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Identifying and measuring child poverty: an overview of recent developments and trends in EU

Poverty, deprivation and social inequalities have been topics of social science research since decades as one of the key common social objectives within the European Union is the reduction of poverty and social exclusion. Children are one of the target groups of social policy.

However, in order to identify, measure and alleviate childhood poverty we do not only need to define ambiguous and contested concepts like poverty, inequality, childhood and social exclusion but we also need to deal with methodological deficiencies, especially in large-scale surveys measuring poverty. We need to measure disadvantage through a number of variables (income, poor housing conditions, professional status, family condition etc).

The standard view is of poverty as a household-level phenomenon and little is known about the distribution of resources within the household members and the impact of policy changes on this distribution.

In the developed countries economic poverty is principally measured in relation to '*relative poverty*'. However there is a lot of debate going on around two concepts the *absolute* and the *relative poverty*.

Taking all these in mind, we will present recent developments and trends and we will describe methods and indicators measuring child poverty. It is important to present research activities by reviewing the major longitudinal studies conducted by EU, OECD and UNICEF.

In this way we will be able to provide different methods of calculation and measurement, the methodological shortcomings and to identify missing information and gaps regarding childhood poverty according to the data source and the method of calculation.

Moreover, the description of childhood poverty using comparative data and harmonisation of relevant statistics constitute a major priority at a European level. Thus, our report will also include suggestions for new indicators in order to enhance child poverty research.

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