

Children's Well-Being: Indicators and Research 19

Gary Pollock · Jessica Ozan  
Haridhan Goswami · Gwyther Rees  
Anita Stasulane *Editors*

# Measuring Youth Well- being

How a Pan-European Longitudinal  
Survey Can Improve Policy

 Springer

# Children's Well-Being: Indicators and Research

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Volume 19

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We express our thanks to the authors contributed to this volume for their continued commitment to the collective aspirations of the MYWeB project to develop a European cohort survey. As it turns out we will all be working together to further these aims with a new Horizon 2020 project scheduled to start in January 2018. We acknowledge also the dedicated contribution of many researchers, expert advisors and the project manager, Paula Sergeant, over the course of the project; the collection and analysis of the data underpinning the chapters in this volume would not have been possible without them.

Finally, we thank every one of the children and young people who participated in the various research activities. Without them the research would not have been possible.

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# List of Abbreviations

ALSPAC	Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children
BHPS	British Household Panel Survey
CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interview
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interview
CAWI	Computer Assisted Web Interview
CI	Cognitive Interviews
CYP	Children and Young People
DE	Germany
DRM	Day Reconstruction Method
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
ECHP	European Community Household Panel
ELSCYP	European Longitudinal Study of Children and Young People
ERIC	Education Resources Information Centre
ES	Spain
ESM	Experience Sampling Method
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EU-SILC	European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions
EVS	European Values Study
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGP	Gender and Generations Programme
GSOEP	German Socio Economic Panel
GUI	Growing Up in Ireland
GUS	Growing Up in Scotland
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children
HR	Croatia
HRQoL	Health Related Quality of Life
HU	Hungary
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISCWeB	International Survey of Children's Well-Being
ISER	Institute for Social and Economic Research

ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LA	Latvia
LABC	Locational accelerated birth cohorts
LBC	Local Birth Cohort
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
MYWeB	Measuring Youth Well-Being
NABC	National accelerated birth cohorts
NBC	National Birth Cohort
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NEPS	National Educational Panel Study
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PSID	Panel Study of Income Dynamics
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PWB	Psychological Well-Being
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SHARE	Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe
SNS	Social Network Sites
SROI	Social Return On Investment
SWB	Subjective Well-Being
TRAPD	Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pre-testing, and Documentation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USD	United States Dollars
WHO	World Health Organisation

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# Chapter 1

## Notions of Well-Being, the State of Child Well-Being Research and the MYWeB Project



Gary Pollock, Jessica Ozan, and Haridhan Goswami

### 1.1 Introduction

Children's well-being is fundamental to that of society as a whole. Promoting children's well-being is not only vital in order for children to have a good childhood, but also as a firm basis for their future well-being as adults (Rees et al. 2012). How children fare through critical points of development affects their quality of life, their productivity, welfare dependency and the transmission of their later life outcomes to their own children (Richardson 2012). In recent years, child well-being has become a priority for the European political agenda. As part of the European cooperation on social protection and social inclusion, the European Union (EU) has expressed its strong political commitment to promoting well-being among children which is reflected (among others) in the establishment of an EU Task-Force on child poverty and child well-being in 2007 (TARKI 2010). The Europe 2020 Strategy gives a new impetus to efforts addressing child poverty and social exclusion in the EU. A number of Member States have set specific targets or sub-targets relating to child poverty/social exclusion as their contribution to the headline European target to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020 (Council of the European Union 2012). Therefore, Euro 2020 has given priority to fighting poverty and social exclusion and improving the well-being of children and young people.

This policy drive in improving children's well-being, the recognition of children's and young people's (CYP) rights to having a good childhood and good future life chances, coupled with the injunction from the New Sociology of Childhood to consult with CYP as active agents have resulted in an increasing number of studies on children's and young people's well-being at national and international levels. See

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Goswami et al. (2016) for the full review. These surveys provide invaluable policy data for improving children's lives. However, the design, content, and modes of data collection used in these surveys are influenced by a number of factors including conceptual underpinning of well-being, its measurement and participatory model(s) used by the researchers for children in those surveys. This chapter is divided into four sections to review those aspects. The first section focuses on the conceptual and definitional aspects of well-being. The second section reviews how well-being is measured in surveys highlighting its objective and subjective dimensions. The third section critically reviews key studies on child well-being to reveal the paradigm shift towards child-centric research. Finally, the chapter closes by describing the structure of this book with summaries of each subsequent chapter.

## 1.2 Well-Being: Definition

Despite substantial academic and policy interest in well-being over the decades, there is no universally accepted definition of the concept. In academic literature, it is used as an over-arching concept to refer to the quality of life of people in society (Rees et al. 2010b).

In defining the concept of well-being, a distinction is also made between the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches (Ryan and Deci 2001). Scholars influenced by the hedonic approach view well-being in terms of subjective happiness and the experience of pleasure versus displeasure broadly construed to include all judgements about the good/bad elements of life. Although there are many ways to evaluate the pleasure/pain continuum in human experience, most research within the new hedonic psychology has used assessment of subjective well-being (SWB) (Diener and Lucas 1999). SWB consists of three components: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood, together often summarized as happiness. It should be noted that a high level of subjective well-being is not assumed to develop from the absence of negative mood, but from a positive balance of negative and positive mood (Fredrickson and Losada 2005; Huppert and So 2013).

On the other hand, the eudaimonic approach maintains that not all desires—not all outcomes that a person might value—would yield well-being when achieved (Ryan and Deci 2001). It focuses on meaning and self-realisation and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning. Ryff and Singer (1998, 2000) have explored the question of well-being in the context of developing a lifespan theory of human flourishing. Ryff and Keyes (1995) spoke of psychological well-being (PWB) as distinct from SWB and presented a multidimensional approach to the measurement of PWB that taps six distinct aspects of human actualization: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness.

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci 2000) is another perspective that has both embraced the concept of eudaimonia, or self-realisation, as a central definitional aspect of well-being and attempted to specify both what it means to