

A Quarterly Review of Social Reports and Research on Social Indicators, Social Trends, and the Quality-of-Life.  
News Included of Research Committee 55 on Social Indicators and Social Reporting of the International Sociological Association.

### REPORT ON THE XI ISQOLS CONFERENCE

## "DISCOVERING NEW FRONTIERS IN QUALITY OF LIFE RESEARCH"

### VENICE, ITALY, NOVEMBER 1 TO 4, 2012

Filomena Maggino

Conference Chair and President of ISQOLS

The 11th conference of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies took place in Venice, November 1-4, 2012. Some 240 participants from five continents peacefully invaded the San Giobbe Campus of the University "Ca' Foscari" of Venice.

The programme was particularly rich, covering different topics and issues (World Regions and international comparisons, Population Segments, Demographic issues, Life Domains Issues, Territorial issues, Social Capital Issues, Conceptual Issues, Methodological and Technical Issues).

The fil rouge linking all the issues discussed at the conference was the idea of "new frontiers" which were identified with reference to different perspectives:

- how to move from academic research to policy decisions;
- how knowledge yielded by scientific research can support policy decisions, in terms of (i) conceptual and empirical findings and (ii) statistical data provided by different organizations and institutions at national and international levels; and
- what role ISQOLS can play in these processes.

These perspectives materialized in the plenary sessions, which aroused great interest from all participants, as the full rooms testified.

Enrico Giovannini, President of the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), organized and chaired the opening session on *Did Quality Quality-of-Life become a goal and a measure for the progress of societies?* The session included the following presentations: Walter Vitali, member of the Senate – Italian Parliament, testified how the most advanced political thought is sensitive to consider wellbeing and its sustainability – defined through a shared process – as a policy goal; Marco Romano, full professor of Aesthetics of the City at the University of Genoa, affirmed very clearly how much beauty is important in order to promote and improve the quality of life by recalling the philosophical approach of the great architects from the Italian Renaissance; Romina Boarini, head of Measuring Well-Being and Progress Section, Statistics Directorate at OECD, described the process initiated at the OECD urging all the advanced countries to include in their policy actions the notion of sustainable progress and shared wellbeing.

(Continued on next page.)

### In this Issue...

#### REPORTS FROM THE 2012 VENICE CONFERENCE

- Report on the XI ISQOLS Conference "Discovering New Frontiers in Quality of Life Research" ..... 1-3
- Viewing the World at the Venice ISQOLS conference 2012 ..... 4-5

#### SOCIAL REPORTS - UPDATES & REVIEWS:

- Differences in Child Well-Being Among U.S. States ..... 6-10

#### CONFERENCES IN 2012

- The 4th International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI), Conference Theme: Child Indicators in a Globalized World ..... 3

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Call for Papers CCFR-SIR Special Issue Conference on Consumer Finance and Social Indicators in China ..... 11
- Call For Papers Applied Research in Quality of Life, ISQOLS ..... 5
- THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR QUALITY-OF-LIFE STUDIES: Headquarters and WWW Homepage ..... 12
- SINET World Wide Web Homepage ..... 5

#### Editor's Note:

This issue of SINET commences with two reports on the November 2012 International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies Conference in Venice, Italy. The first is a general overview of the Conference by the Conference Chair and ISQOLS President Filomena Maggino. The second report by former ISQOLS President Wolfgang Glatzer highlights some interesting studies of worldwide variations in the quality of life that were presented at the Conference – one based on objective indicators and one based on happiness measures. This is followed by an extended abstract/synopsis of an article by William P. O'Hare and colleagues on the construction of a new state-level child well-being index for the United States and analyses of variations therein. Announcement of forthcoming conferences and calls for papers complete the issue.

# SINET

Social Indicators Network News

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On the second day of the conference, an interesting plenary on *Measuring wellbeing in Italy: the new challenges of the BES project*, organized and chaired by Linda Laura Sabbadini, Director of the Department of Social and Environmental Statistics at the Italian National Institute of Statistics, illustrated the BES (**B**enessere **E**quo e **S**ostenibile, Fair and Sustainable Wellbeing; <http://www.misuredelbenessere.it/>) project. It represents a joint initiative of CNEL (National Council for Economics and Labour) and ISTAT aimed at identifying new indicators for measuring the progress of the country. The project involves unions and management, civil society and academic experts, by considering concepts not only related just to [macro-]economics but also to equity and sustainability with reference to social and environmental dimensions. Two committees have been established:

- a Steering Committee (jointly established by CNEL & ISTAT), made up of representatives from unions and management, civil society, . . . , whose task is defining the domains to be considered in the indicators identification;
- and a Scientific Committee (established by ISTAT), made up by academics experts and professors and ISTAT researchers, whose task is identifying and selecting indicators. It has been organized into subcommittees (consistently with the domains defined by the Steering Committee).

The whole process involves Linda Laura Sabbadini (co-chair of both Committees) and as well as by other components of the Scientific Committee, Viviana Egidi (University of Roma "La Sapienza"), Andrea Brandolini (Bank of Italy), Filomena Maggino (University of Florence), and Nicoletta Pannuzi (ISTAT).

Later on the second day, Antonella Delle Fave (full professor of Psychology at the Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences, University of Milan and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Happiness Studies*) gave a successful keynote lecture on Wellbeing and disabilities. She illustrated the challenges and resources in coping with disability and the experience of patients, caregivers and helping professionals from a psychological perspective. According to the WHO's guidelines, intervention strategies aimed at promoting well-being of persons with disabilities should take into account their daily subjective experience, the perspective of their caregivers, and the evaluation of professionals daily interacting with them. In line with this approach, several studies shed light on the positive impact of individual and contextual resources in coping with disability. In this presentation, attention was specifically paid to the quality of experience during daily life and activities, and the impact of disability on meaning making and long-term adjustment. These topics were explored among patients with neurodegenerative diseases and their caregivers, hospitalized patients undergoing rehabilitation trainings due to motor or psychiatric problems, and parents and teachers of children with motor and mental disabilities. Findings from studies using experience sampling procedures as well as a mixed-method approach were discussed. Their implications for quality of life promotion and policy implementation were outlined.

On the third day, a new initiative for ISQOLS conferences started, the "*Richard J. Estes lecture series on International and Comparative QoL Research*". Thanks to a generous contribution of Richard Estes (past President of ISQOLS and Emeritus Professor of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia), the "International and Comparative RJE lecture series on QOL Research" has been established. The lecture will be given at each of ISQOLS global conference and an ad-hoc committee will select the speaker.

Richard A. Easterlin was invited to open the series in Venice and gave the first series' lecture. The view at the beginning of the speech was extraordinary: the plenary room was completely full when Richard A. Easterlin (Professor of Economics – University of Southern California, member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a former Guggenheim Fellow, and past president of the Population Association of America, and the Economic History Association) started his lecture on *Happiness, growth, and public policy* – focused on the conference's theme. The audience's attention was particularly high and the thunderous applause was followed by an intense series of questions to the speaker. *SINET* will have an article related to Easterlin's Venetian speech in the February 2013 issue.

The plenary planned at the end of the third day aroused a great interest and appreciation  
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especially from young researchers interested in identifying *International institutions and organizations working on Quality Quality-of-of-Life from different perspectives*. In particular, the conference chair invited Marleen D De Smedt (Advisor to the Director-General at Eurostat – European Commission), Tadas Leoncikas (Research Manager – Living Conditions and Quality of Life unit – Eurofound), Romina Boarini (Head of Measuring Well-Being and Progress Section, Statistics Directorate – OECD), and Maria Laura Di Tommaso (University of Turin – Human Development and Capability Association - HDCA) to illustrate the work on quality of life research enhanced by their institutions, organizations and associations (data, survey projects, communication projects, conferences and meetings). One of the consequences of the plenary was the initiation of intense networking.

Describing the plenary sessions aims just at giving an idea of the level of the discussion in the ambit of the conference, testified also by the rich programme (<http://www.aiquav.it/isqols2012/Programme.htm>).

The closing plenary session had a particular meaning. The idea was to avoid the sadness of any good-bye word. The goal was, after having duly thanked the persons who concretely made possible the organizational success of the conference (the Local Organizing Committee and the agency VeneziaCongressi), to meet the participants in order to illustrate and discuss ISQOLS' future activities and initiatives. In particular, ISQOLS President (Filomena Maggino) and some of the past Presidents (Wolfgang Glatzer and Valerie Møller) together with the Executive Directore (Denis Huscka) showed the new ISQOLS website and logo. This restyling is not only formal but has also intends to encourage the development and proposal of new actions.

Participants submitted suggestions for future conferences and shared their ideas on how to develop possible networks. The intent to establish a new ISQOLS conference cycle (biannual, with regional conferences in between) was met with favour by the participants, as well as a suggestion to encourage the creation of working groups. A particular interesting suggestion was to include in the future conferences' discussions not only data and analyses but also philosophical issues.

From a strategic point of view, different items will be considered with particular care by ISQOLS: networking (through conferences and meetings but not only), sharing knowledge, competences and experiences (training courses, workshops, and so on), sharing possible research projects (by establishing working groups on defined issues, like indicators construction).

In concluding, it should be added that the participants also had an opportunity to have an intense experience not only from the scientific point of view. In fact, the participants' experience included also Venice and its particular living conditions, e.g., the high water, which on the first day of the conference reached almost 150 centimeters (corresponding to having more than 70 percent of the city completely covered by water) because of the strong winds from the south. In spite of that, the conference started as scheduled, including the workshops (*Introduction to multilevel modelling with applications to quality-of-life studies and Communication aspects of statistical graphics: how to use graphs for underlining messages*) which heroically took place on November 1 in the morning. These particular environmental conditions allowed the participants to experience one of the issues which generally are discussed about quality of life, (QoL in extreme environmental conditions). Actually, the experience aroused a great success, as the boots of the participants testified, by adding new insights to the definition and assessment of the Quality of Life.

The conference was just a moment in ISQOLS' life: Everyone is invited to be active part of our community.

# THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CHILD INDICATORS (ISCI) CONFERENCE

**THEME: CHILD INDICATORS IN A  
GLOBALIZED WORLD**

Hosted at Seoul National University, Seoul  
Korea

May 29-31, 2013

- Venue: Hoam Faculty House, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea
- Main theme: Child Indicators in a Globalized World: Implications for research, practice, and policy.
- Topics to be addressed in the conference included: theory and conceptual frameworks of child indicators, dissemination of child indicators, advocacy using child indicators, information technology and child indicators.
- Feature: Keynote speakers, plenary and concurrent sessions, pre/post conference workshops.
- Key contact at the host organization: Bong Joo Lee, Professor, Department of Social Welfare, Seoul National University.
- E-mail: [isci2013@gmail.com](mailto:isci2013@gmail.com)

## Important Deadlines

- Early Bird Registration: By February 28, 2013
- Regular Registration: After February 28, 2013

## SINET WORLD WIDE WEB HOMEPAGE

SINET has a homepage entry on the World Wide Web. It is located on the homepage of the Department of Sociology at Duke University and thus can be accessed by clicking on Department Publications on the address of that page, namely, <http://www.soc.duke.edu> or by typing in the full address <http://www.soc.duke.edu/resources/sinet/index.html>. The homepage for SINET contains a description of the Contents of the Current Issue as well as of Previous Issues. In addition, it has Subscription Information, Editorial Information, Issue-Related Links, and a link to the homepage of ISQOLS, the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies. The Issue-Related Links button has links to World Wide Web locations of data for the construction, study, and analysis of social and quality-of-life indicators that have been identified in previous issues of SINET. When you are surfing the Web, surf on in to our homepage.



## VIEWING THE WORLD AT THE VENICE ISQOLS CONFERENCE 2012

Wolfgang Glatzer

Our earth got its contours step by step. From the European point of view, there was originally a relatively small old world from which explorers started to discover the new world. In the course of hundreds of years, the geographical contours of our world were more and more elaborated. In continuing these efforts, the challenge to describe the world is put nowadays into the hands of quality of life researchers. To construct a world map of quality of life and wellbeing belongs to the new frontiers of quality of life research.

This article describes a selection of the contributions to track one at the Venice ISQOLS conference 2012, which was carried through in a stimulating architecture with lively discussions. The topic of the track was global views on quality of life (QoL). The approaches are complex. At least two basic types of views are available, the objective one - experts evaluate the state of the world - and the subjective one - people express their evaluation of the world.

Each approach was represented by one example at the conference. The objective view was expressed by Richard Estes (Philadelphia), who started with the concept of social progress and defined indicators for forty dimensions of social development; see the world map Distribution of WISP scores by Country & Development Zone, 2009 nearby. All in all, Richard gave a picture of the world, where the African continent showed high deficits and the Scandinavian countries in Northern Europe are leading in quality of life.

In contrast, the subjective view was presented by Ruut Veenhoven (Rotterdam), who collected data about satisfaction with life from more than 150 countries. He showed significant differences between the countries: There is a satisfied world including

large parts of Europe, North and South America and Australia. The remaining parts of the world are characterized by lower and lowest satisfaction with life; see the world map of Average Happiness in 149 Nations 1970-2010 nearby.

The two maps illustrate the world pattern the two views on QoL.

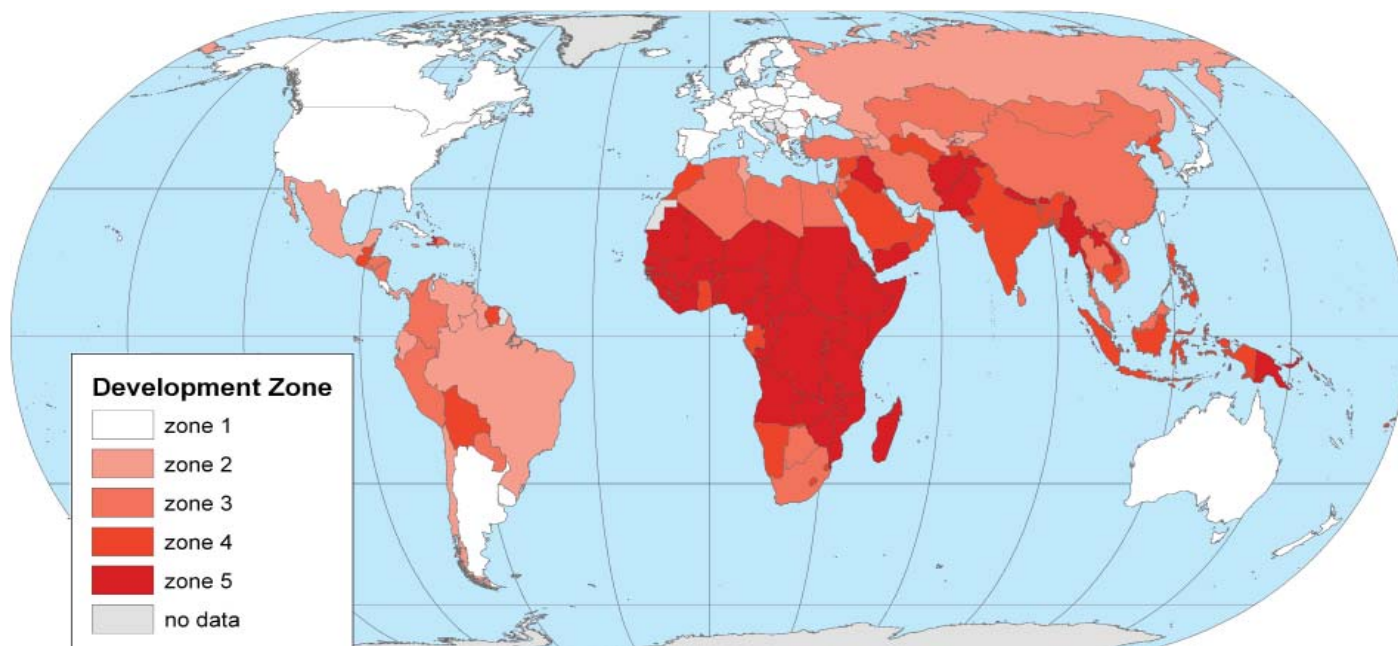
One problem the world faces is that "differences" can be tolerable but structural "inequalities" are often not acceptable from a moral view. Especially the inequality between developed and developing countries is often a cause for worries and tensions in the world system (as presented by Dowling John Malcolm, Hawaii). Policies are asked to improve core components of quality of life, especially mortality and morbidity in developing countries.

With respect to the question of why world development stagnates, the answer points to corruption occurring on a world wide scale. Presentations at the conference pointed to the concentration of the negative effects of corruption on human development growth in the less developed countries and additionally on health components (presented by Ortega Bienvenido, Malaga).

The final world view presentation focused on hopes and fears, which are fundamental for future orientations. An optimistic society is better than a fearful society and fears reduce individual wellbeing. But as pointed out (presenter Jennifer Gulyas, Frankfurt), fears can also have a positive function.

At this conference, as at their predecessors, worldwide networks were developed, global common knowledge was created, and worldwide bonds across different nations and cultures were established.

**Distribution of WISP Scores by Country & Development Zone, 2009**



## CALL FOR PAPERS

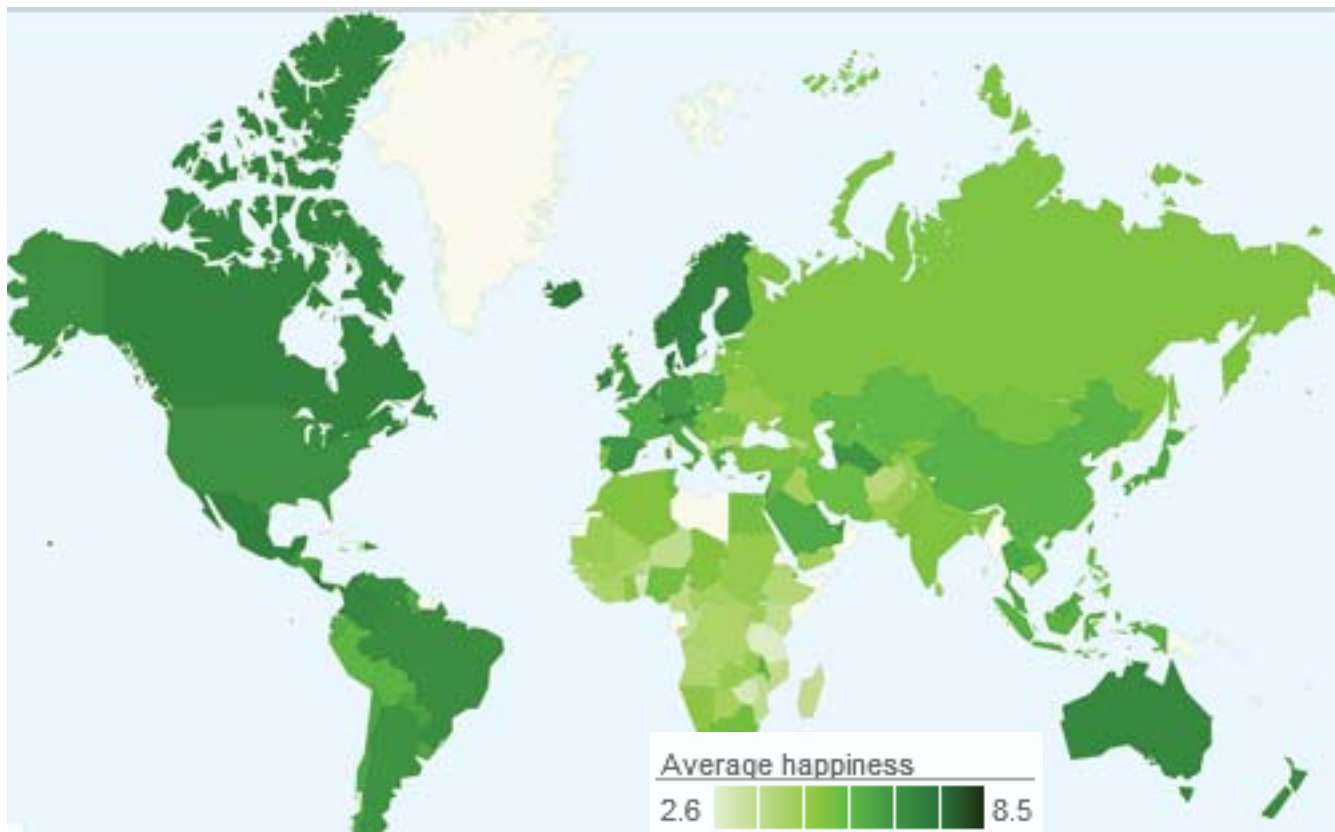
### APPLIED RESEARCH IN QUALITY OF LIFE

*The Official Journal of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies*

The aim of this journal is to publish conceptual, methodological and empirical papers dealing with quality-of-life studies in the applied areas of the natural and social sciences. As the official journal of ISQOLS, it is designed to attract papers that have some direct implications for or impact on practical applications of research on the quality-of-life. We welcome papers crafted from interdisciplinary, inter-professional and international perspectives. This research should guide decision making in a variety of professions, industries, nonprofit, and government sectors such as healthcare, travel and tourism, marketing, corporate management, community planning, social work, public administration, human resource management, among others. The goal is to help decision makers apply performance measures and outcome assessment techniques based on concepts such as well-being, human satisfaction, human development, happiness, wellness and quality of life. The Editorial Review Board is divided into specific sections indicating the broad scope of practice covered by the journal, and the section editors are distinguished scholars from many countries across the globe.

Authors interested in submitting manuscripts for publication should consult the website <http://ariq.edmgr.com>. Further information may be obtained by contacting one of the journal's Co-Editors: Richard Estes, University of Pennsylvania (USA), [restes@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:restes@sp2.upenn.edu); Alex C. Michalos, University of Northern British Columbia (Canada), [michalos@unbc.ca](mailto:michalos@unbc.ca); M. Joseph Sirgy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (USA), [sirgy@vt.edu](mailto:sirgy@vt.edu).

### AVERAGE HAPPINESS IN 149 NATIONS 1970-2010 How much people enjoy their life-as-a-whole on scale 0 to 10



(Cont

## DIFFERENCES IN CHILD WELL-BEING

### AMONG U.S. STATES

William P. O'Hare, Mark Mather, Genevieve Dupuis, Kenneth C. Land, Vicki L. Lamb, and Qiang Fu

Over the past 20 years, there has been an enormous increase in the collection and use of social indicators related to children in the United States, which has been fostered by a mix of scientists, researchers, advocates, practitioners, and government officials (Ben-Arieh and Fronese 2007; O'Hare 2011; Brown, et al. 2002; Brown and Botsko 1996; Brown et al. 2008; Brown and Moore 2007; Stagner et al. 2008). There is growing interest in merging data on children from different data sources, constructing child well-being indices, and sharing results with policymakers and the public. In response to this growing interest, researchers have engaged in numerous efforts to produce indices of child well-being at the national and state levels (O'Hare and Gutierrez 2012; Fernandes et al. 2012; Land et al. 2001; Moore et al. 2007; O'Hare and Lamb 2004; Mather et al. 2007; O'Hare and Lamb 2009). There have been no systematic research efforts to date, however, that have attempted to explain state differences in child well-being.

Recently, O'Hare et al. (2013, forthcoming) developed a broad quality-of-life measure based on 25 indicators of children's well-being to examine differences in the well-being of children across the U.S. states. The study builds on the work of the Child Well-Being Index (CWI) published yearly by the Foundation for Child Development (<http://fcd-us.org/resources/2011-child-well-being-index-cwi>). The CWI, which has published Annual Reports since 2004, is based on concepts and findings from quality-of-life/well-being research over the past 40 years. The O'Hare et al. (2013) article constructs a 25 item index that is termed the state CWI to address three questions: 1) How do states vary in terms of overall child well-being? 2) How are domains of well-being related across states? 3) What demographic factors, economic conditions, and public policies are associated with states that exhibit higher levels of child well-being?

#### Conceptualizing Child Well-Being

There are a number of definitions of child well-being in the literature but little consensus on exactly how to define the concept (Pollard and Lee 2002; Fernandes et al. 2012). A few definitions of child well-being from the literature are the following:

"Child well-being encompasses quality of life in a broad sense. It refers to a child's economic conditions, peer relationships, political rights, and opportunities for development." (Ben-Arieh and Fronese 2007, p. 249-250)

Child well-being is "a multidimensional construct incorporating mental/psychological, physical and social dimensions." (Columbo 1986, p.1)

Child well-being is "the ability to successfully, resiliently, and innovatively participate in the routines and activities deemed significant by a cultural community. Well-being is also the state of mind and feeling produced by participation in routines and activities." (Weiner 1988, p. 70)

"Children's health and well-being is directly related to their families' ability to provide for their essential physical, emotional and social needs." (Schor 1995, p.414)

These statements demonstrate that there is no consensus on exactly how child well-being should be conceptualized but most analysts think of child well-being as a global concept involving multiple domains/dimensions. O'Hare et al. (2013) also conceptualize child well-being as a multi-dimensional construct, which is reflected in a variety of indicators from several key domains. They also include both outcome and social environment domains, and following widespread practice, combine outcome and social environment indicators into a single index to reflect overall child well-being.

#### Data and Methods

The indicators used in O'Hare et al. (2013) are closely related to the measures employed by Land and colleagues in developing their national CWI (Land et al. 2001; Meadows et al. 2005; Land et al 2007; Haggerty and Land 2007; Land et al. 2011). The index composed by Land et al. is based on 40 years of research on quality of life studies (Cummings 1996). Measures chosen for the state-level index possess three important attributes: 1) they reflect several important areas of a child's well-being; 2) the indicators reflect experiences across a range of developmental stages—from birth through early adulthood; and 3) all of the indicators are measured consistently across states. By combining several different data sources for the year 2007, state-level data for 25 of the 28 measures used in the national CWI. The remaining 25 CWI indicators were grouped into seven different domains of well-being:

1. Family economic well-being;
2. Health;
3. Safety/behavioral concerns;
4. Educational attainments;
5. Community connectedness;
6. Social relationships with family and peers; and
7. Emotional/spiritual well-being.

These 25 measures were composed into seven domain indices, and an overall index using same methodology employed by Land et al (2001). Table 1 shows the 25 indicators of child well-being along with their domains and basic descriptive statistics. The data in Table 1 underscores the large variation in child well-being across states.

Before combining the indicators into an index, O'Hare et al. (2013) standardized the state data in two ways: 1) directionality of indicators was oriented so that increasing numerical values are indicative of better well-being, and 2) the measures were converted to standard score units. Standardized domain scores also were calculated because some domains contain more indicators than others. The national CWI classifies the 25 state-level indicators into seven different domains, calculates an equally-weighted average of the indicators within each domain, and then calculates

*(Continued on next page.)*



**Table 1 Descriptive statistics for 25 indicators in the state child well-being index**

Average	Highest State Value	State Standard Deviation	Lowest State Value	State Average	Lowest State Value	Highest State Value	Standard Deviation
<b>Family Economic Well-Being Domain</b>							
1. FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN POVERTY 2007				14.5	7.5	24.6	4.17
2. CHILDREN WITHOUT SECURE PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT 2007				32.7	24.1	42.6	4.26
3. MEDIAN INCOME-FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 2007*				57,451	40,200	81,000	10,611
4. CHILDREN WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE 2007				9.7	4.5	20.2	3.69
<b>Health Domain</b>							
5. INFANT MORTALITY RATE 2007				7.1	4.8	10.0	1.50
6. LOW BIRTHWEIGHT BABIES 2007				8.2	5.7	12.3	1.44
7. MORTALITY RATE, AGES 1-19 2007				33.1	18.4	51.9	8.41
8. CHILDREN NOT IN VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT HEALTH 2007				13.8	7.6	22.3	3.23
9. CHILDREN WITH FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS 2007				4.6	2.9	6.7	0.91
10. CHILDREN AND TEENS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE 2007				31	23.1	44.4	4.21
<b>Safety/Behavioral Domain</b>							
11. TEEN BIRTH RATE 2007				42.3	20.0	71.9	12.75
12. CIGARETTE USE IN THE PAST MONTH, AGES 12-17 2006-08				10.8	6.5	15.9	1.96
13. BINGE ALCOHOL DRINKING AMONG YOUTHS, AGES 12-17 2006-08				10.2	6.6	13.2	1.59
14. ILLICIT DRUG USE OTHER THAN MARIJUANA, AGES 12-17 2006-08				4.8	3.8	6.2	0.63
<b>Educational Attainment Domain</b>							
15. AVERAGE READING SCORES FOR 4TH AND 8TH GRADERS 2007*				241.2	228.9	254.5	6.85
16. AVERAGE MATH SCORES FOR 4TH AND 8TH GRADERS 2007*				259.9	246.3	275.2	7.62
<b>Community Connectedness</b>							
17. YOUNG ADULTS WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED A H.S. DIPLOMA 2007				16.3	9.5	23.5	3.57
18. TEENS NOT IN SCHOOL AND NOT WORKING 2007				8	4.0	12.6	2.14
19. PERCENT OF CHILDREN, AGES 3-4 NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL 2007				54.6	34.9	71.5	8.14
20. YOUNG ADULTS WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED A B.A. DEGREE 2007				72.3	56.7	82.0	7.13
21. YOUNG ADULTS WHO DID NOT VOTE IN ELECTION 2007				54.3	40.8	77.6	7.74
<b>Social Relationships Domain</b>							
22. CHILDREN IN SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES 2007				31.9	18.2	43.7	6.12
23. CHILDREN WHO HAVE MOVED WITHIN THE LAST YEAR 2007				16.2	9.9	22.6	2.97
<b>Emotional/Spiritual Well-Being Domain</b>							
24. SUICIDE RATE, AGES 10-19 2007				5.2	1.4	14.5	2.82
25. CHILDREN WITHOUT WEEKLY RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE, AGES 0-17 2007				46.8	25.6	74.5	10.70

(Continued from previous page.)

an equally-weighted average of the domain scores to construct the overall index. That is the method applied to the state-CWIs as well. An equal-weighting strategy is the simplest, most widely used, and most transparent method. There is no consensus at this point on a preferred alternative to equal weighting (Hagerty and Land 2007; Zill 2006). Moreover, Haggerty and Land (2007) show with both analytic proofs in a model of heterogeneous importance weights for composite indicators and numerical simulations that the equal weights method is a minimax statistical estimator in the sense that it minimizes extreme disagreements among individuals making such ratings.

## Findings

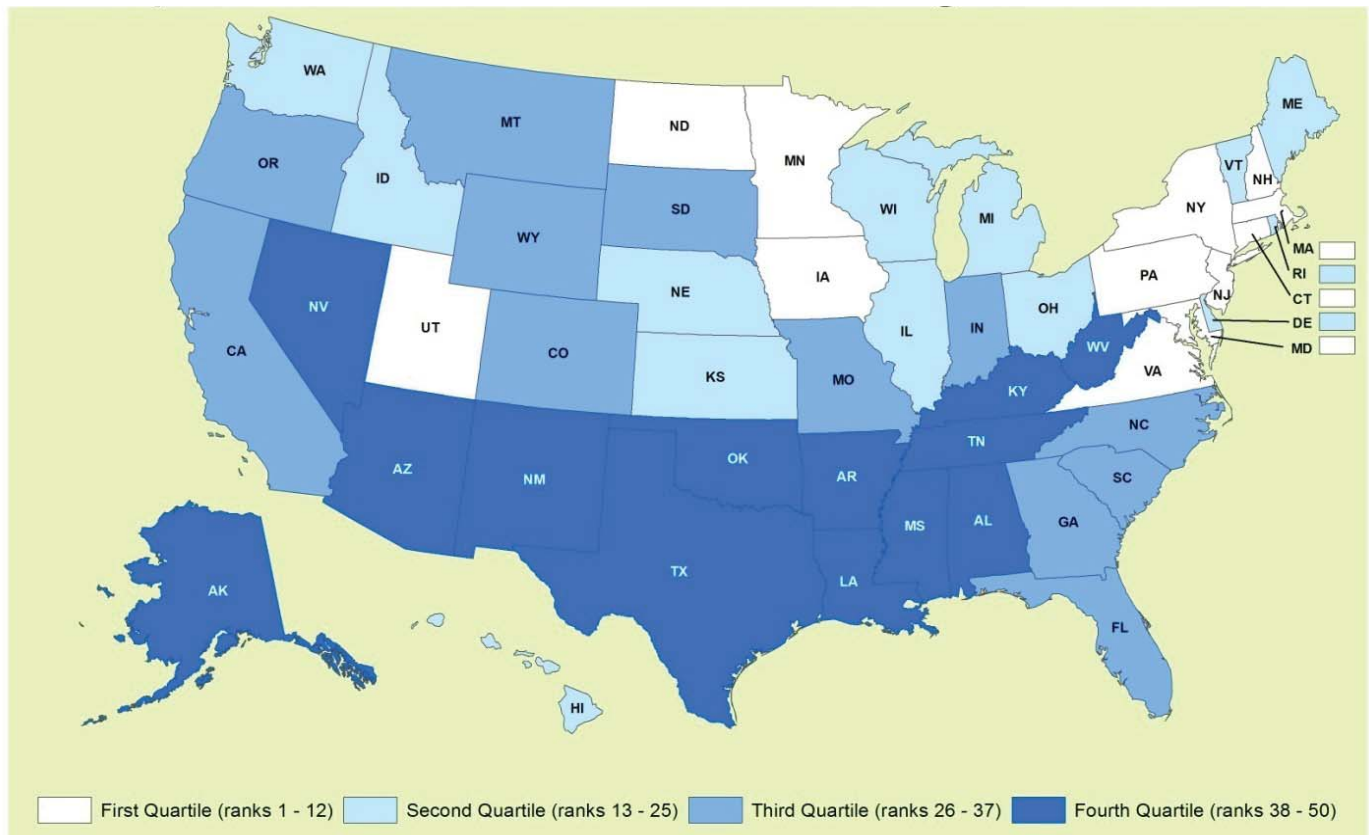
Map 1 provides a visual representation of the results. New Jersey and Massachusetts ranked highest on the state-CWI, while New Mexico and Mississippi were at the bottom of the rankings. Overall, the results are consistent with the general pattern seen in many other reports on state-level child well-being (The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2011; Every Child Matters Education Fund 2008). States in the South and Southwest do poorly while states in the upper Midwest and Northeast do well. The bottom-10 states in terms of child well-being are almost all in the South and Southwest. The top-10 states are mostly in the Northeast and Upper Midwest.

O'Hare et al. (2013) next engage in an extensive study of state-level demographic, economic, and policy correlates of the state-CWIs. They identify a total of 27 such correlates and study the ability of the demographic, economic and policy variables to account for the variation among states' CWI in regression analyses. This is complicated by the fact that there are 27 regressors and only 50 states. In addition, it might be anticipated that the 27 regressors covary substantially with each other and, indeed, this is what the researchers found.

(Continued on next page.)

This is indicative of a statistical artifact known as the partialling fallacy (Gordon 1968; Land et al 1990; McCall et al 2010). This fallacy refers to situations wherein two (or more) regressors are more highly correlated with each other (even at relatively modest levels such as 0.6 or 0.5) than either is with the dependent variable. In such circumstances, the ordinary least squares estimation algorithms of conventional linear regression models such as those reported here often will attribute all explained variance to a regressor (e.g., percent of adults with a disability) that is more highly correlated with the outcome variable, and thus attribute no explained variance to the other regressors when there is no theoretical or substantive reason for allocating the explained variance in this way.

### Map 1: Overall Child Well-Being Index, 2007



To correct for problems in a regression analyses on all 27 variables associated with partialling fallacy, O'Hare et al. (2013) employed the principle components analysis/composite index method of Land et al. (1990) to simplify the covariate space and thus to reveal any underlying structure in the regression relationships. Each regressor's loading on the first three principal components is given in Table 2. It should be noted that the three policy measures in Table 2 are not included in the three components so that the additional contribution of the three policy measures to explaining variation in state-level CWI can be analyzed.

The three components can be defined by covariates with higher loadings (above 0.25). The substantive labels of the three components and the specific indicators corresponding to each (with the algebraic signs indicating direction of the relationships) are:

1. A Deprivation-Affluence Dimension, along which the following explanatory variables lie, Adults with disability (-), State Per Capita Income (+), Household Net Worth (+), Annual Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Benefit per Child (+), and Medicaid Child Eligibility as a Percent of the Federal Poverty Line (+).
2. An Urban-Immigrant Population Dimension, along which lie Hispanic Population Under Age 18 (+), Percent of Children that are Minorities (+), Population Ages 0 to 4 (+), Population Ages 10 to 17(-), Children with a Foreign-Born Parent (+), Urban Population (+), and Adults 18-64 Without Health Insurance (+).
3. A Human Capital Dimension, along which lie Population Ages 0 to 4 (+), Adults 25+ with a HS diploma (+), Adults with Disability (-), Gini Coefficient (-), Employment Ratio (+), States with Personal Income Tax (-), Food Stamp Participation Rate (-) and Education spending per 4 Year-Olds in Pre-Kindergarten (-).

Next, O'Hare et al. (2013) regressed the state-level CWI on composite structural indices formed from these three dimensions. Results showed that 66.0 percent of the variation in the state-level CWI is explained by the three indices. Moreover, each of the three indices is significantly associated with state-level CWI, net of other effects. The Deprivation-Affluence and the Human Capital Indexes have positive net effects on the state-level CWIs, and the Urban-Immigrant Population Index has a negative net effect. In particular, relatively poor states with low levels of human capital and high levels of immigrant populations in urban areas tend to have the lowest CWIs.

O'Hare et al. (2013) then calculated a second regression that nests the effects of the three composite indices within an equation that also contains three policy measures – state and local tax rate, spending per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools, and



**Table 2 Loadings of 27 covariates on the first three components of a principal components analysis<sup>a</sup>**

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Percent of Children Non-Hispanic Black	-0.0879	0.1059	0.1914
Percent of Children Hispanic	0.0832	0.3745	-0.0359
Percent of Children Minorities	0.0394	0.3825	0.0762
Percent of Child Population Ages 0 to 4	-0.1394	0.3088	-0.2531
Percent Child Population Ages 5 to 9	-0.1544	0.2204	0.0748
Percent Child Population Ages 10 to 17	0.1687	-0.3353	0.1869
Percent of Children with a Foreign-Born Parent	0.2167	0.3481	0.024
Percent of Children Living in Urban Areas	0.2298	0.2882	-0.0162
Percent of Adults 25+ with a High School diploma	0.1848	-0.2185	-0.3164
Percent of Adults Age 18 - 64 without health insurance	-0.2025	0.2623	0.109
Percent of Adults with a disability	-0.2717	-0.1311	0.2686
Per Capita Income	0.3389	0.0581	-0.0177
Gini Coefficient (Measure of Income inequality)	0.003	0.1606	0.354
Average Household Net Worth	0.2941	0.0104	-0.0101
Employment Ratio (ratio of workers to population age 18-64)	0.1704	-0.0795	-0.414
Income tax threshold for a two parent family of four	0.2224	0.0855	-0.0335
State and local tax rate	0.2164	-0.002	0.2666
States with personal income tax	0.0293	-0.0457	0.2617
States with refundable Earned Income Tax Credit	0.1275	-0.0343	0.1306
States where part time workers are eligible for Unemployment Insurance	0.1282	-0.0298	0.0478
Annual TANF benefit per child	0.3015	0.0136	0.1329
Food Stamp participation rate	-0.1097	-0.2053	0.2604
Medicaid child eligibility as a percent of Federal Poverty Level	0.2748	-0.0216	0.1422
Medicaid working parent eligibility cutoff as a percent	0.1315	-0.0029	0.0695
Education spending per 4 year old in pre-K	0.0143	0.0694	0.2773
Education Spending Per Pupil in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools States charging a premium for child health coverage programs	0.2927	-0.1098	0.1165
	0.1463	0.0348	0.0926

<sup>a</sup>The corresponding eigenvalues associated with the first three components are 6.26834, 4.8142 and 3.58058, respectively.

(Continued from previous page.)

states charging a premium for child health coverage programs. To make their sizes of effect comparable to those of the three regressor dimensions/composite indices, the policy measures were standardized. The explained variance increased from 66.0 percent in the structural indices only equation to 79.5 percent in the structural indices plus policy measures equation, which is a substantial increase in explanatory power. Among the three composite structural indices, the Deprivation-Affluence and Human Capital Indexes show positive net relationships to the state CWIs, while the Urban-Immigrant Population Index shows a negative net relationship. In brief, net of the policy variables in the regression, states that are more affluent and have higher levels of human capital have higher CWIs and states that have higher concentrations of urban immigrant populations have lower CWIs. These relationships are consistent with the zero-order associations noted in previous sections. In addition, after controlling for the structural sources of variation in the state-level CWI, as measured by the three composite indices, only one of the three policy measures, State and Local Tax Rate, has a significant positive relationship to the state-level CWIs.

### Discussion and Conclusions

In sum, the O'Hare et al. (2013) analysis shows that state rankings based on the state CWI are governed by a geographic pattern where states in the South and Southwest show low rates of overall child well-being and states in the Northeast and Upper Midwest show the high rates of child well-being.

Several factors were found to be associated with state differences in child well-being including state economic characteristics, demographic composition, human capital, and state policy measures. The human capital factors most highly correlated with child well-being are characteristics of adults including levels of education and health insurance coverage as well as levels of disability – all indicative of activities and investments that increase resources in people. Minority population concentrations, especially when concentrated in urban areas, are also associated with lower levels of child well-being, but minority population was not as closely correlated with child well-being as the characteristics of adults. The economic factors most highly correlated with overall child well-being include employment, income, and wealth. The policy measure that is most highly correlated with child well-being is the state and local tax rate. States that have higher tax rates are also more generous in providing education and support services and these states have higher levels of child well-being on average.

(Continued on next page.)

A key finding of O'Hare et al. (2013), which is consistent with many other studies, shows that when children are situated in environments with more resources they do better. Resources may include private resources such as family income, wealth, and parental education or public resources such as welfare benefits, health insurance, or school expenditures. The evidence presented shows a strong positive correlation between state and local income tax rate and child well-being, which leads to the hypothesis that this relationship operates through a broad set of supportive public policies and programs linked to higher tax rates.

Most of the demographic and economic factors closely related to state differences in child well-being are things that states cannot change quickly. The demographic composition of a state typically changes very slowly and public policy plays only a minor role in such shifts. Likewise, earnings and accumulation of wealth in a state do not change quickly and state policies have only marginal impact on these. Therefore focusing on the results of the policy measures may be more productive and useful. There are many policies that governments could enact or change immediately, if they choose to do so. While states provide most of the public expenditures on children, it is important that the role played by the federal government not be overlooked. More than a third of government support for children comes from federal sources.

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