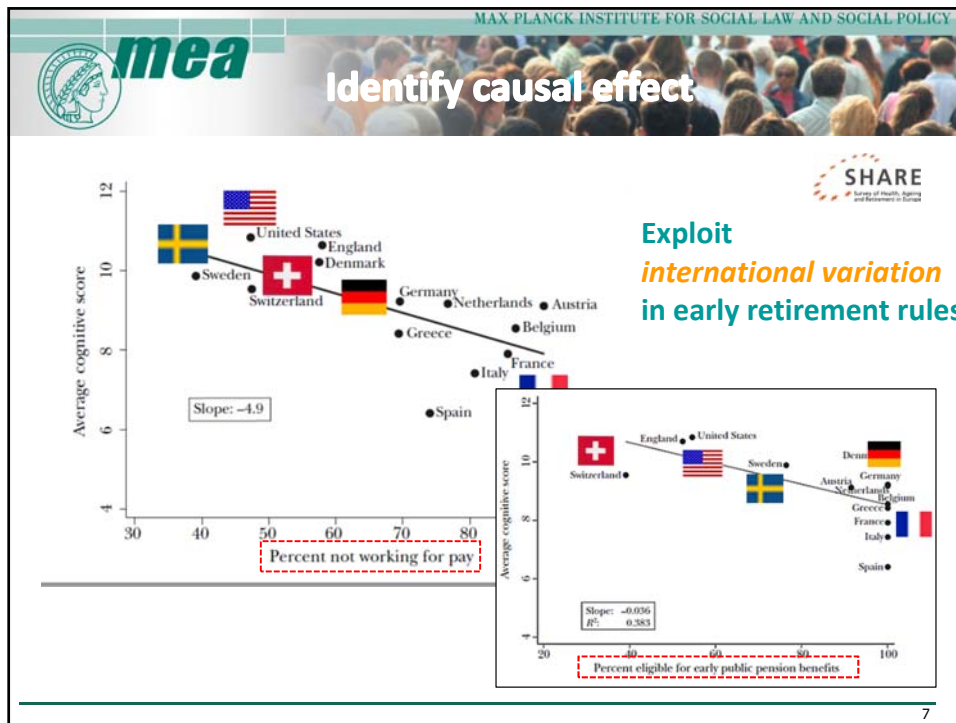
**2. Types of data needed:  
SHARE and SPLASH**

**3. Distilling a message:  
The NBER International Social Security project**

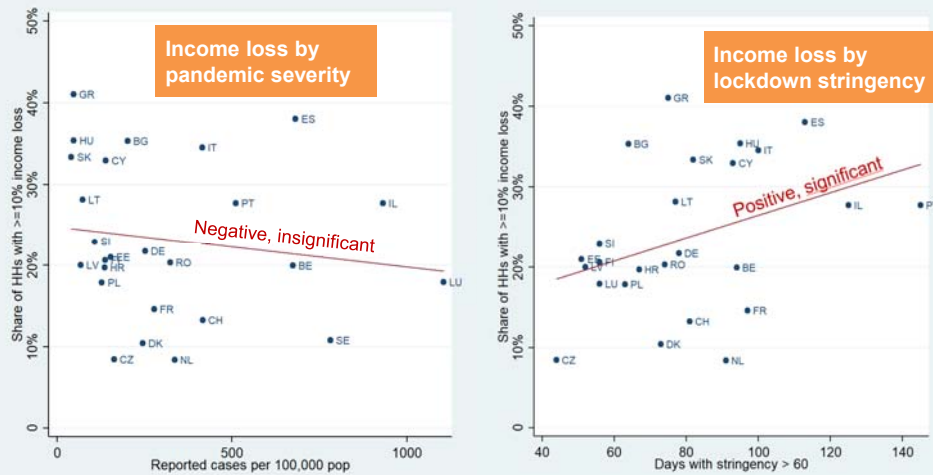








## Causes for effects?



9

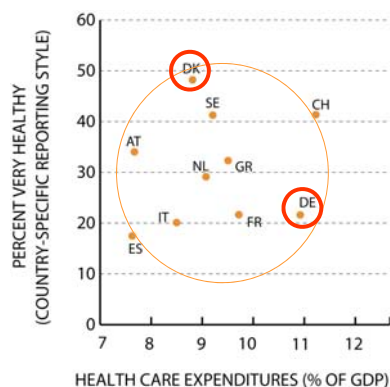
SHARE COVID CATI preliminary (rel0), weighted data



mea

MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

## Challenges and pitfalls: health measurement

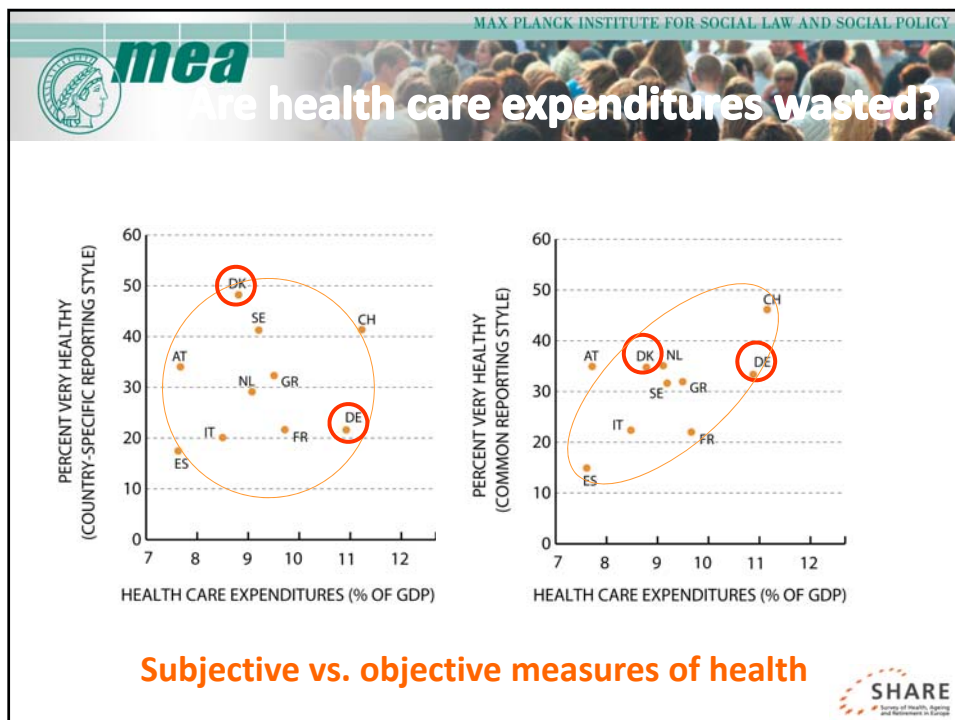
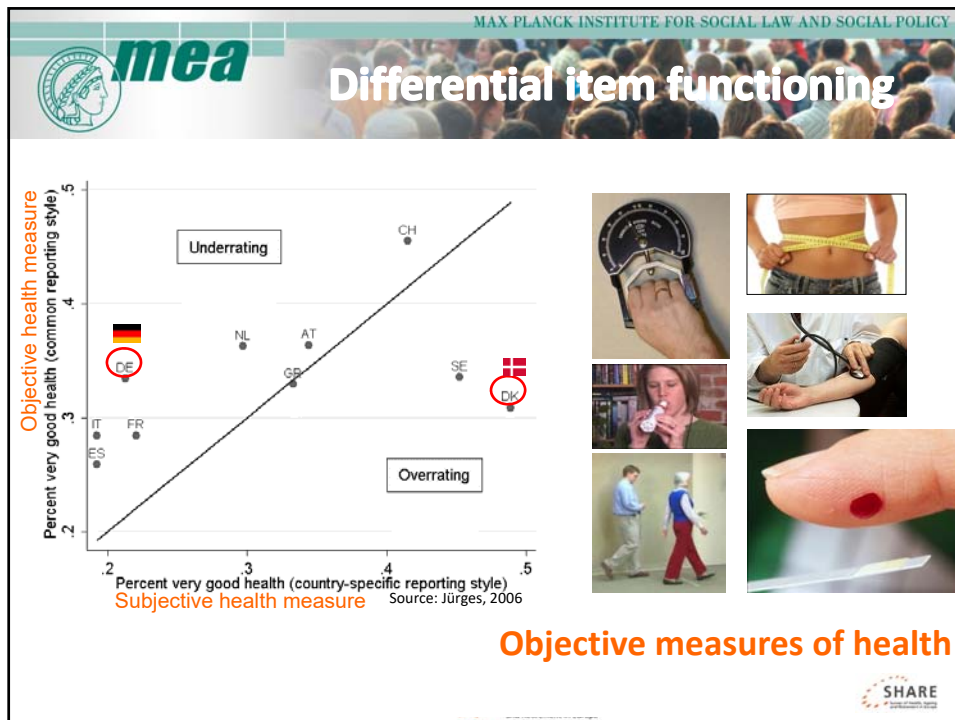


Effects of health expenditures on health: Are they wasted?

Subjective measure of health: "poor" to "excellent"







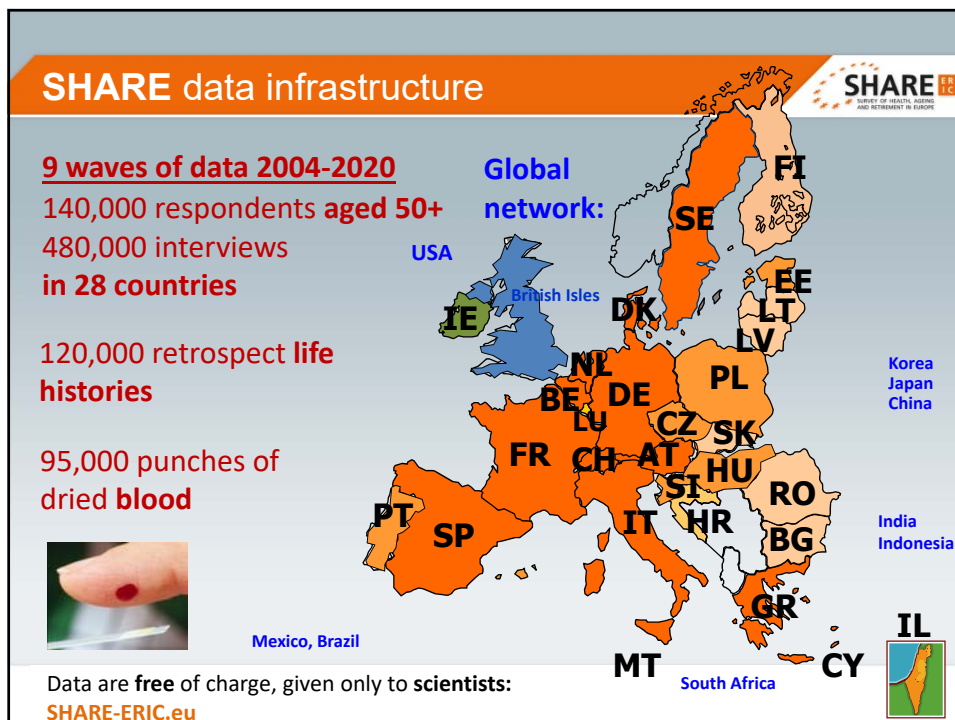
MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALRECHT UND SOZIALPOLITIK

**mea**

1. The fascination of heterogeneity:  
Chances and challenges of international comparisons

2. Types of data needed:  
**SHARE and SPLASH**

3. Distilling a message:  
The NBER International Social Security project



## A transdisciplinary picture of human life



- ▶ **Health, social and economic situation closely related**
- ▶ Broad range of **questions, measurements and tests**:
  - ▶ **Socio-economic status**: labor force participation, retirement, income (amount and sources), wealth, housing, consumption, pension claims, expectations, well-being
  - ▶ **Health**: subjective-objective (self-report, ADL/IADL, conditions, physical performance tests, biomarkers: HbA1c, CRP, Lipids, Cytokines), physical-mental (cognition, MMSE, CES-D, Euro-D), health behaviors, health utilization and insurance coverage
  - ▶ **Social participation**: activities (volunteering), family and social networks (size and intensity), help (time, money)
- ▶ **Face-to-face interviews** by trained interviewers, every 2 years
- ▶ Link to past and current **health, social and economic policies**

## Health, social and economic policies




SPLASH collects data on **institutional context** to ease **cross-country evaluation of welfare state policies**





## Longitudinal Survey Strategy



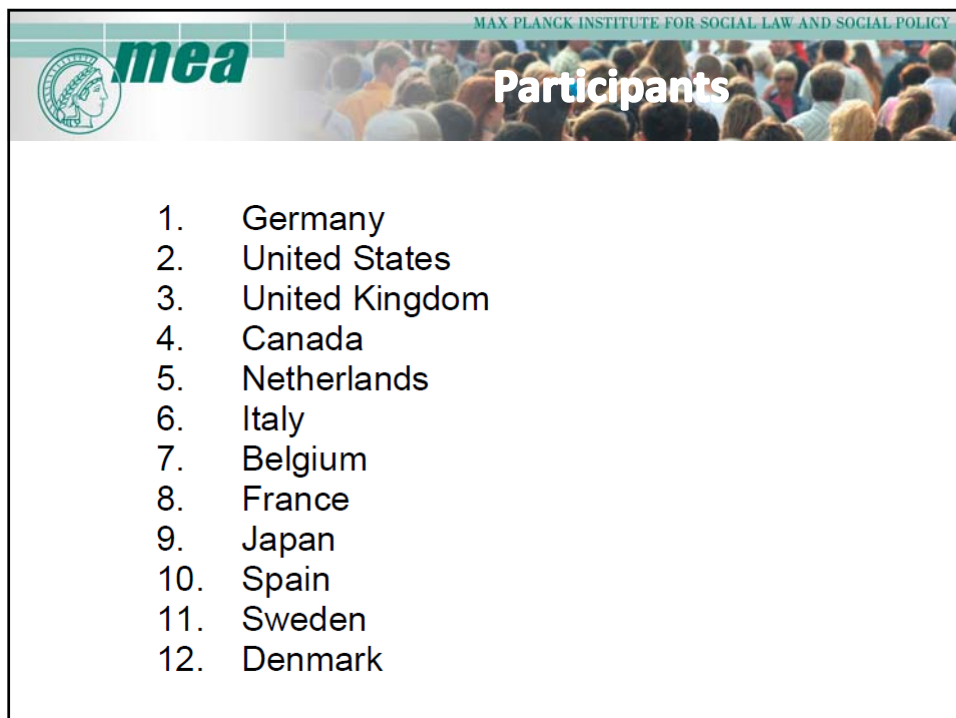
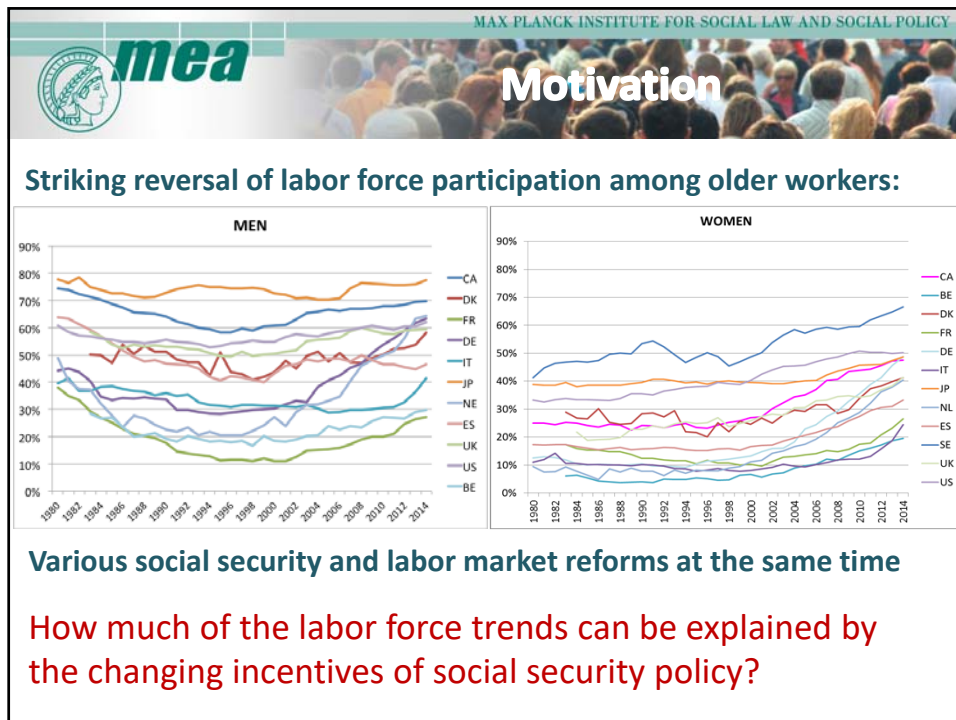
- 1. Life course background**  
 SHARE waves 2004 – 2018  
 Retrospective life histories including parental and childhood conditions
- 2. Immediate pre-Corona status**  
 Face-to-face interviews in Wave 8, stopped in March 2020 after about 70% of sample
- 3. First SHARE Corona Telephone Survey in June/July 2020**  
 Health, work, economic and social conditions during the first wave of the pandemic
- 4. Second SHARE Corona Telephone Survey in June/July 2021**  
 Health, work, economic and social conditions during the “third wave” of the pandemic
- 5. Immediate post-Corona status**  
 Face-to-face interviews in Wave 9, planned for November 2021





MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALRECHT UND SOZIALPOLITIK

- 1. The fascination of heterogeneity:**  
**Chances and challenges of international comparisons**
- 2. Types of data needed:**  
**SHARE and SPLASH**
- 3. Distilling a message:**  
**The NBER International Social Security project**

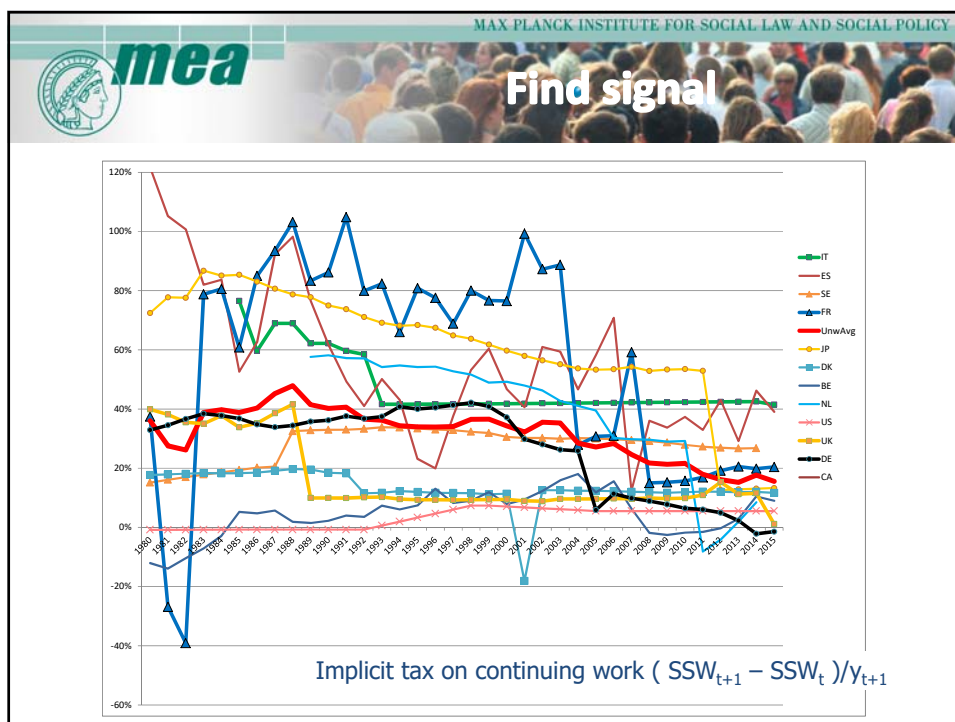


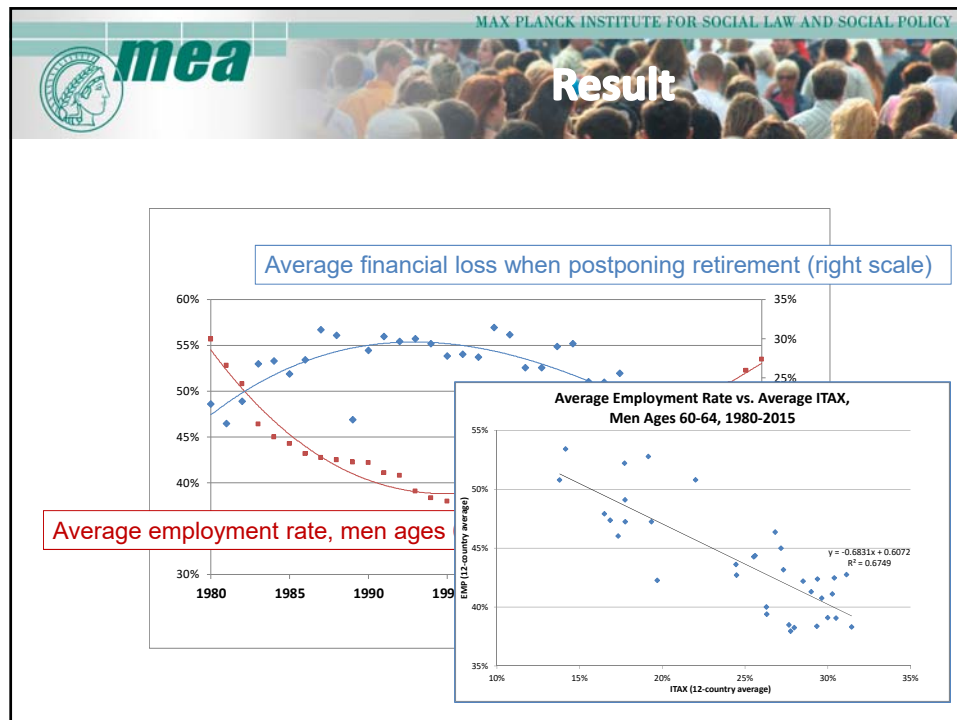
MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

**mea**

## Highly structured

- 1. Which relevant reforms have taken place**
  - ▶ *Structured* verbal descriptions; use *same* language; *update*
  -  1992, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2014, 2017
- 2. Quantitative policy parameters**
  - ▶ EEA, NEA, FRA, actuarial adjustments, replacement rate,...
  - ▶ by socio-econ characteristics, by pathway, by sector
  -  1992, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2014, 2017
- 3. Economic indicators**
  - ▶ Implicit tax on continuing work ( $SSW_{t+1} - SSW_t$ )/ $y_{t+1}$





MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

**General lessons**

- Incentive variables from **SPLASH** data base
- Which **micro data**? SHARE-HRS-ELSA-JSTAR, EU-LFS, EU-SILC
- Which **reforms** are covered? Identification!
- Which **covariates** are available? Health, education, other HH members, tax rate, benefit type?
- **Simple probit/logit regressions:**
  - $\text{Prob}(\text{receives pension}) = f(\text{ITAX; age, covariates})$
  - $\text{Prob}(\text{out of LF}) = f(\text{ITAX; age, covariates})$



The slide header features the **mea** logo on the left, the text **MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALRECHT UND SOZIALPOLITIK** on the right, and the title **The art of meaningful international comparisons in population aging research** in the center. The background of the header shows a crowd of people.

- 1. The fascination of heterogeneity:  
Chances and challenges of international comparisons**
- 2. Types of data needed:  
SHARE and SPLASH**
- 3. Distilling a message:  
The NBER International Social Security project**