

Equality of Opportunity for Well-Being

Daniel Mahler

University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Xavier Ramos

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Paper Abstract:

There is a growing political concern about assuring that people have equal opportunities for acquiring income and going beyond income when measuring well-being. This paper attempts to bridge these two concerns by measuring the extent to which individuals have equal opportunities to achieve a high level of well-being. The German Socio-Economic Panel is used to measure well-being in four different ways including log incomes. This makes it possible to determine if the way well-being is measured matters for identifying who the opportunity deprived are and for tracking inequality of opportunity over time. We find that the measurement of well-being does not matter much for characterizing who the opportunity deprived are. It matters a bit more when tracking inequality of opportunity over time, particularly as we change what individuals are held responsible for.