



OPTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK ON CHILD WELL-BEING AND CHILD POLICIES

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Background: “Diverging Destinies of Families”?

- Substantial changes in family living arrangements over the past decades, resulting from the increase in women’s labour force participation and from changes in family and gender relations
- Changes in family life contribute to increase inequalities?
 - Changes in family behaviour are associated with **gains** in household resources for families with **highly educated parents**, while they leads to **losses** in resources for children borne to **less educated parents**.
 - Need to look at consequences of key changes in demographic and intra-family behaviour, which vary with socio-economic status => increase inequalities?
- Policy responses are diverse: work-family reconciliation policies, support to sole and “non-married” parents, child maintenance systems, practices regarding child custody, etc.
 - Whether and how these policies contribute to slow the increase in inequalities among children is still unclear

- Family Database
 - Trends in family living arrangements, household composition, parental work, child poverty
- Doing Better for Children (2009), How's Life for children (2015):
 - Statistical portrait of Child well-being, but little focus variations by socio-economic status
- Doing Better for Families (2011)
 - Influence of early maternal employment on child development (Australia, Canada, Denmark, United Kingdom, United States)
 - Families poverty risk
 - Sole parents and child maintenance systems
- Divided we stand (2011):
 - impact of assortative mating on income inequality (not the main driver of income inequalities), but:
 - have not look at the impact on child poverty or other child outcomes
 - Did not look at the influence of other demographic and family changes

Child poverty: are demographic, economic and policy determinants changing?

- What we know from past cross-national studies:
 - Changes in demographic have overall contributed to reduce child poverty (esp. the aging of parents, and the increase in their educational attainment); while the increase in sole parenthood increase poverty risk.
 - Maternal employment strongly reduces poverty risk in both couple and sole parent families
 - Mixed impact of public income transfers

Chen and Corak, 2008 – changes in poverty rates in the 1990s

Whiteford and Adema, 2007

Child poverty: questions for future research (1)

- Do changes in demographic behaviour affect child poverty?
 - Changes in partnership formation
 - Changes in childbearing behaviour (drop of teenage pregnancies, postponement of motherhood, reduction of family size)
 - Rise in parental separation
 - Has the influence of demographic factors on child poverty increased over time?
 - Role of parental employment to protect children from poverty
 - Does the rise in in-work poverty affect the protective role of parental employment
- How do policies child poverty trends?
 - Cash family, social assistance and spending on basic social protection (healthcare, unemployment)
 - Key child-level services (healthcare, nutrition programs, childcare, preschool)
 - Family planning policies
 - Work –family reconciliation policies (in-work benefits, leave entitlements, childcare services)
 - How do these policies interact with economic development?

Pooled time-series data on child poverty, demographic, employment and policy trends

Child poverty: questions for future research (2)

- What are the « socio-economic profiles » of child poverty? Are their characteristics changing over time?
 - Household/demographic composition, income composition, parental employment status/intensity
- To which extent is income poverty linked to other aspects of child deprivation?

Household survey data

- Include as much as possible the experience of “emerging countries”:
 - To analyse the relationships between policies and economic development and to look at how different policies interact

Family Settings and Child Outcomes

- How does family life affect child outcomes? :
 - Income (consumption goods and childcare) / Parental employment situation
 - Parenting activities (type, time and quality), including fathers' involvement
 - Child interaction with sibling and step-sibling
 - Home environment
 - Use/quality of formal care services
- Do changes in family settings over childhood (as, for instance, due to parental separation then re-partnering) have cumulative effects on child outcomes?
 - Are effects persisting over time or fading out?
 - Differences by gender?
- Can early programmes of formal care *eliminate* or *prevent* adverse effects of changes in family environment?

Longitudinal child cohort data: Australia, Canada, Denmark, United Kingdom, United States....France (?); Ireland (?), Italy (?), New Zealand (?)

- Develop comparative information on families living and care arrangements and on their institutional context

Consequences of family dissolution and policy responses

- The « Costs » of separation depends on :
 - Solution adopted for child custody
 - Payment of child alimony by one parent to the other – non-payment rates are often high.
 - Child maintenance systems, and other Tax-benefit support to sole parent
 - Housing conditions of resident and non-resident parent
 - Indirect « costs » due to the effect of separation on employment situation of parents
 - Gender, marital status
- How do child support systems work?
 - Role of legal obligation, court decisions, child/parent support agencies
 - Rules applied to fix the amount of child alimony, and consequences of changing rules on the living standards of split families.
 - Country practices to enforce payment of child alimony
- What is the effect of parental separation on living standards of families?
 - Micro-simulation models to estimate the effect of child alimony payments/child custody arrangements on household living standards, and at the aggregate level on child poverty and/or on public spending on child maintenance benefit.
 - Short- and medium-term consequences of parental separation on split families living standards, as compared to « intact » families - using longitudinal data.

Questions for you

- What are the important issues missing?
- What should be (policy-relevant) research priorities?
- What might be feasible, given data availability and limitations

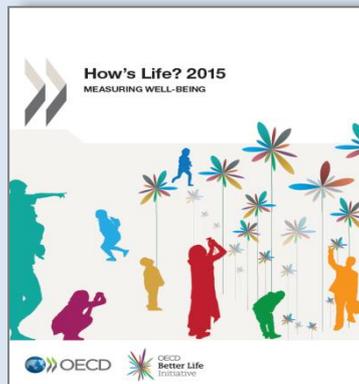
Thank you and further information

3rd Expert Consultation on Child Well-Being

<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/child-well-being-2015.htm>

OECD Family Database

<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>



OECD (2015) How is Life?

www.oecd.org/howslife



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