

Wolfgang Aschauer
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New directions in cross-cultural well-being research

In this article, I attempt to give insights into the potentials and limits of quantitative well-being approaches. Starting with the main historical achievements, I present an overview of the development stages in quality of life research. I then focus on the potential new field of societal well-being, since theoretically driven and multidimensional concepts to measure perceptions of societal developments are still widely absent in well-being research. I give examples based on cross-national surveys of how

to monitor societal well-being over time and how to test for equivalent indicators. As a last step, I focus on the limits of cross-cultural comparisons as the main methodological challenge in well-being research. Content validity is especially crucial to assess well-being in a culture-specific way, and several steps must be achieved to reach the goal of comparability. I end with the systematic question of how to potentially fulfil both quality criteria in cross-cultural research, i.e. content validity and equivalence.

Barbara Castillo Rico
Marion Leturcq
Lidia Panico
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Childhood poverty and deprivation at the starting gate in France

Examples using Elfe survey

Income has been increasingly criticized as an indicator of childhood living conditions, especially at young ages. In this paper, we present a picture of poverty and multi-dimensional deprivation of children in France, around the time of their birth and during the first year of life. To do so, we use both an income poverty measure as well as a multiple deprivation approach, applied to a nationally representative survey of over 18,000 children born in France in 2011 (the Elfe cohort). We examine

four dimensions of children's daily lives: material conditions; parenting; housing conditions; and extreme housing conditions. Our results show that income poverty does not always overlap with deprivation: some children live in income-poor households without being deprived in the dimensions we study, and vice versa. Notably, we find only a small overlap between extreme housing deprivation or parental involvement and income poverty. Furthermore, we show that the population groups most at risk of deprivation in early life vary according to the dimension considered, and are distinct from the determinants of income poverty. For example, while single motherhood is the main driver of income poverty, it is not associated with an increased risk of housing deprivation nor with low parental involvement, when other socio-demographic characteristics are controlled for. This approach therefore adds more precision and nuance to our understanding of child poverty at very young ages in France.

Ingrid Schoon
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The well-being of children in the face of socio-economic deprivation and family instability

This paper explores the role of parenting practices in promoting the well-being of children growing up in conditions of socio-economic deprivation and family instability. Using data collected for the UK Millennium Cohort Study, a multi-dimensional approach is adopted in conceptualising family adversity and children's well-being. The effect of income poverty on children's cognitive, social

and emotional adjustment is assessed, considering several related adverse factors, such as family demographics, family instability, housing, and area deprivation, to evaluate their independent and combined risk effect. The findings suggest that persistent and intermittent poverty are significantly associated with poorer academic attainment and socio-emotional behaviour adjustment of young children. Family structure and instability show an independent risk effect, especially regarding social behaviour adjustment. Generally, the combined effect of socio-economic and family-related risk factors on children's adjustment is stronger than individual effects. Parenting practices do not completely mediate the impact of family adversity on children's adjustment across domains but show independent and beneficial effects - in particular regarding the quality of the parent-child relationship. Adopting a multi-dimensional approach facilitates a better understanding of independent and cumulative risk effects and enables the unpacking of differential effects of parenting practices.

Anna Garriga
Laura Bernardi
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Custody arrangements and social inequalities among children

The recent concentration of divorce and separation among the least advantaged, and the increase in shared physical custody of children raises the question of how such family developments affect social inequalities among children. Our paper contributes to this debate by examining the moderating role of parental socioeconomic background in the relationship between children's health and well-being and child custody arrangements. From the Spanish *'Health Behaviour in School-aged Children'* survey, we test the competing compensatory and floor effect hypotheses, distinguishing the separate effects of father's and mother's education and occupation on multiple children outcomes, such as psychological complaints and life satisfaction. Our results indicate that growing up in a "non-intact" family still has greater negative consequences for disadvantaged children, and that social inequalities in child health and well-being after separation persist in contemporary Spain.

Jonathan Bradshaw
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Child subjective well-being studies

Some points of discussion

The justification for undertaking research on child subjective well-being has been challenged on three grounds: that it is a smokescreen diverting attention from more serious issues in childhood; that the measures of subjective well-being available lack reliability and validity; and that the results of the research have little or no policy relevance. Each of these challenges are considered drawing on national and comparative empirical research (with a partial focus on France) undertaken over the last ten years. It is acknowledged that there is some truth in all three arguments, nevertheless research on subjective well-being has a part in the study of all domains of child subjective well-being. Subjective well-being has been and continues to be measured over time and between countries successfully; and there are examples of policy makers acting as a result of the findings.

Michal Molcho
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Children and well-being from an international perspective

This paper examines well-being in childhood in a historical context, and in the context of the family and school and relationships with parents, based on a large cross-sectional survey. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC) is an international survey that has collected data every four years since 1984 from children and adolescents in over 40 countries in Europe and North America. The HBSC study aims to gain new insights into, and increase our understanding of, young people's health and well-being, health behaviours and their social context in three critical points in the life of adolescents: 11, 13 and 15 years old. The study collects data on various aspects of adolescents' lives, including their perceived health and well-being, and relationships with their parents. The findings from the HBSC study indicate that the gender gap in well-being and in communication with parents increases with age. If boys and girls report poorer well-being and communication with their parents as they grow older, these decreases are larger among girls than boys.