

2020

36th IARIW General Conference

Paper Prepared for the 36th IARIW General Conference, Oslo, Norway, August 24-28, 2020

Inequality of Well-being Freedoms: The Case of Poland, and Polish Leading Emigration Destinations

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According to Statistics Poland (GUS 2018), more than two and a half millions of Polish citizens live abroad. Their main emigration destinations are the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands, Ireland. The opportunity to improve their well-being is something that attracts people to emigrate. However, it is little known how much these opportunities, well-being freedoms thereafter, differ from country to country. This paper aims to scrutinise the international inequality regarding well-being freedoms.

The theoretical background of the paper refers to Amartya Sen's (2005) capability approach, which distinguishes between well-being achievements (functionings) and well-being freedoms (capabilities). While the former consists of a person's current states and activities (e.g., being well-nourished, being involved in social life), the latter includes the person's freedom or real opportunities to function which mean alternative ways of functionings to their present ones. A person's capability set depends not only on available resources (e.g., income), but also on various conversion factors such as personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender, intelligence), social (e.g. traffic congestion) and environmental (e.g. air quality) circumstances (Robeyns 2017).

A combination of available resources, actual functionings and various conversion factors allows to identify the well-being freedoms of citizens of Poland, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands, and Ireland. The Multiple Indicators and Multiple Causes Model (MIMIC) applied to this study will enable an estimation of a latent variable further interpreted as a personal capability. MIMIC is a special case of the general structural equation model (SEM) which consists of a structural model and a measurement model (Jöreskog, Goldberger 1975). The first one describes the casual link among the latent variable and the observed (exogenous) variables while the second shows how the latent variable is estimated through the observed variables (indicators). The paper assumes that capabilities as a latent variables are casually dependent from resources (e.g. income), personal, social and environmental conversion factors (e.g. age, gender, traffic congestion, air quality) and can be estimated using indicators related to actual

person's being or doing (functionings). The functioning indicators will be grouped into five dimensions for each country: (1) housing, (2) employment and work, (3) health, (4) social relationships, and (5) economic situation.

The primary data source is the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS). This survey was carried out by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2018) in 2016 and 2017 as the 4th wave. The total size of the dataset is 36908 observations that come from 33 EU and other European countries. EQLS documents the living conditions and social situation of the population in Europe.

The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into differences in living opportunities between Poland and countries where Polish citizens emigrate the most. It is also expected that inequality of well-being freedoms between these countries has a tendency to diminish.

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