

German Youth Institute

Monitoring child well-being: better policy and practice

Indicators and listening to children

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I. The optimistic part (thesis)

- **Child well-being at the intersection of ethics, politics, and science**
- **Pros for children's participation in research**

II. The pessimistic part (antithesis)

- **Asymmetry in generational relations**
- **Cons for children's participation in research**

III. The pragmatic part (synthesis)

- **Methods of indicator development**
- **Studies and indicators**
- **Pragmatic conclusion**
- **Suggestions**

I. The optimistic part (thesis)

- **Pros for children's participation in research**
 - **Subjective turn in social sciences**
 - **Knowledge of subjective views helpful for better policies**

II. The pessimistic part (antithesis)

- **Asymmetry in generational relations**
 - **State and children**
 - **Parents and children**

- **Cons for children's participation in research**
 - **Subjective views – and their producers**
 - **Children – mirrors of environment or autonomous and authentic persons?**



- **Autonomy or heteronomy of children's views?**
- **Priority of emotions**
- **Brain as retroactive producer of reasons**
- **Accounts**
- **Heterogeneity of children's wishes**

„Politics“ seen by a 4 year old girl

III. The pragmatic part (synthesis)

- **Ethical principle of child well-being**
- **Listening to children to get subjective indicators (not only, objective ones)**
- **Scientific understanding of children's views etc. (by children's active participation in research?)**

Methods of indicator development

		Participation of children and young people in the development of indicators	
		No	Yes
Indicators of child well-being	objective	1	3
	subjective	2	4

- Statistical Yearbook of the United Nations (2008)
- Developing indicators for the protection, respect and promotion of the rights of the child in the European Union (2009)

		Participation of children and young people in the development of indicators	
		No	Yes
Indicators of child well-being	objective	1	3
	subjective	2	4

- UNICEF: Child poverty in perspective (2007)
- An Index of Child Well-being in the European Union (2007)

Design of the DJI-Kinderpanel

Age of Child	1. Wave (a) 4. Qrt. 2002	2. Wave (b) 1. Qrt. 2004	3. Wave (c) 1. Qrt. 2005
11 - 13			Mother Father Child
9 - 11		Mother Father Child	
8 - 9	Mother Father Child		Mother Father Child
6 - 8		Mother Father Child (Proxy)	
5 - 6	Mother Father Child (Proxy)		

Some indicators for child well-being (DJI-Kinderpanel)

- | **Children's self-esteem and feelings of well-being**
 - | **Children's emotional and behavioral problems**
(e.g. internalization)
 - | **Emotional family climate**
 - | **Peer relations**
 - | **Family constellations**
 - | **Socio-economic status of families**
 - | **Leisure time activities of the families**
 - | **Local/regional environment**
 - | **Kindergarten**
 - | **School**
- subjective**
- 
- objective**

		Participation of children and young people in the development of indicators	
		No	Yes
Indicators of child well-being	objective	1	3
	subjective	2	4

- Thomas/O'kane (1998)
- Emond (2002)
- Stalker/Connors (2003)
- Alderson (1995)

		Participation of children and young people in the development of indicators	
		No	Yes
Indicators of child well-being	objective	1	3
	subjective	2	4

- Freire (1973)
- Strocka
- DJI (German Youth Institute)

Pragmatic conclusion

- **Benefits of children's participation**
- **Problems of subjective indicators**
- **Problems of the participation of children in research**

- **Compromise: suggestions I:**
 - **Children's *and* adult's views**
 - **Objective *and* subjective indicators**
 - **E.g. emotional family climate**
 - **E.g. personality / behaviour characteristics (self-esteem, internalisation, externalisation, aggression etc.)**

Suggestions II

- **Scientific workshops about age-dependent abilities of children**
- **Scientific workshops to test of methodological variations of children's active participation in research**
- **Political support by NGOs, governments etc.**

Bibliography

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