

# In memoriam Hans-Jürgen Krupp

\*April 15, 1933 – †July 29, 2024



Photo: Stephan Roehl © DIW Berlin.

The founder of the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) passed away on July 29, 2024, at the age of 91. Following his studies in industrial engineering, Hans-Jürgen Krupp was appointed Professor of Economic and Social Policy at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt am Main in 1969 and headed the university from 1975 to 1979. From 1972, he headed the project "Social Policy Decision and Indicator System for the Federal Republic of Germany" (SPES). SPES, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), incorporated a multidisciplinary focus with researchers from the social sciences and economics. At the end of the 1970s, this research group formed the nucleus for the DFG Collaborative Research Center 3 "Microanalytical Foundations of Social Policy" at the Universities of Frankfurt am Main and Mannheim. In 1979, Hans-Jürgen Krupp was appointed President of the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) and, as the applicant and head of sub-project B-5, "The Socio-Economic Panel," was responsible for establishing this long-term study for researching and analyzing social change. He did so at DIW Berlin, starting in 1983, with the

first wave of data collection in 1984. Initially funded for five and then ten years, SOEP has now been in existence for 40 years and is also an important international source of social science data on Germany.

On the occasion of the 25th wave of the SOEP, Hans-Jürgen Krupp recalled his founding idea for a household panel study, first developed in the 1970s: "It was theoretical considerations on personal income distribution and the realization of the emerging possibilities of electronic data processing that made me realize that, in view of these improved analysis possibilities, a longitudinal micro-data basis would be indispensable for answering many questions about our social development" ([available online, only in German](#)).

In the summer of 1988, the SOEP founder moved to Hamburg to work in politics, first as Senator for Economics and later as Senator for Finance. Hans-Jürgen Krupp was subsequently President of the then Landeszentralbank Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and a member of the Central Bank Council of the Deutsche Bundesbank.



In the summer of 2012, Hans-Jürgen Krupp and his Sfb-3 colleague Wolfgang Zapf engaged in a lively chat and discussion about the history of the SOEP with former colleagues, SOEP employees, and SOEP doctoral students. Photo: Stephan Roehl © DIW Berlin.

Even in these new roles and in his retirement, Hans-Jürgen Krupp always remained associated with SOEP, regularly sharing with us his original motives and convictions for his idea of a panel study. He was not only a valued advisor to the SOEP directors who followed him, but also a regular guest of honor at various SOEP conferences and events. Hans-Jürgen Krupp originally associated the SOEP and its establishment at DIW Berlin with the hope that it could form the data basis for a microfoundation of macroeconomics. Instead, however, macroeconomics was supplanted by an increasing microfoundation of research, for which the SOEP could specifically provided the necessary empirical basis. Hans-Jürgen Krupp concluded on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the SOEP with the following words about the beginnings of the panel in 2008: "It can be seen as an irony of history that the central motive for applying for the panel had lost significance, without the SOEP having been less useful as a result - on the contrary" ([available online, p. 24, only in German](#)).

In Hans-Jürgen Krupp, the SOEP has lost its far-sighted founding father, a formative leadership figure, and a long-time companion and supporter of the SOEP. We are deeply saddened and our thoughts are with his family. We will honor his memory.

On behalf of all current and many former SOEP employees.

Jan Goebel, Markus Grabka, Carsten Schröder, Sabine Zinn (SOEP division heads) and Jürgen Schupp (Director of SOEP from 2011 to 2018 and retired in 2022).