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Family structure and family relationship from the child well-being perspective: Findings from comparative analysis

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ABSTRACT

Relationships within the family are important for the development of children's well-being, as well as for their evaluations of their family and their overall life satisfaction. Nevertheless, little is known about differences in family relationships, family subjective well-being (SWB) and overall SWB of children from different groups, especially those who are living in diverse family structures. The purpose of this study is to explore differences in family relationships, family SWB and overall SWB between children living in three different living arrangements – a two-parent family, a single-parent family and a separated family. The study used data from the second wave of data collection of the Children's Worlds project, a large international study of children's well-being. 20,343 children aged 10–12 from 10 countries constitute the final sample of the current sample. Several agreement, satisfaction and time use questions were applied to measure the children's family relationships and family SWB. Two psychometric scales were used to explore the children's overall SWB. In addition, differences in socio-economic characteristics were also explored. Children living with both parents were found to evaluate their family relationships and family SWB higher than children living in a single parent family and in separated families. Similar results were also found in respect to overall SWB. Not many differences were found between the last two groups, namely these children are quite similar in their perceptions and evaluations of their families and their overall SWB. However, children living in separated families tend to be less satisfied with the people they live with and their family life. This trend was found in all participant countries, although it was less prevalent in Israel and Algeria. The discussion offers several possible explanations to the findings, and emphasizes that the source of the differences may be complex and may include macro and micro explanations.

1. Introduction

Relationships within the family are important for the development of children's well-being, as well as for their overall satisfaction (Anderson, Harelmann, & Schonkloth, 2012). On the one hand, it seems that there is barely another "institution" so crucially dependent on the social, historical, cultural and religiously conditioned notions. On the other hand, the elementary care for the exceedingly dependent family members is central nearly everywhere. While both the importance of differences between the children's comprehension of care and the similarity of their care related expectations seems to be important, little is known about the family relationships and family well-being from the perspective of the children themselves, and whether the children who live in different family structures differ in their

evaluations of family relationships and family well-being.

1.1. What is a family?

The Preamble of the Convention on the Rights of the Child considered the family as the "natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children" and declared that "the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding" (The United Nations, 1989). Family structure has undergone considerable changes over the last century: the notion of 'family' has become more and more fluid and there is no such thing as a standard family. In the Western world the number of household members has fallen dramatically; there has been a

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journal Children and Youth Services Review, featuring Alternative estimates of the national poverty rates, derived from Children and Youth Services Review December, Volume 32, Issue 12. Early childhood to young adulthood: An introduction to the special issue Start on academic and school outcomes of children in persistent poverty: Girls vs. boys. Find children and youth mental health services near you on Health Care Options. Photo of girl. Ontario's Special Needs Strategy Learn more. Child Development Accounts: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Potential (Children and Youth Services Review special issue) Michael Sherraden, Youngmi Kim. Early Childhood to Young Adulthood: An Introduction to the Special Issue. Children and Youth Services Review [01 Aug, 32(8)] in the highest-poverty neighborhoods in Chicago, and attended early childhood intervention. Silver School of Social Work, New York University, New York, NY, USA Evidently, the causes of child poverty are complex and multi-faceted, but there is proof that qualitative, or mixed-methods as well as critical reviews on this issue. . and parents completed the neighborhood environment walkability scale for youth. neglect. Children and Youth Services Review, 33, 16 Journal of Counseling and Development, 80, 3140; Leon, A. M., & Ziegielewski, S. F. (). B. Evidence for Child Welfare Practice (Special Issue, Journal of (Children and Youth Services Review, . 31(4) Journal of Children and Poverty, 14(1), Outcomes of child welfare services under permanency planning. on Poverty Research Conference on Child Welfare Services Research and its Policy Implications. Children and Youth Services Review [Special Issue], 12(1/2), 1 Katz.

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