**1. Measures of Height (living and skeletal)**

Our World in Data provides country-specific average male height from 1896 to 1996, sourced from the NCD database. The NCD website itself offers height data for school-aged children (1985–2019) and adults, with coverage at the global, regional, and country levels.

**2. Holistic Measures of Prosperity**

**Legatum Prosperity Index**

• Covers 167 countries, with data spanning 2009–2023.  
• Based on 300 indicators from 81 sources, combining objective measures (e.g., mobile phone ownership, inflation, governance indicators) and subjective measures (e.g., life satisfaction).  
• Indicators are standardized using a distance-to-frontier method, aggregated into 67 elements, then grouped into 12 pillars, and then grouped into 3 domains: Inclusive Societies, Open Economies, and Empowered People.

• The report does not release the full dataset, but it lists the underlying sources in their report (e.g., page 94 of report 2023). Their historical report could be found here: <https://index.prosperity.com/about/resources>

• Example use: Budsaratragoon & Jitmaneeroj (2021, Journal of Policy Modeling) employ the 2015 index.

**Social Progress Index**

• Covers 172 countries, spanning 1990–2020.  
• Applied in Krylova et al. (2025, Journal of Social Research Methodology) and validated for robustness by Beltrán-Esteve et al. (2023, Regional Studies), who also show it can be used as an instrument for GDP per capita in Europe.  
• Public visualization available here: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/social-progress-index-by-country (data download still pending as the Social Progress Index website is really slow).

**OECD Better Life Index**

• Collects standardized indicators across 11 dimensions of well-being since 2011.  
• Allows users to assign weights to each dimension to generate individualized well-being scores, which complicates cross-country comparisons.  
• Example application: Si & Taiya (2024) analyze welfare variation across Chinese prefectures.

**Happy Planet Index** (too simplified)

• Defined as (Life Expectancy × Self-reported Well-being) ÷ Carbon Footprint.  
• Focuses on sustainable well-being, balancing current quality of life with environmental impact.  
• Limited academic use, but applied in Bondarchik et al. (2016).

**Other Measures (to be explored further)**

• Gross National Happiness  
• Sustainable Society Index  
• UN Beyond GDP Initiative (potentially the most promising long-term framework)

**Nathan – Book (DRAFT)**

1. Measure of height (alive sometimes / dead)
   1. Our world in data has the [country-specific men average height](https://ourworldindata.org/human-height) dataset from 1896 to 1996. But they source from NCD, so I dig into that website
   2. The NCD website provides global / country-specific / region-specific [School-aged children height from 1985 to 2019.](https://ncdrisc.org/data-downloads-height.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com) They also have [adult data](https://ncdrisc.org/data-downloads-adiposity.html).
   3. [Baten et al. (2014)](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352793628_Human_Height) wrote a paper that contains rich information about human height as a welfare indicator.
2. Holistic prosperity data / measure / paper that uses it
   1. **The Legatum Prosperity Index:** The Legatum Institute launches this holistic index, which provides a unique framework to assess prosperity in terms of both income and wellbeing across 167 countries (in 2023 dataset). This dataset spans from 2009 to 2023. Legatum Institute collects a total of 300 indicators from 81 data sources, including both objective (number of mobile phones in a household, inflation rate, World Bank’s governance indicators) and subjective (respondents’ perceptions of their life such as health satisfaction) measures of prosperity. All variable scores are standardized using distance to frontier approach to obtain the relative ranking of each country. All 300 indicators are then aggregated into 67 elements by using a weighted average with weight ranging from 0.5 to 2. Analogously, all 67 elements are assigned weights based on their relative importance within 12 pillars, and then 3 domains. The 3 domains are Inclusive Societies, Open Economies, and Empowered People. In the [report](https://index.prosperity.com/about/resources), they did not share their datasets, but they do have the list of source [(pp. 94, 2023)](https://docs.prosperity.com/9616/7756/5038/The_2023_Legatum_Prosperity_Index_report.pdf) where they obtain the raw data. [Budsaratragoon & Jitmaneeroj](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016189382100003X#sec0010) (Journal of Policy Modeling, 2021) used the 2015 Legatum Prosperity Index.
   2. [**Social Progress Index**](https://www.socialprogress.org/social-progress-index): The index covers 172 countries and spans from 1990 to 2020. Krylova et al. (Journal of Social Research Methodology, 2025) use this dataset and Beltrán-Esteve et al. (Regional Studies, 2023) shows that this index is robust to multiple alternative designs and could be used as a good instrument for GDPpc in Europe. There is a website provides good visualization of ranking but I haven’t figured out how to download the data yet. https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/social-progress-index-by-country
   3. [**OECD Better Life Index:**](https://www.oecd.org/en/data/tools/oecd-better-life-index.html)OECD collects and standardizes indicators across 11 dimensions of well-being (quality of life, living conditions, etc) since 2011 to date. Individuals are allowed to assign a weight to each dimension to get an individualized wellbeing, which could make it hard to make cross regional comparison. There are some papers use it to measure the national welfare within each prefecture ([Si and Taiya, 2024](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jph/71/9/71_24-002/_pdf/-char/en)).
   4. [**Happy Planet Index**](https://happyplanetindex.org/trends/?c=&am=hpi_score): It’s basically the product of life expectancy and self-reported wellbeing divided by a consumption-based carbon footprint from latest UN Environment Programme estimates. It is a simpler measure that shows how well nations are doing at achieving sustainable wellbeing, i.e., supporting their inhabitants to live good lives now and ensuring that others can do the same in the future — the sustainable wellbeing for all. There are not many research using this index but I do find one by [Bondarchik et al. (2016)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1470160X16302266)
   5. I also find “Gross National Happiness”, “Sustainable Society Index”, and the most promising UN and Beyond GDP Initiative. I haven’t looked into them in detail but I will do that this week and report weekly.