GEFÖRDERT VOM
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

Ortrud Leßmann, Peter Bartelheimer
Capability, participation and precarity as concepts in socio-economic reporting

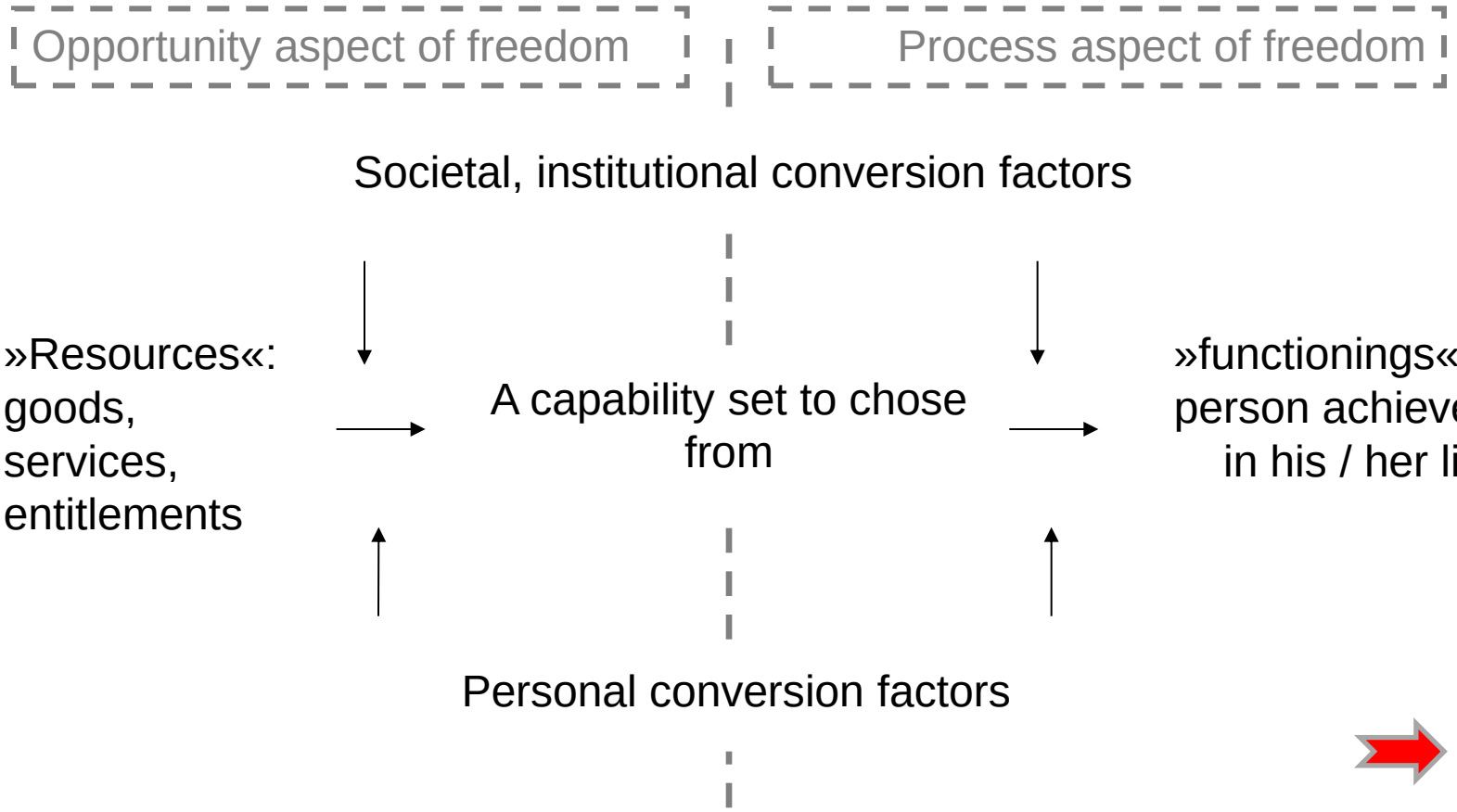
SASE 2015 at LSE, London

Mini-Conference »Inequality of what?«

The Agenda of Socioeconomic Reporting for Germany (soeb)

- **A network of research institutions and data centers, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science**
  - Work in progress: 3rd Report (2013 – 2016)
- **Direct and multidimensional measures of individual welfare**
  - Participation – A German rendering of capability as normative reference
- **A broader socioeconomic approach to reporting**
  - Mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion linking production to unequal individual welfare outcomes in German capitalism
  - Transformation of socioeconomic model changes interplay of (welfare) state, firms and households as sectors of welfare economics
- **To monitor inequality calls for sociological concepts of stratification**
  - Graded social positions: multidimensional profile of collective areas (»zones«) of participation, precarity and disaffiliation (R. Castel)

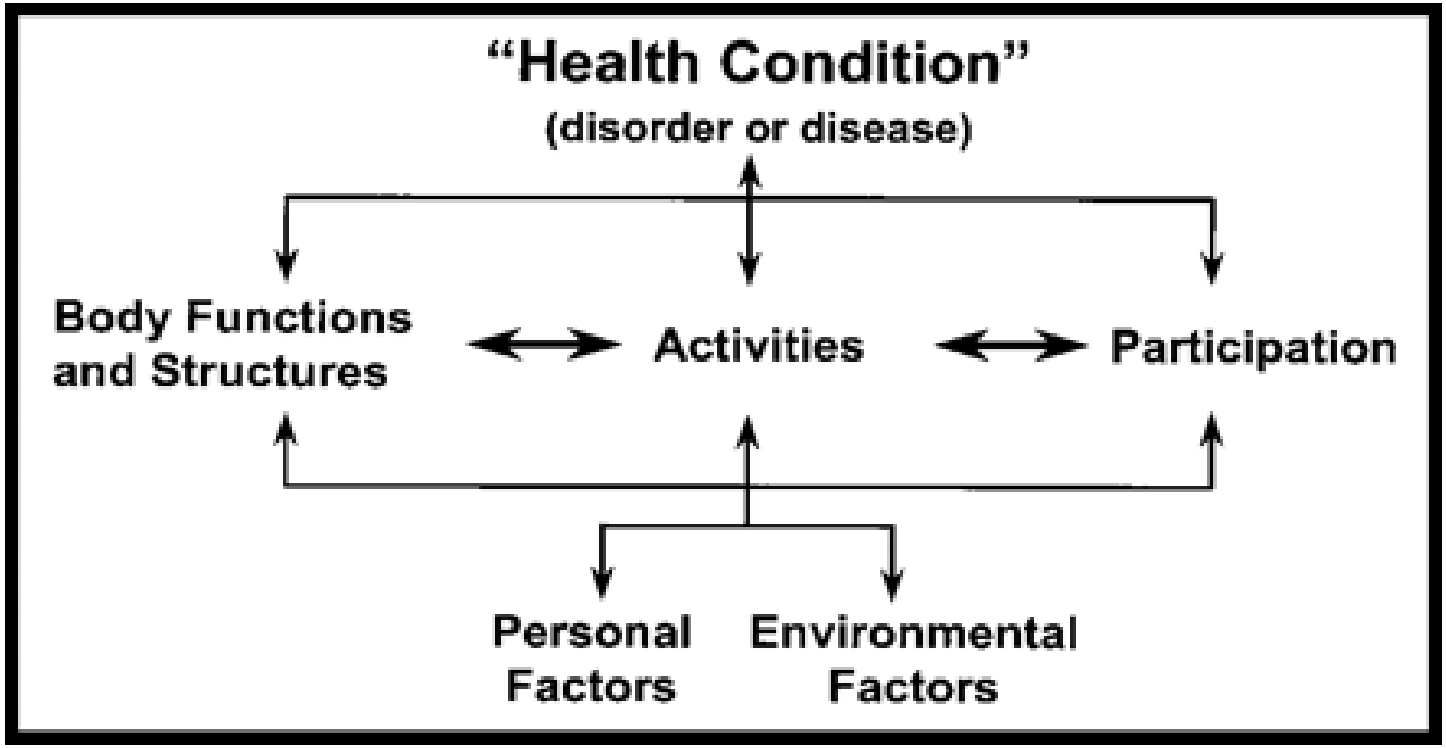
Basic model of participation in soeb



Capability, participation and UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)

- **Capability is not easily translated into German**
  - Concept of »life situations« as a native German paradigm of direct welfare measurement
  - »Teilhabe« (participation) as a common, albeit vague normative reference in German political discourse
- **Participation and inclusion as a new rights-based political agenda**
  - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD): »full and effective participation (>Teilhabe<) and inclusion in society«
  - Participation as a social human right
  - Shift of focus towards social structures restricting or enabling participation of individuals and groups with conditions of disadvantage
    - Disability results from interaction of persons and their environment
- **Striking similarity between capability and UN CRPD concept**

- **Basic model in International Classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF)**



Participation in ICF / UN CRPD and *soeb* – comparison of the concepts

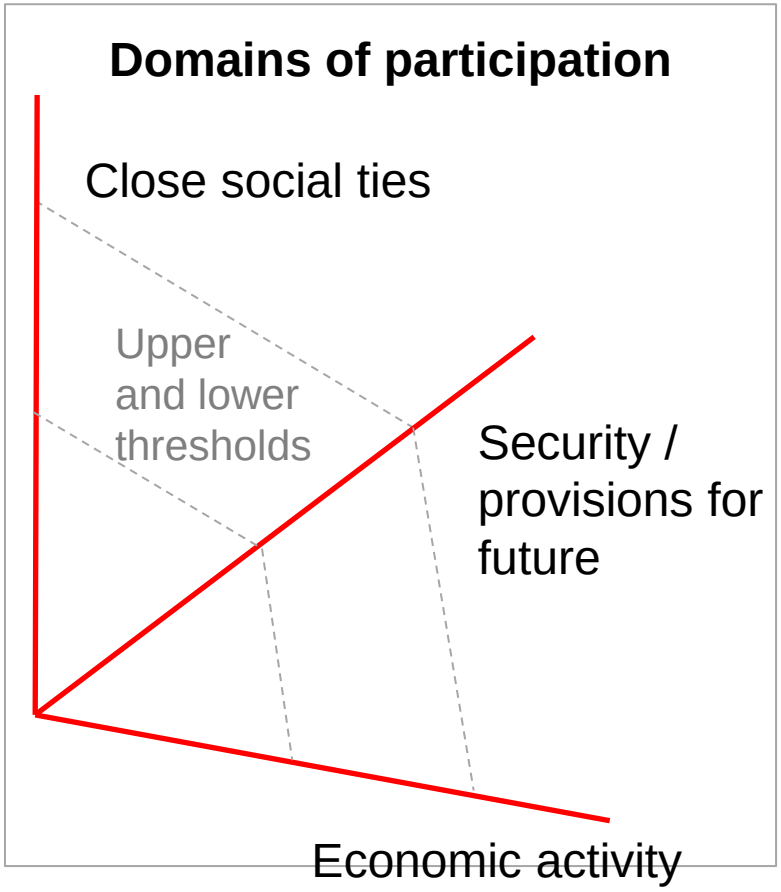
- **Common ground**
  - Target: claims to equality address active and self-determined conduct of life in society
  - Disadvantage (impairment): results from interaction of personal and structural factors
  - Normative reference to established societal standards for ways of life
- **Differences in construction of »conversion«**
  - ICF: scope for »conversion« of body functions and structures
  - *soeb*: scope for »conversion« of resources and entitlements
- **Differences in emphasis**
  - *soeb*: welfare effects enhanced by freedom of choice
  - ICF, UN CRPD: strategies for more inclusive structures and institutions

Patterns of participation and precarity

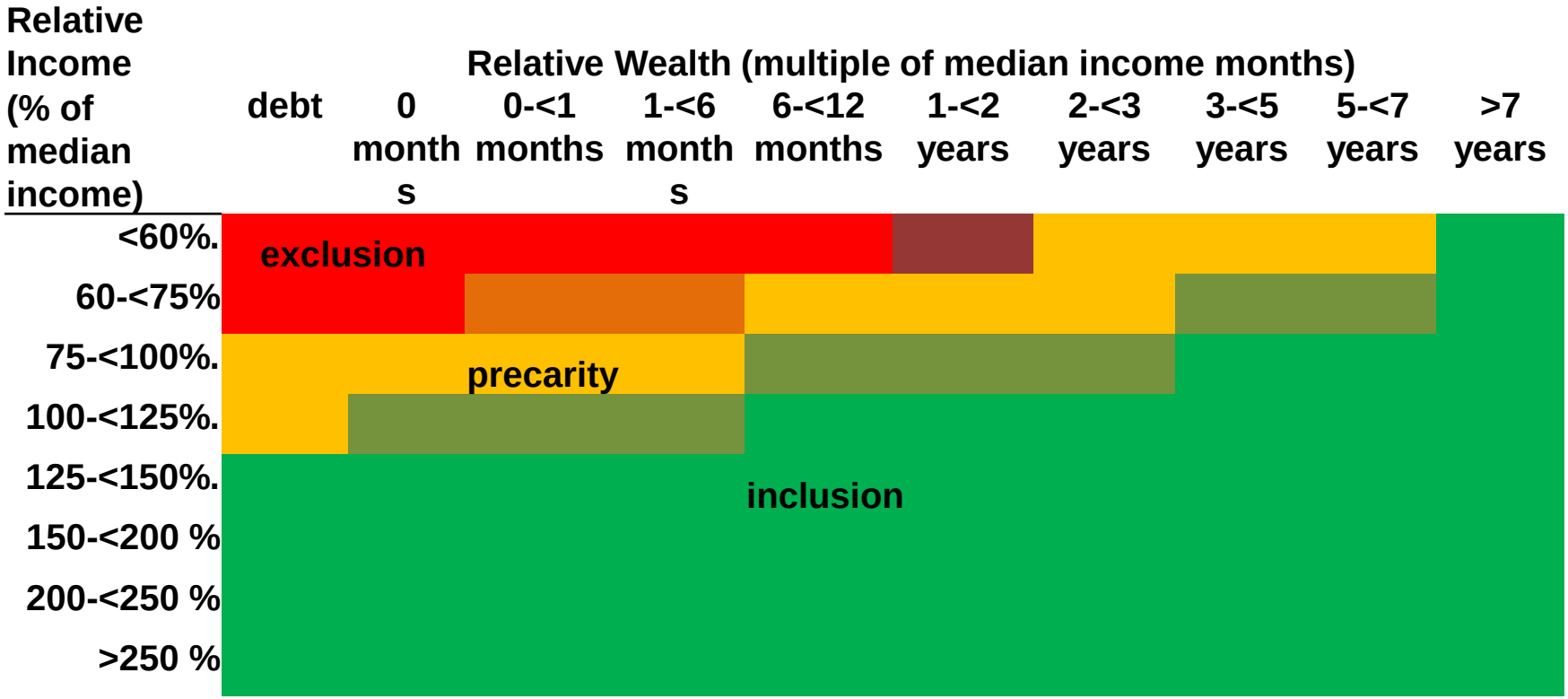
- **Participation in what? Domains and patterns of participation**
  - Inclusion via labor market, social networks,social rights (Castel)
  - Shared norms of participation – pattern of participation:
- **Emergence of a zone of precarity**
  - socio-economic transformation,
    - stable und at-risk patterns of participation coexist
  - Shared norms of participation become less accessible to many
  - Binary distinction of poor / non-poor, inclusion / exclusion falls short
  - Which life domains determine graded social positions?
- **Where and how to draw fault lines**
  - »Zoning« requires two cutoff points in any observed domain / dimension

Precarity: Domains and determinants

- **What determines participation**
  - Unequal resources
    Unequal conversion factors
- **Individuals and households**
  - Precarious employment need not translate into precarity for individuals
  - Households provide ties and securities – they compensate or aggravate risk
- **Time effects matter**
  - Dynamic concept of precarity – individual life course and linked (family) lives



Example of operationalization: joint distribution of income and wealth



Goebel/Kottwitz 2015

More ...

GEFÖRDERT VOM
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

- **http://www.soeb.de**
  - Reporting on the socioeconomic development in Germany
- **http://ipa.hsu-hh.de/lessmann**
  - Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg (HSU)
    Institute for Employment and Labour Relations (IPA)
- **http://www.sofi-goettingen.de**
  - Soziological Research Institute (SOFI)
    at the Georg-August University Göttingen