



# **The Children's Worlds Project: Future Perspectives**

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SCHUBERT CENTER  
FOR CHILD STUDIES



- **What opportunities does the Children's Worlds project offer?**
- **Rich and impressive data base from the a broad international sample AND from the perspective of children**
- **Enormous opportunities in moving forward with these data and also in additional and complimentary ways**



- **Data base (90,000+ children, in 22 nations)**
- **Available to other researchers**
- **How to promote and facilitate**
  - **Publication and policy implications from this group**
  - **Funding opportunities for young researchers**
  - **Work groups**



- **As core or pivot point for other studies and efforts**
- **Future attention to the WHY's or explanations that can be offered for the findings from the survey (will be advanced by multiple perspectives in analysis, including children, and mixed methods)**

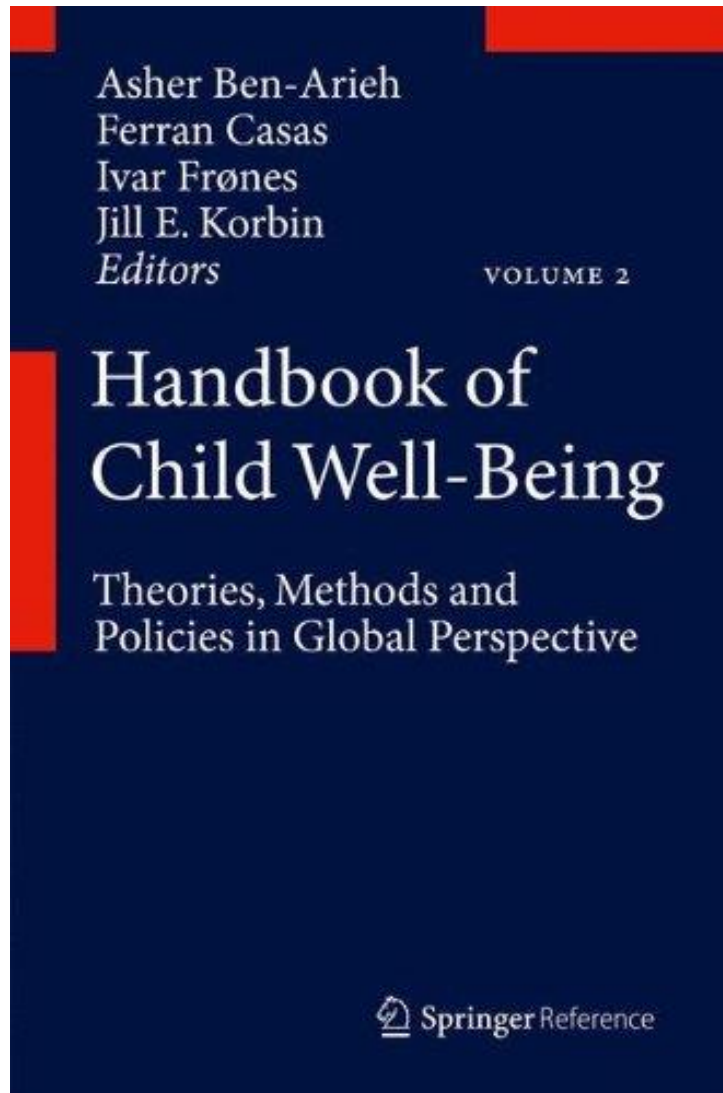


- Children's Worlds has demonstrated that children can DESCRIBE AND EVALUATE
- Now we need to give children a chance to EXPLAIN
- To fully understand and implement children's voices need to understand their explanations and possible solutions for their conditions
- Children's Worlds is already doing some of this, in a position to lead

# Some Frameworks

- **Multiple and complex ideas persist about what child well-being is.**
- **Well-being in cultural context**
- **Meaning and Perspective on Well-Being from Children and Adults**
- **Mixed methods: incorporate administrative, biological, and ethnographic data along with survey data**

# There Are Multiple Views on What Constitutes Child Well-Being



- **114 chapters**
- **229 authors**
- **International representation**

# Multifaceted Concept of Child Well-Being

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## Multifaceted Concept of Child Well-Being

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Asher Ben-Arieh, Ferran Casas, Ivar Fønnes, and Jill E. Korbin

Dictionary definitions of well-being emphasize a desirable state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous; that is, well-being refers to both subjective feelings and experiences as well as to living conditions. Well-being is also related to the fulfillment of desires, to the balance of pleasure and pain, and to opportunities for development and self-fulfillment. The concept refers to the qualities of life and to the many possible dimensions of a good or bad life. The breadth and heterogeneity of the idea of well-being is illustrated in human rights treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Rights are implicitly understood as creating well-being or opportunities for well-being, referring to the quality of children's lives economically and emotionally; to their psychological states; to their material, social, and cultural environments; as well as to their development and to realizing their potentials.



# Children Around the World

- Enormous range of diversity in the experience of childhood and adolescence along with the commonalities of the lifestage
- Substantial inequality in experience of childhood and adolescence

# **Child Development Knowledge Is Based Primarily on Euro-Centric Contexts**



- **Samples drawn from less than 10% of the world's children**
- **“Weirdest People in the World”**
  - **Western**
  - **Educated**
  - **Industrialized**
  - **Rich**
  - **Democratic**

**(LeVine and New, 2008; Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan, 2010)**

# **Child Development Knowledge Is Based Primarily on Euro-Centric Contexts**



**A randomly selected U.S. undergraduate student (in a psychology course primarily) is 4,000 times more likely to be included in a research study on human development and behavioral sciences than a randomly selected person from outside the West....**

**(Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan, 2010)**

# **What is Culture and How to Measure?**

- **Shared (though differentially)**
- **Multivocal and multidimensional**
- **Learned (though also transformed in the process)**
- **Dynamic (always changing)**
- **Can be seen in behaviors and activities**
- **Held in the mind as cognitive models and cultural scripts**

# **Children's Cultural Learning Environments:**

## **Culture provides the settings and context:**

- **People with whom the child is involved**
- **Activities in which the child engages**
- **Daily routines**
- **Opportunities**
- **Challenges**

# Culture, Context, and Child Well-Being

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## 3.1 Introduction

There are different conceptions of what it means to be happy and what the goals of life are in different communities around the world. Diversity within societies regarding the circumstances that can make for well-being and what we want from life is also apparent, and diversity often includes cultural and ethnic variations. Including “culture” is a way to insure that research does not assume what the goals are, and what makes others happy, since “...there is no unambiguously single pursuit of happiness—rather there are multiple ‘pursuits of happiness’” (Mathews and Izquierdo 2009: 1).

Another reason to include culture is that well-being includes subjective and experiential aspects, as well as objective material and health and other assessments. Culture includes models for everyday living, beliefs, goals, and values held in the mind – in other words, subjective experiences that shape the interpretation of what happens and do not only respond to but organize behavior and the choice of contexts. What is life’s meaning, what is the moral direction of good child development, and what would be good parenting to strive toward to reach that valued way of life? Cultural communities vary in their answers to these questions, and more open-ended, conversational interviews and naturalistic observations and fieldwork in communities are essential ways to learn about these differences (LeVine et al. 1988).

Hence, cultural evidence is important for understanding well-being. Studying well-being in a wide range of communities with differing beliefs and practices requires qualitative understanding as well as closed-ended survey or questionnaire methods (Weisner 2013). What is going on here? Why are you investing so much

# Cultural Pluralism and Well-Being

- **Considering the diversity of childhood around the world, what is the essence of child well-being?**
  - **ability of child to be an engaged participant in the activities deemed appropriate and desirable in that cultural community**
  - **with the (emerging) competencies and skills to do so**
  - **that meets basic needs and produces experiences that the community finds desirable**

**Source: T. Weisner**

# **Within and Between Cultural Diversity and Commonality**

- **A variable or construct should be examined for both intra- and inter-cultural variability:**
- **For example, Whiting Six Cultures Study:**
- **Children living in extended families as opposed to those living in nuclear families displayed more pro-social behaviors**
- **Explanation held both within and between cultures**



# Globalization and Cultural Diversity

**Globalization impacts children and adolescents through the processes of: rapid population movement; economic interconnectedness; rapid spread of materials, products, and ideas; rapid technological innovation and spread of those technologies.**

# Globalization and Child Welfare

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Globalization and Children's Welfare

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Peter N. Stearns

The process of globalization, extending now over several decades if not longer, has had significant impact on children's well-being, though in diverse, sometimes contradictory directions. Globalization has provided a framework for increasing influences from one society to another, even in as personal an area as childhood and socialization. Larger processes have also been at work, as in global economic competition or the efforts of a variety of international organizations to define and defend children's rights and physical well-being. While the economic and political aspects of globalization loom largest in the area of child welfare, cultural dissemination looms large, in toys and media productions, for example, while redefinitions of other processes, such as migration, also figure in. It was even possible, by the early twenty-first century, to talk of at least strong hints of a global epidemic of childhood obesity.

It is not always easy to distinguish between impacts of globalization and the increasing spread of basic modern trends such as schooling or reductions of child mortality rates. Individual societies might commit, for example, to new levels of education or health measures for children – as in Russia or China after successful communist revolutions in the twentieth century, but they did so in an environment in which global contacts facilitated knowledge of childhood trends in other societies that seemed to set appropriate new standards even in revolutionary contexts that expressed defiance of outside influences in other respects. For many countries and for many relevant international organizations, globalization and a new, modern framework for childhood seemed to go hand in hand.

- Impacts of globalization on children:
  - Increasing widespread education
  - Increased international adoption
  - Efforts to improve the status of girl children
  - Reduction in child labor
  - Increase in child trafficking
  - Increased consumerism and disparities between wealthy and not-wealthy children

# **How Has Globalization Influenced Child and Adolescent Well-Being**

- **Globalization has been linked with both positive and negatives for children and adolescents, For example: access to education:**
- **82% of the world's children were enrolled in primary school in 2002 (UNICEF)**
- **Still: (with implications for Children's Worlds)**
  - **millions are still unschooled**
  - **disparities in quality of schooling**
  - **disproportionality or disparities by gender, income, etc.**

# Multiple Perspectives to Consider in Child Well-Being Work

- **Children**
- **Adults**
- **Peers/Siblings**
- **Administrative data sources**

# **Example: Neighborhood Dangers & Fears**

- **Child and Parent listing of dangers and fears in open-ended format**
- **Viewed in context of police reports categorizing neighborhoods as low(er) or high(er) violence**

# Open-Ended Questions

- **Question to Child:** Are there any dangers in this neighborhood? Are there things that make you afraid?
- **Question to Parent:** Are there dangers in this neighborhood for children? Are there things in the neighborhood that make you afraid for your children?

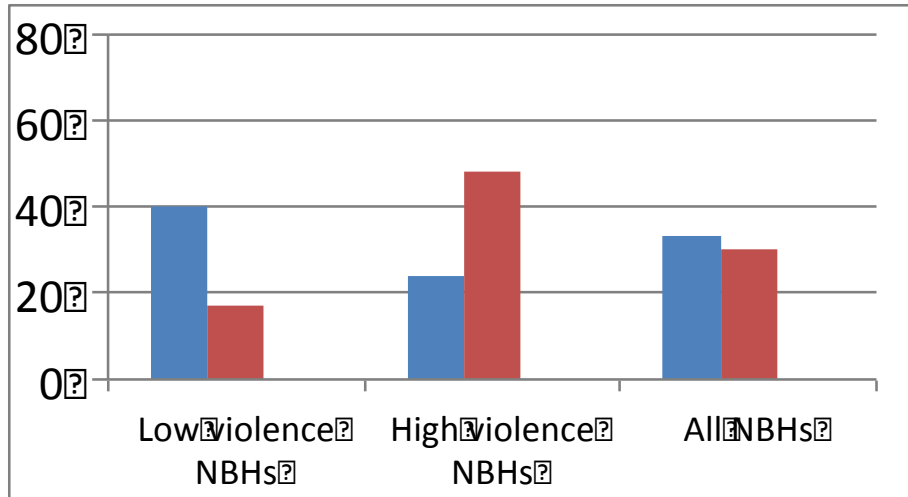
# Parent-Child Views

- “I think this is a very safe neighborhood.” (parent of 12 year-old girl, low(er) violence neighborhood): **BUT girl identified stalkers as a fear**
- “... they seem to be pretty fearless.” (parent of 7 year-old boy, low(er) violence neighborhood): **BUT boy identified 'bad kids' as a fear**
- “... I really don't think there's anything they're afraid of.” (parent of 9 year-old boy, low(er) violence neighborhood): **BUT boy identified speeding cars as a danger**

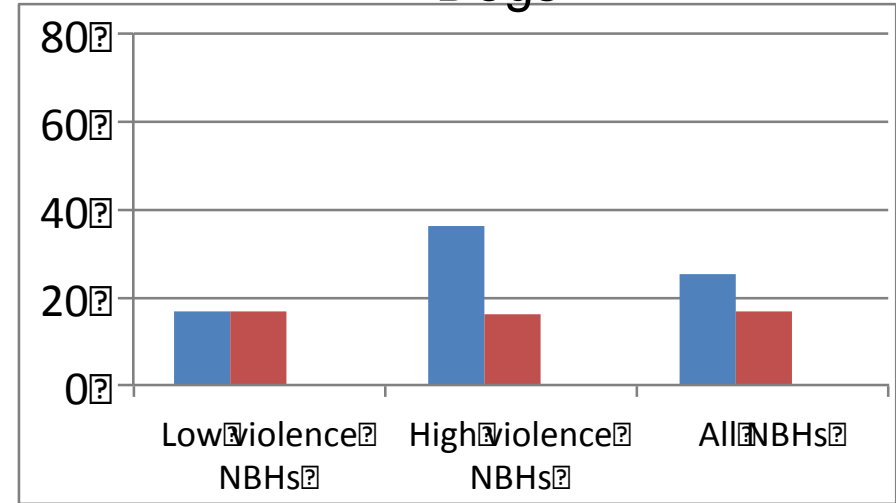
# Child and Parent Agreement (Examples)

■ = child ■ = parent

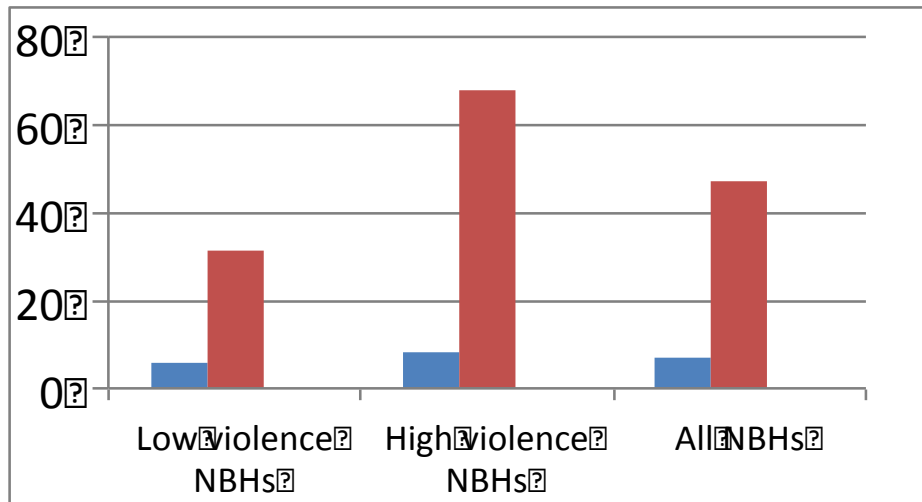
## Violent Crime



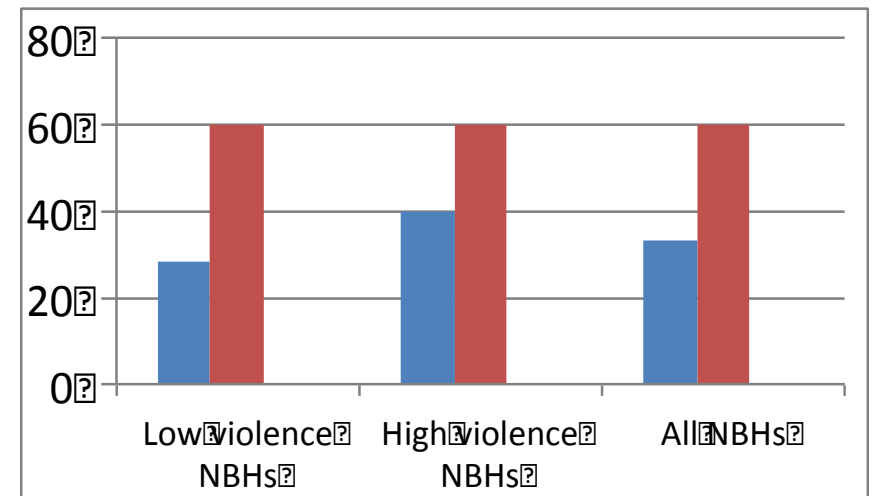
## Dogs



## Drugs



## Cars





## Example Narrative: Dogs

- I forgot to tell my mom this. The last time I went around the block there was this dog. I didn't know what I could do just to get him away. but there were these people in the backyard, and the dog went up closer to them ... and I got away. (7 year-old boy, low(er) violence neighborhood)
- They get loose and chase people (11 year-old boy, high(er) violence neighborhood)

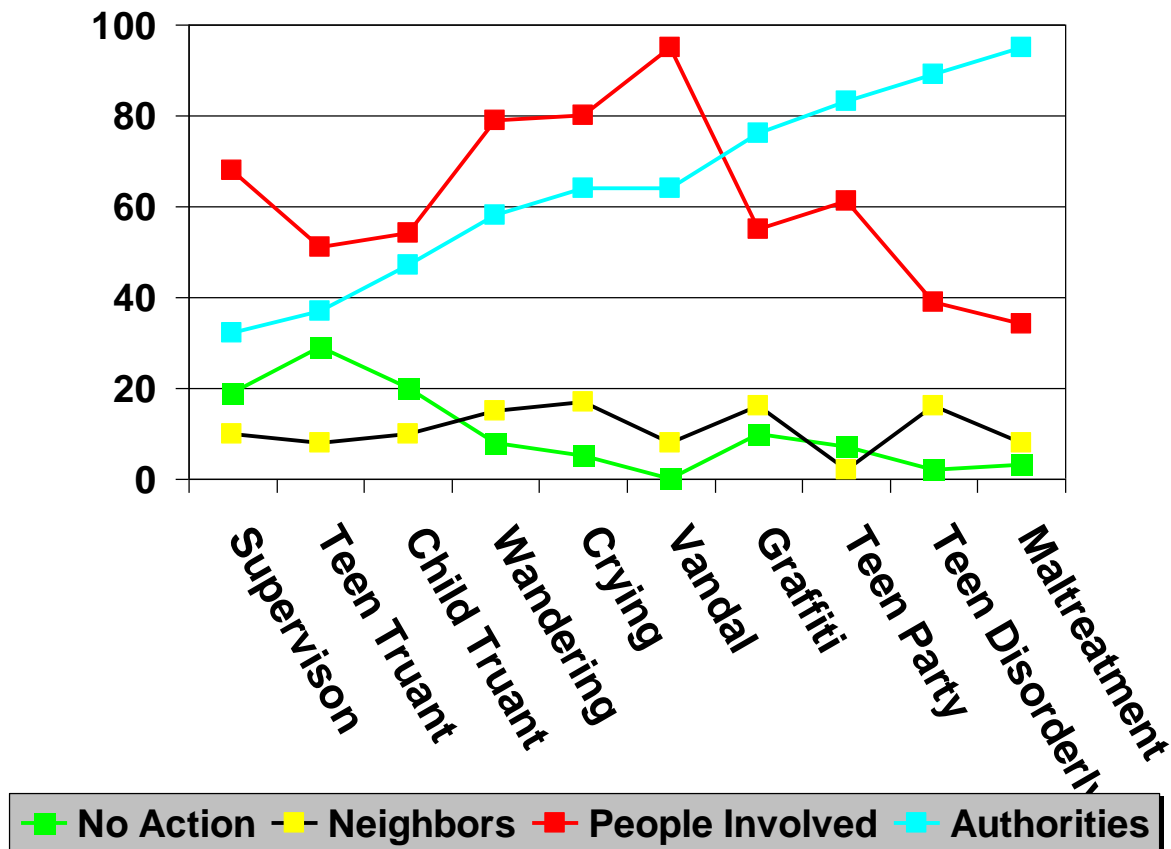
## **Example: Collective Efficacy**

- **...social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good (Sampson et al. 1997)**

# Hypothetical Situations to Adults

- **Children in Need**
  - Child Maltreatment
  - Child Crying
  - Child Wandering
  - Unsupervised Child at Night
- **Child Misbehavior**
  - Disorderly Teens
  - Teens Partying and Noisy
  - Child Throwing Rocks
  - Child/Teen Graffiti
- **Truancy**
  - 7-8 year old
  - Teenager

# Engagement with Children



# What Criteria Did Adults Use in Engaging with Children?

- **Assessment of Need**
- **Expected Efficacy**
- **Cultural Script**
- **Relationship/Connectedness**
- **Trust**
- **Situation**

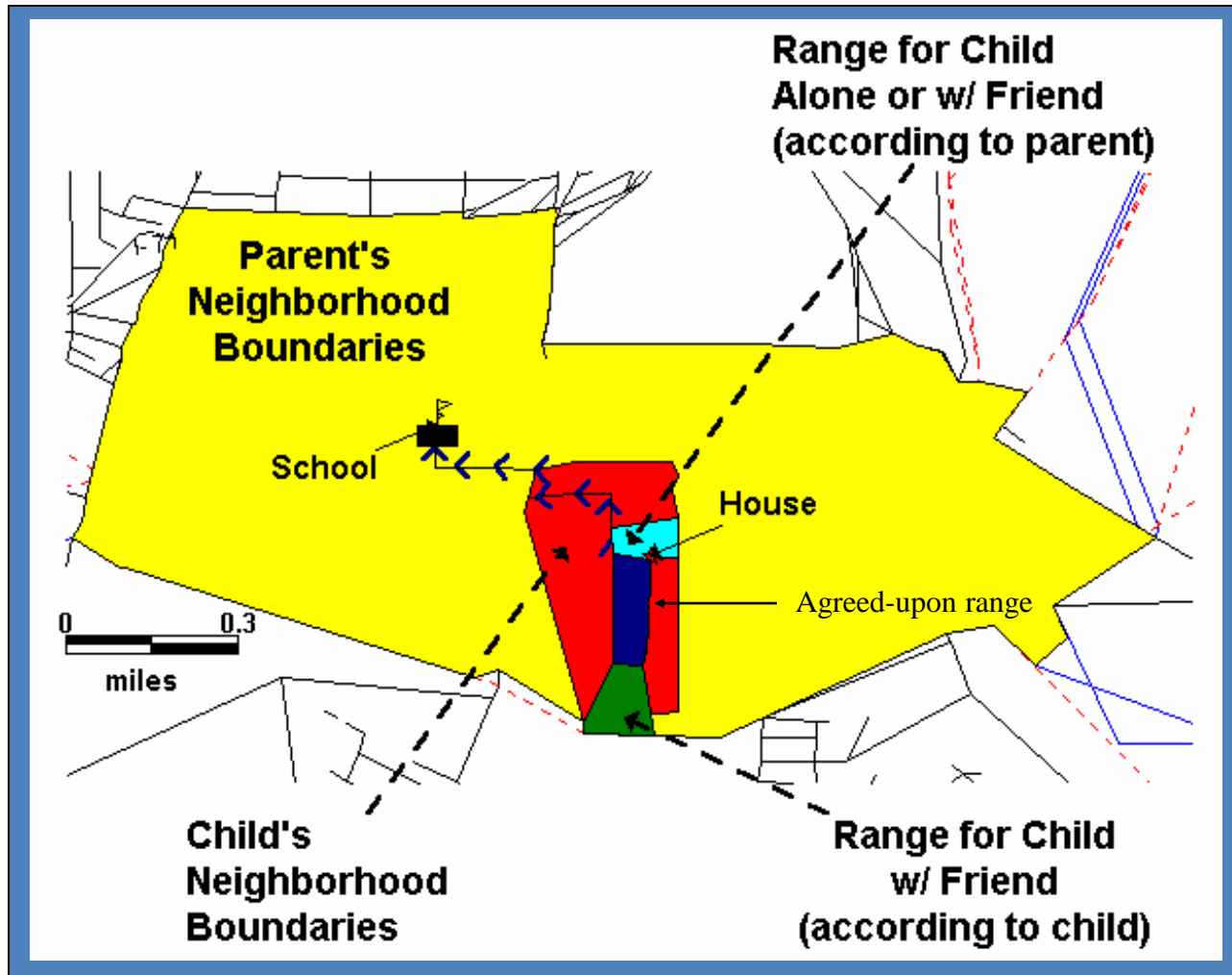
(Coded from interviews)

# What Criteria Did Children Use in Engaging with Adults for Help?

- **Someone You Know**
- **If Unknown:**
  - **Preferably a Woman**
  - **Preferably a Mother**
  - **Preferably with a Stroller**
- **Or, an Old Person**

(Source: Spilsbury & Korbin, 2004, Negotiating the Dance)

# Example: Parent's & Child's Neighborhood Boundaries May Vary



# Mixed Methods in Research on Child Well-Being

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Mixed Methods in Research on Child  
Well-Being

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M. Clara Barata and Hirokazu Yoshikawa

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## 101.1 Introduction

The concept and practice of “mixed methods” in the study of child well-being has become increasingly widespread in recent years. This term – most frequently applied to the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies – bridges a perceived dichotomy between research that includes quantification and therefore relies on numbers and research that does not and therefore most typically relies on narratives or words. Many landmark studies in child well-being made no such distinctions and fluidly traversed what many current scholars call “quantitative” and “qualitative.” Consider, for example, Piaget’s close observations of children’s cognitive development or John and Beatrice Whiting’s observations using a large variety of methods across cultures. Certain data collection modalities are associated with quantitative or qualitative research, but their roots do not always fall neatly in these categories. For example, ethnography is a suite of methods that aim to understand a human community. Those methods can include quantification (e.g., counting of particular behaviors).

However, these nuances aside, the majority of recent research in child development and well-being has been quantitative in nature. We posit that the skills that permit flexible use of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, depending on the research question, are vital in the study of how human development can reach its potential across the lifespan (Axinn and Pearce 2006). Whether one’s purpose is to delineate the mechanisms of developmental change, to pinpoint sources of contextual influence in the settings of children’s and families’ everyday lives, or the ways in which developmentally



# Mixed Methods

(see Yoskhikawa et al. 2008)

- **“How does knowledge gleaned from words (qualitative) complement knowledge gleaned from numbers (quantitative), and vice versa?”**
- **3 general principles**
  - Integrating approaches can provide more understanding than either alone
  - Research question determines the methods and if and how they should be combined
  - Quantitative vs Qualitative dichotomy is arbitrary and limiting

# WHY Mixed Methods?

- **ALL methods are flawed, no method is perfect (from Donald Campbell)**
- **A Mixed Methods approach allows one method to compensate for the shortcomings and build to the strengths of another**

# Child Maltreatment Rates by Neighborhood

## (factor analysis using administrative data)

- **IMPOVERISHMENT:** poverty rate, unemployment rate; vacant housing, population loss, female-headed households, percent African-American population
- **CHILD CARE BURDEN:** ratio of children to adults; ratio of males to females; percent of population that is elderly (+ 65 years of age)
- **INSTABILITY:** proportion residents moved in the past 5 years; proportion in their current home <10 years; percent in current home <1 year
- **Contiguous to concentrated poverty:** Borders one or more high poverty neighborhood

## Neighborhood Resident Explanations for Child Maltreatment (interview)

- **POVERTY & FAMILY STRUCTURE (30%):** Unemployment, poverty, single parents, lack of knowledge about child rearing
- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE (13.8%):** Drugs and alcohol
- **MORAL VALUES (11.4%):** Lack of family and religious values
- **INDIVIDUAL PATHOLOGY (7.9%):** Abuse in own childhood; psychological and emotional problems

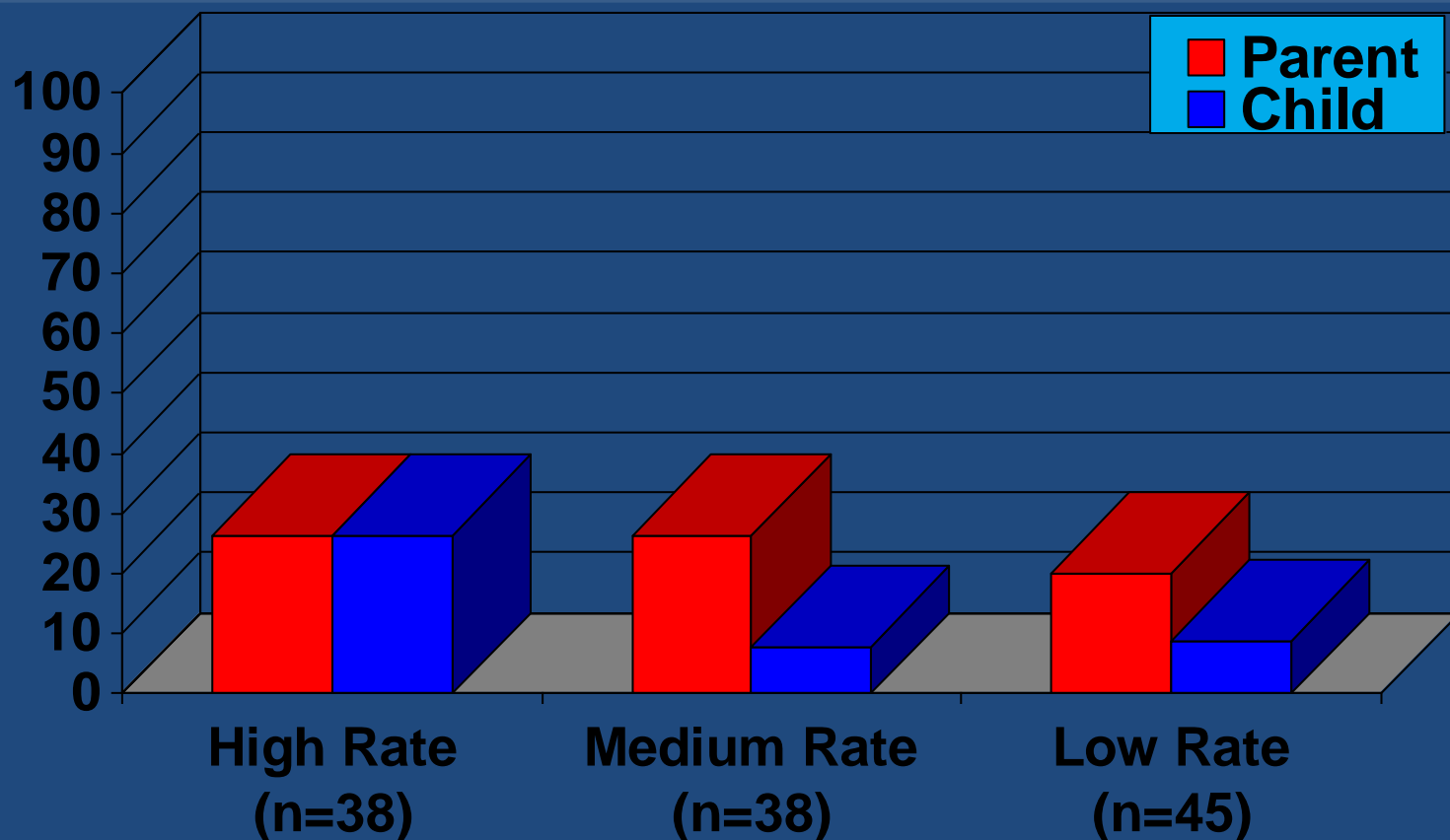
## Explaining Child Maltreatment Rates by Neighborhood (ethnography)

- **“Before, neighbors treated all children like their own. Now no one would step in. People don't want to step on other people's toes. And if they do step in sometimes the kids, or even the parents get nasty. Just a few days ago, there was a woman walking down the sidewalk by our house. She had a little boy with her who was throwing rocks at our dogs. I told the boy to stop it, and the mother turned around and said all kinds of words I can't repeat. Then the little kid repeated exactly what she said.”**

## Ethnography (continued)

- **“They would yell vulgarities at you. I heard they would hit you. I've never seen it, but it's enough to scare you. And I know youth carry weapons. It's very intimidating.”**
- **(It used to be that...) “The parent would punish the child and thank the neighbor.”**

# Neighborhood Fear of Retaliation by Adults Versus Children (coded from ethnography)



# Child Well-Being: Anthropological Perspectives

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Child Well-Being: Anthropological Perspectives

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Edward G. J. Stevenson and Carol M. Worthman

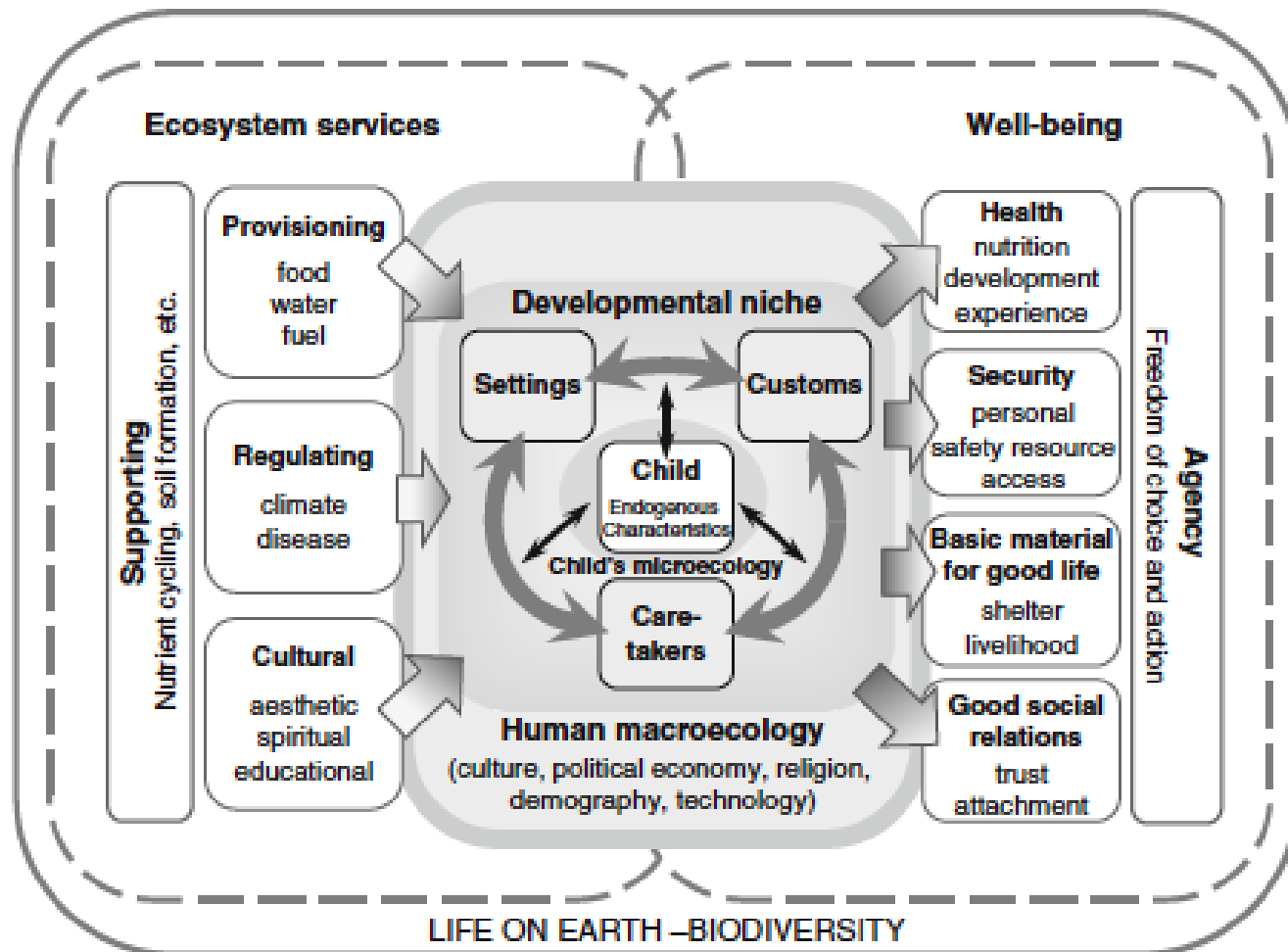
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## 18.1 Introduction

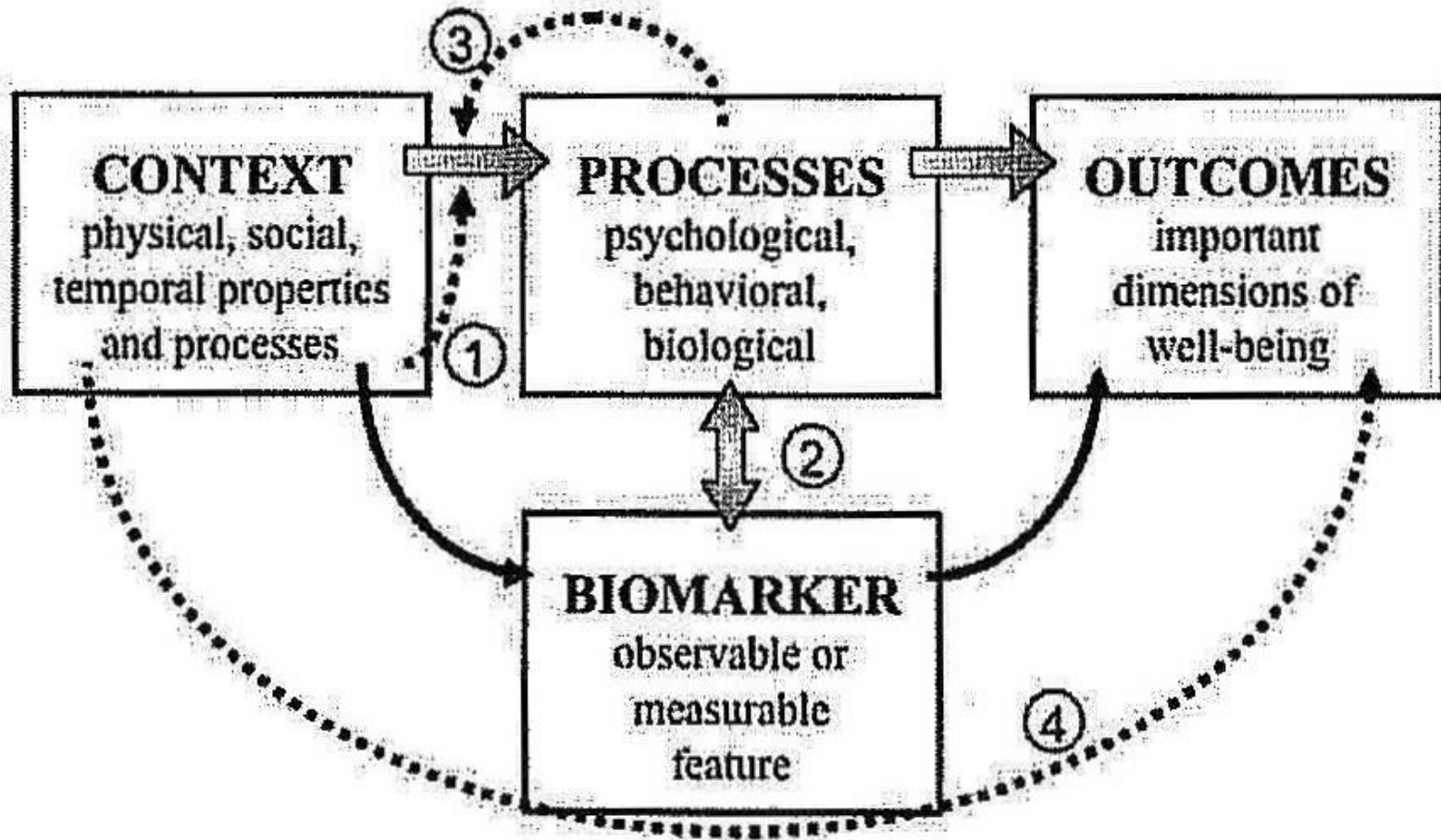
Anthropology commonly is regarded as the study of human origins or exotic cultures, but in fact, its remit embraces all aspects of humanity. It is distinguished from other social sciences, conceptually, by its attention to both culture and biology and their interaction on the timescales of evolution, history, and the individual lifespan, and methodologically, by a tradition of ethnographic fieldwork conducted among diverse populations. Anthropological study of children occupies a special place in the discipline, as it engages with issues from the evolution of the life course to how culture is acquired during the earliest years. A lapse in attention to children and childhood by mainstream anthropology in recent decades has been balanced by a current surge of interest in the place of children in society and appreciation of the value of anthropological studies for understanding child well-being (Bluebond-Langner and Korbin 2007; Lancy 2008). Unfortunately, major recent reviews of threats to child welfare and how to ameliorate them (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007; Engle et al. 2007; Walker et al. 2007, 2011) have largely overlooked anthropological contributions – and particularly the importance of culture as a determinant of both socioeconomic conditions and local definitions of well-being. In this chapter, we discuss anthropological perspectives that advance



# Child Well-Being in Context (Stevenson & Worthman 2014)



# Biocultural Pathways



Worthman and Costello 2009

# Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Child Well-Being

**“Over 200 million children under 5 years are not fulfilling their developmental potential.”  
(Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007 in The Lancet)**

# **Cultural Pluralism and Universal Goals for Child Well-Being**



**Are these approaches mutually exclusive  
or complimentary --- and under what  
conditions or circumstances?**



Thank you Children's Worlds Project