# Average happiness[1,2] in nations: Trend 1946-2003

Rise/decline
Expressed in regression coefficient[3] Average Happiness - Year

Rise Significant increase		*Stable* No significant change		*Decline* Significant decrease	
Italy 1973-2002	+.035	Spain 1986-2002	+.007	Germany (reunited) 1990-2002	-.035
Denmark 1973-2002	+.017	Netherlands 1973-2002	+.005	Belgium 1973-2002	-.024
Luxembourg 1973-2002	+.010	West Germany 1973-2002	+.001	Greece 1981-2002	-.016
France 1973-2002	+.009	Ireland 1980-2002	+.001		
		Great Britain 1973-2002	+.001		
		Japan 1958-2003	-.002		
		Portugal 1986-2002	-.003		
		United States 1946-1998	-.004		
		East Germany 1990-2002	-.017		

The number of nations in which average happiness rose is not significantly greater than the number of nations in which it declined (bi-nominal test).
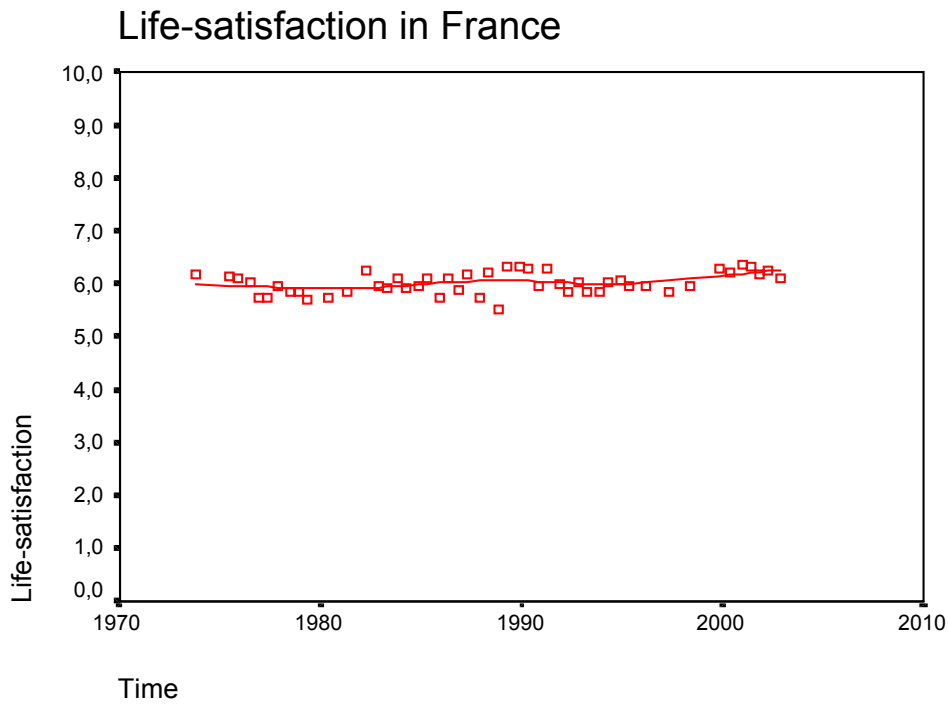
All cases, alphabetic

Life-satisfaction in Belgium
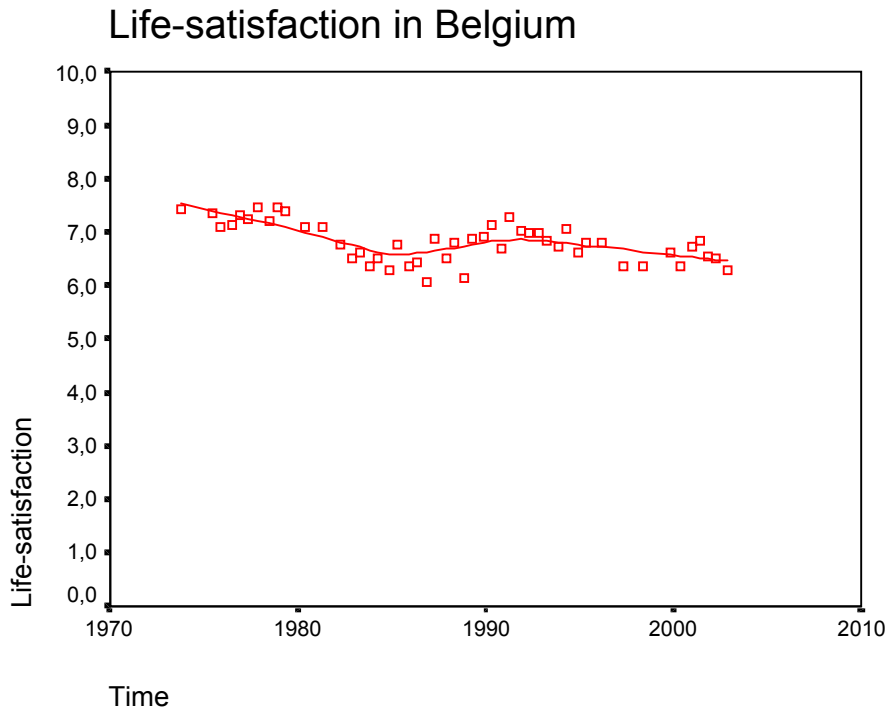
The linear regression coefficient for Belgium is -.024. 95% confidence interval [-.035, -.013]

Life-satisfaction in Denmark
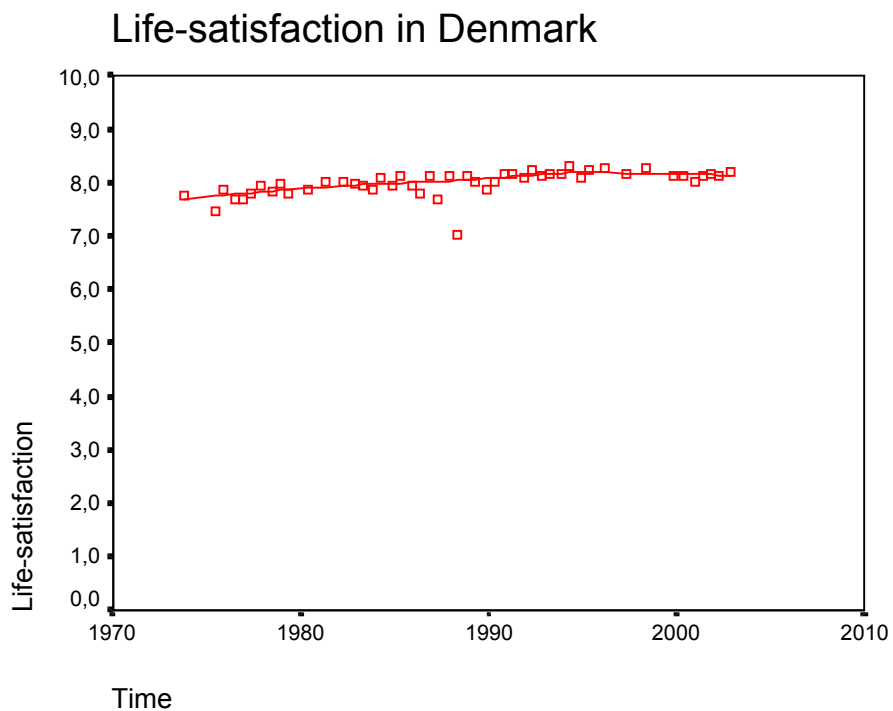
The linear regression coefficient for Denmark is +.017. 95% confidence interval; [+.010,+.024]

Life-satisfaction in France

Linear regression coefficient for France is: +.009. 95% confidence interval: [+.002,+.015]

Life-satisfaction in Germany (reunited)

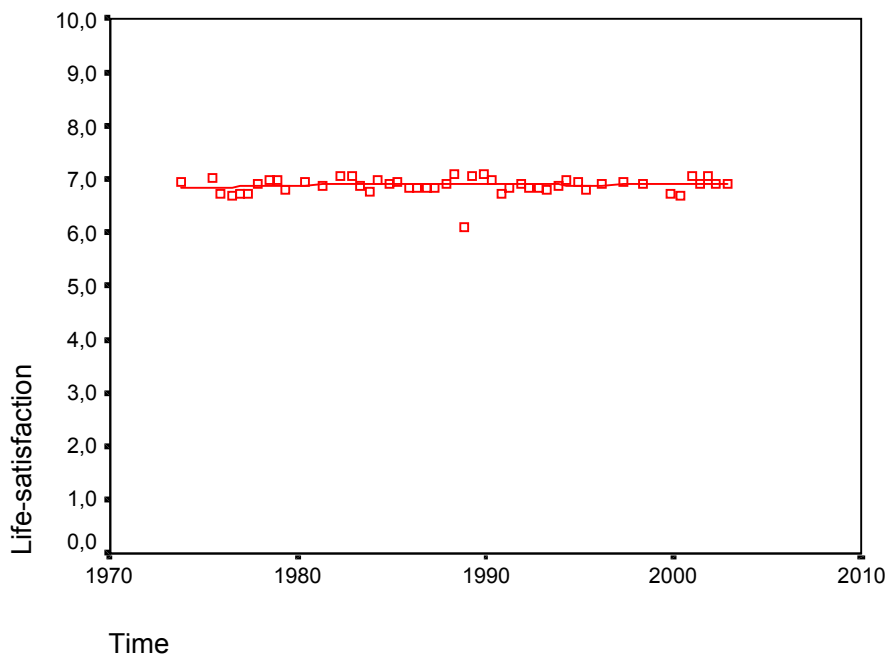
The linear regression coefficient for reunited Germany is: -.035. 95 % confidence interval: [-.060,-.010]

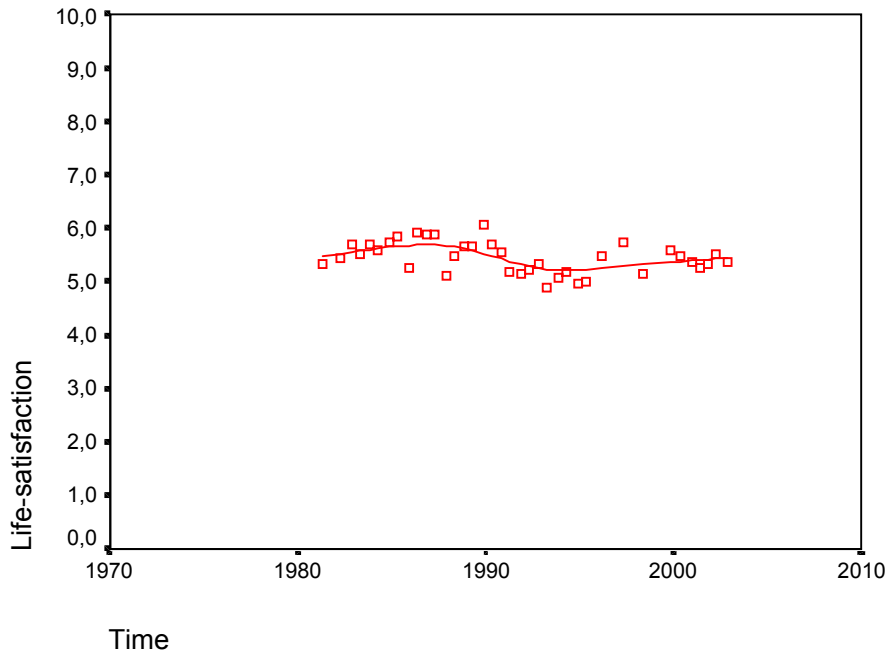## Life-satisfaction in East and West Germany

(separately)
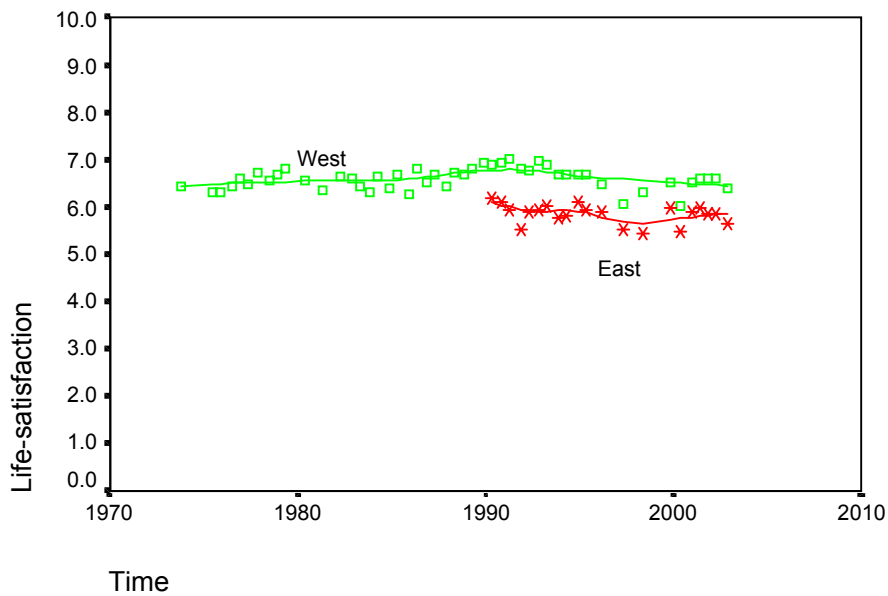
The linear regression coefficient for East Germany is: -.017. 95 % confidence interval: [-.039,+.006]
The linear regression coefficient for West Germany is: +.001. 95 % confidence interval: [-.007,+.009]
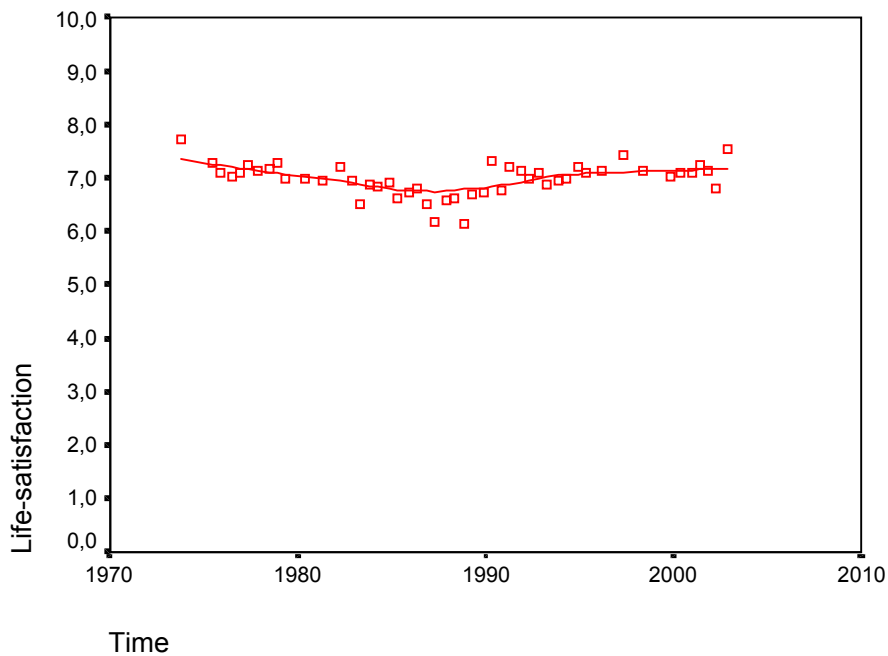
Life-satisfaction in Great Britain

The linear regression coefficient for Great Britain is: +.001. 95 % confidence interval: [-.005,+.007]

Life-satisfaction in Greece
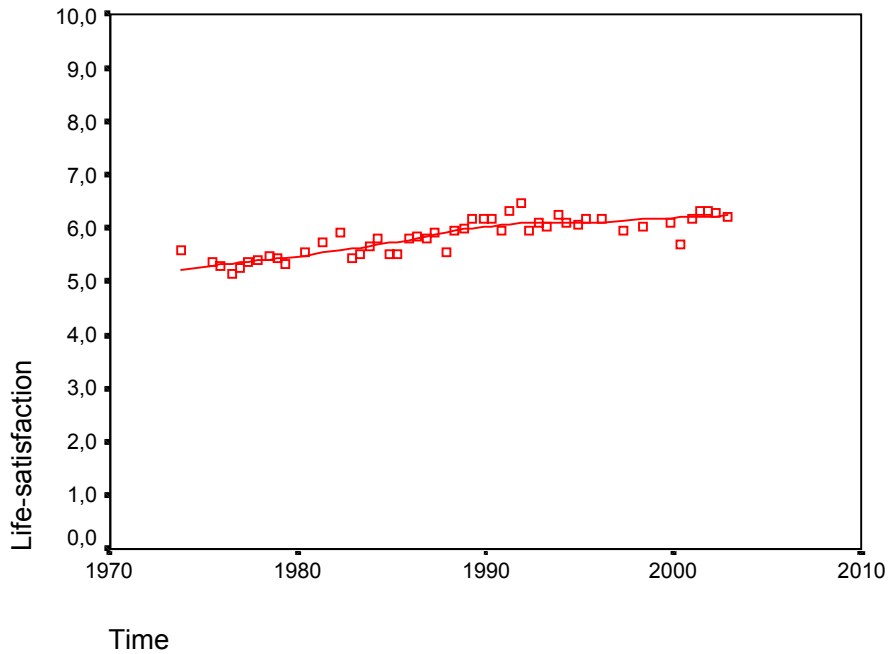

The linear regression coefficient for Greece is: -.016. 95 % confidence interval: [-.031,-.002]
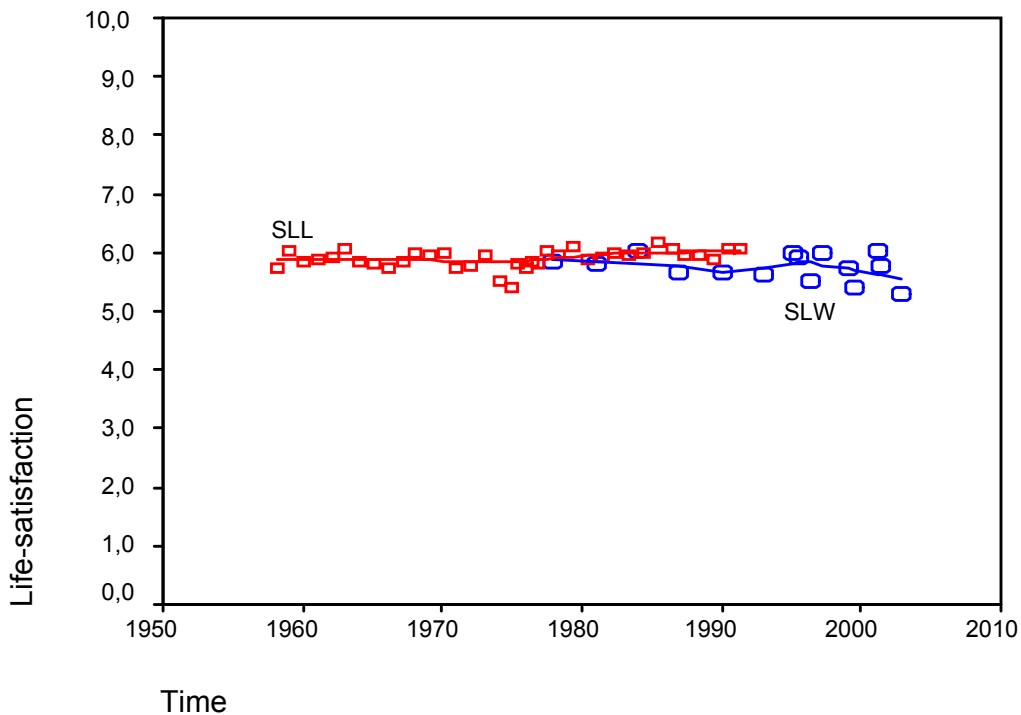
Life-satisfaction in Ireland

The linear regression coefficient for Ireland is: +.001. 95 % confidence interval: [-.010,+.012]

Life-satisfaction in Italy

The linear regression coefficient for Italy is: +.035. 95 % confidence interval: [+.028,+.042]

Life-satisfaction in Japan
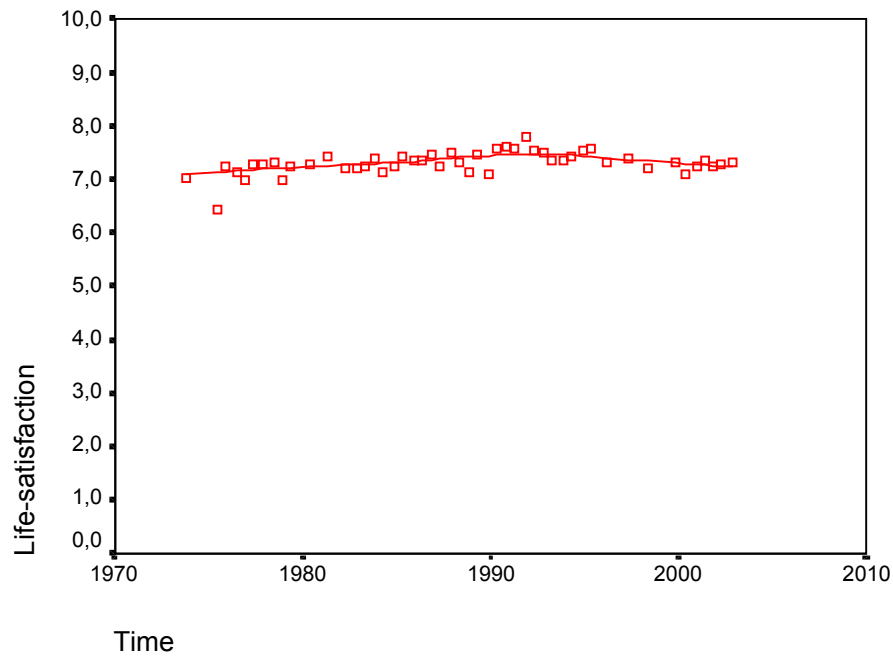

The linear regression coefficient on item O-SLL/u/sq/v/4 over the years 1958-1991 : +.005. CI95 [-.000, +.010]
The linear regression coefficient on item O-SLW/u/sq/4/5 over the years 1978-2003: -.008. CI95 [-.025, +.002]
The linear regression coefficient for the combined items over the years 1958-2003 is:-.002. CI95 [-.007, +.002]

Life-satisfaction in Luxembourg

The linear regression coefficient for Luxembourg is: +.010. 95 % confidence interval: [+.003,+.017]

Life-satisfaction in The Netherlands
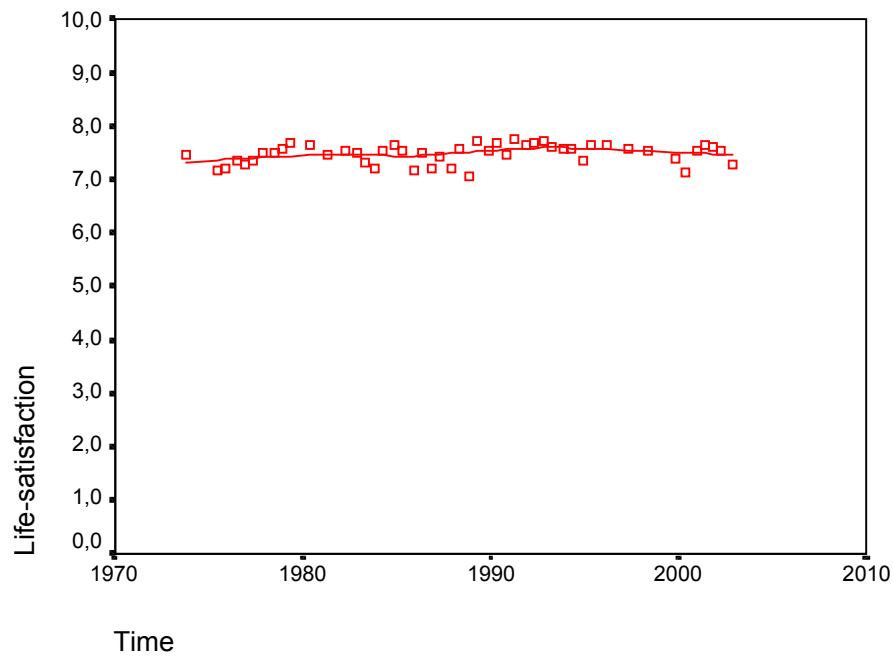
The linear regression coefficient for The Netherlands is: +.005. 95 % confidence interval: [-.001,+.011]

Life-satisfaction in Portugal
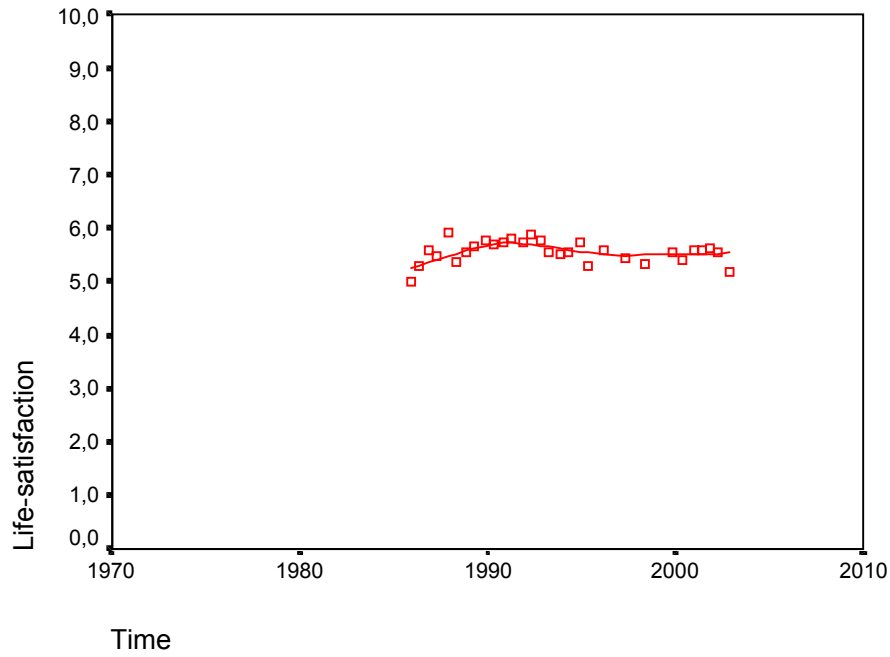
The linear regression coefficient for Portugal is: -.003. 95 % confidence interval: [-.019,+.011]

Life-satisfaction in Spain
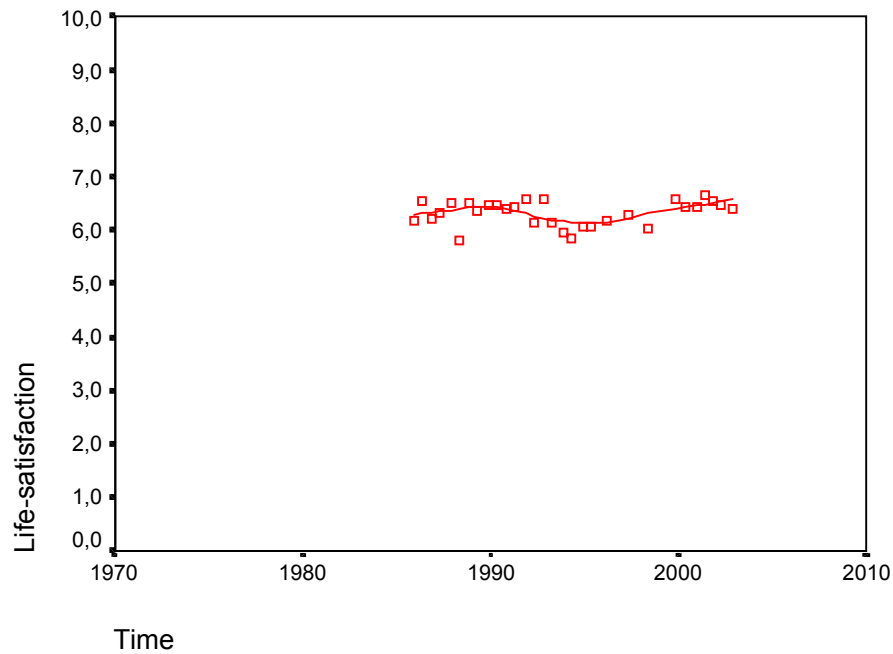
The linear regression coefficient for Spain is: +.007. 5 % confidence interval: [-.010,+.024]

Happiness in the United States
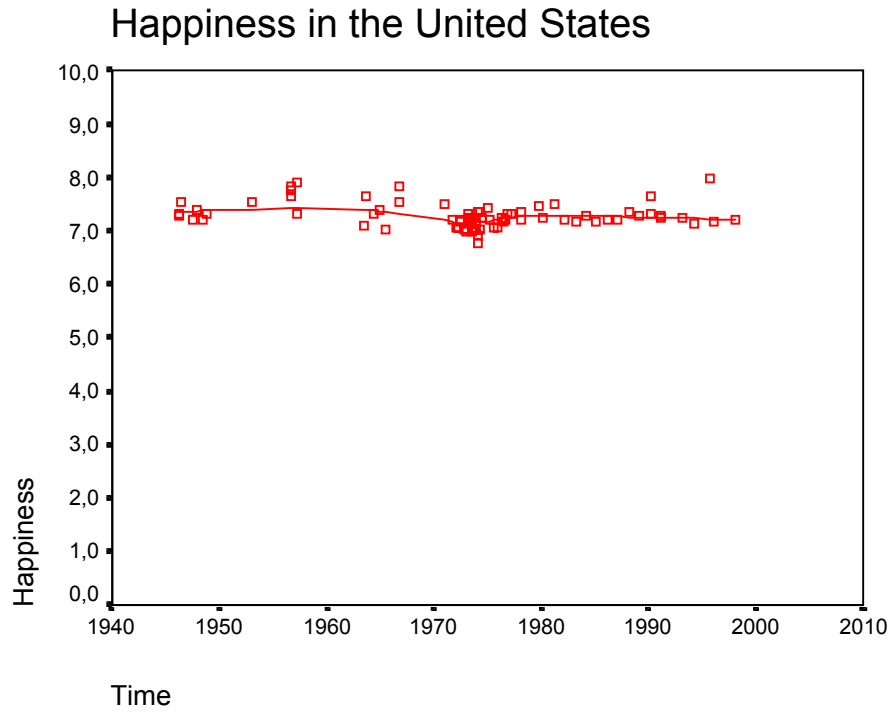

The linear regression coefficient for the USA is: -.004. 95 % confidence interval: [-.008,+.001]

Technical details

1. Happiness assessed by means of surveys in general public samples. This list is based on standard surveys that used the same question over the years.

2. The trend lines in this report are based on slightly different questions:
   - In the EU-nations, happiness was assessed by a single item on life-satisfaction:
     "How satisfied are you with the life you lead?
       o Very satisfied   (4)
       o Fairly satisfied   (3)
       o Not very satisfied   (2)
       o Not at all satisfied   (1)
     This question is categorized as type 121B, subtype O-SLu/u/sq/v/4/b.

   - In Japan a similar question on life-satisfaction was used:
     "On the whole, are you.. with the life you lead?"
       o Fully satisfied   (4)
       o Not fully, but to some extend satisfied   (3)
       o As yet unsatisfied   (2)
       o Very dissatisfied   (1)
     This question is categorized as O-SLL/u/sq/v/4/c. Two slightly different variant have been used: in 1958-63 version a, and since 1987 version b. The precise wording of these variants can be found in the item bank.

     From 1978 on, the following question has also been used in Japan
     Overall, how satisfied are you with your present life?
       o Very satisfied   (5)
       o Fairly satisfied   (4)
       o Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   (3)
       o Fairly dissatisfied   (2)
       o Very dissatisfied   (1)
     This question is categorized as O-SLW/u/sq/v/5 and has also been used in slightly different variants (a, g. k, l). The precise wording of which can be found in the item bank.

   - In the USA the question asked about happiness:
     "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days?
     Would you say you are….:
       o Very happy   (3)
       o Pretty happy   (2)
       o Not too happy   (1)
     This question is categorized as type 111A, subtype O-HL/c/sq/v/3/aa.

   - The original scores on these questions were transformed linearly to a comparable 0-10 point scale.

   - Section 4/3 of the introductory text provides more detail about the classification of items and transformation of scores.

3. The regression-coefficient stands for the size of the angle of the linear regression line trough the dots (averages) in the time charts. A positive coefficient denotes a rise in average happiness, and a negative coefficient a decline. A regression-coefficient of +.01 means 0.01 point increase on this 0-10 happiness scale per year, which implies that a one point rise of happiness would take hundred years at this pace of change.

    Continuation of this trend in the US would mean that average happiness declines from about 7.21 in 1998 to 7.00 in 2050.

Cite as:
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