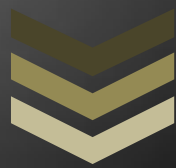


Social Construction of the Well-Being in Young People



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Abstract

The objective of this study is to explore the concept of well-being based on theories and the perceptions of the concept that two groups of adolescents from the municipality of Espoo and Kirkkonummi have. The theories related to well-being are based on the works of Erik Allardt and Amartya Sen. The research was made from the theoretical perspective of social constructionism and used mixed methods strategy. The findings show the multidimensionality of the well-being concept and the importance of the social and cultural background in its definition. Well-being concept can be considered as an important tool in enlarging the range of activities of the youth centres in order to help the youth to reflect on their position in life and on their future aspirations.

Keywords: well-being, adolescents, social constructionism, mixed methods, youth centres

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction.....	4
Chapter I “The Social Constructionism Theory”	7
Social Constructionism and Common- Sense World	7
Social Constructionism and Language	9
The Importance of the Social Interaction	10
The Social Constructionism and the Epistemological and Methodological Implications.....	12
Emotions as Social Constructions	13
Social Constructionism and its critiques	15
Chapter II “Well-Being Concepts, Theoretical Approaches and Ways of Measuring”	17
Well-being Concepts and Definitions	17
Well-being conceptions and the role of the cultural dimension	19
Well-being and similar Concepts	20
Well-being and theoretical framework.....	22
Evaluating the Well-Being.....	23
Well-being and Philosophical Issues	25
Conclusions	26
Chapter III “Well-being and Young People”	28
Youth and Adolescence in context.....	28
General View	28
Well-being and Well-becoming	29
Relationships and Well-being of Young People	30
Family and Parenting Process	31
Adolescent Peer Relations.....	33
School environment and Youth Well-being.....	34
Others aspects and concepts connected to the Youth Well-Being	35

Conclusions	36
Chapter IV “Investigation”	37
Ethics	37
Research Design and Methods.....	37
1.- Groups	37
2.- Methodology	37
3.- Sample and Recruitment.....	38
4.- Focus group questions.....	38
5.-Research places	38
6.- Role of researcher.....	39
7.- Analytic procedure	39
8.- Findings	39
Well-Being and Activities of the Youth Centres	63
Conclusions.....	64
References	66
Appendix	75

Introduction

The importance of the well-being conception is increasing both in theoretical and political sense. Nowadays there are different kinds of well-being indicators like Quality of Life index, Happy Life Years or Satisfaction with Life, which show a more broad conception about how good life is studied and understood. These different indicators have impact on the decision-makers, on the different social policies, including the youth policies. When we understand what kind of conception of the well-being is used in a specific social policy or more concretely, in a specific youth policy, it is possible to evaluate better the goals and impact of this policy.

But what about youth work? What is the importance of the well-being perspective for the youth work and the youth workers? Youth work is connected to different dimensions of the life and well-being of young people like social inclusion, participation, prevention of risk behaviours, employment policies and better living conditions. Now we can go one step forward and think about how well the youth workers know the meaning of the well-being for the young people, and how this knowledge can influence the relation between them. The main argument to justify this work is precisely, that in the most practical way, the meaning of the well-being is a central element of the relation between these two actors; youth worker and young people. If we can have a deeper knowledge about the meaning of the well-being for the young people, we can develop better practices in the specific places where the youth work happens.

The subject of this thesis is the well-being and specifically, the well-being of the young people. The well-being is a very broad concept and there are different perspectives and methods to research it. In this work one of the most important aspects comes from the idea that the young people for themselves must define what well-being means. The research problem is defined in relation to two main questions. First; how the young people define well-being? And the second; what factors in their lives are important to explain the concept of well-being?

As an applied sciences university thesis, where the knowledge needs to be applicable, this study has the objective to consider the well-being concept as a possibility to enlarge the range of activities that youth centres in the municipality of Espoo and Kirkkonummi, normally have, including activities that are connected to the

reflection on life itself and the decisions that affect the future. The activities of the youth centres have the focus in the leisure time of the adolescents and in this way, these centres are important because they offer a safe place for the peer relationships that are flourishing in this stage of life.

From the theoretical perspective, this work is developed in the tradition of the social constructionism. In short the social constructionism describes the social reality as the interplay between the social actors and their historical and cultural contexts. In a more specific way and in this work, the social constructionism perspective means that the conception of well-being that young people have, is product of the specific historical and cultural context in which they are living. From the methodological perspective, this work is an exploratory small-scale qualitative research with mixed methods strategy, which means a combination of different methods as focus groups, questionnaires and graphic elicitation.

The thesis has four chapters. The chapter one makes a description and analysis of the most important aspects of the social constructionism theory. In this chapter some newer critiques are analysed as well. The chapter two is the analysis of the well-being concept from different theoretical perspectives and ways in which the well-being can be evaluated. The chapter three focuses in the specific case of well-being in young people, analysing what the theories say about the specific factors that influence it and discussing as well the concepts of well-being and well-becoming. Finally the chapter four is the investigation, where the main objective is to answer the question of the meaning of the well-being for a very specific group of adolescents and to place these meanings in interplay with their specific social context.

Chapter I “The Social Constructionism Theory”

The main aims of this chapter are to explain what are the most important and characteristic aspects of the social constructionism theory, and how this theory is related to the process of investigation of any social concept, like the concept of well-being. It is important to have in consideration that social constructionism has different perspectives and representatives (Burr 2004, 1) and this chapter is focused only in the most essential characteristics of this theory. The social constructionism has been one of the most influential and controversial perspectives in social sciences in the last decades (Miller Holstein 2007, 5). For this reason it is important to know some of the critiques that have been formulated by different scholars towards the social constructionism theory, these critiques are explained in the last part of the chapter.

Social Constructionism and Common- Sense World

The first important aspect that it is necessary to have in account is that the social constructionism has different theoretical roots (Stam 2002, 573), and it is possible to recognize these roots from a very long time ago, for example from the work of Giambattista Vico (Lock Strong 2010, 6). Vico as Hosking point out: “Worlds are artificially constructed by people. As people change their constructions they transform their worlds, and in doing so change themselves” (Hosking Morley 2004, 4). This statement is central in the social constructionism theory.

However, in this thesis the analysis starts with the work of one of the important scholars in this tradition of social thought, Alfred Schutz (Psathas 2004, 2). Schutz explains how we need to consider the knowledge about our world in this way:

All our knowledge of the world, in common-sense as well as in scientific thinking, involves constructs, i.e., a set of abstractions, generalizations, formalizations, idealizations specific to the respective level of thought organization. Strictly speaking, there are no such things as facts, pure and simple. (Schutz 1990, 5).

The human being lives in the “world of daily life” (Schutz 1990, 213) makes different kind of constructions that constituted the reality, and this reality conforms the “common-sense world” (Schutz 1990, 208). The common-sense world is full of knowledge and meaning, and the very especial characteristic of this knowledge is it “taken for

granted” nature (Schutz 1990, 208). The reality emerges from our social relations, and we take this reality as evident facts, but the situation for the social scientist is very different; because he or she takes the reality as a phenomenon that needs to be explained, like Schutz says:

The thought objects constructed by the social scientist refer to and are founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thought of man living his everyday life among his fellow-men. Thus, the constructs used by the social scientist are, so to speak, constructs of the second degree, namely constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene, whose behaviour the scientist observes and tries to explain in accordance with the procedural rules of his science (Schutz 1990, 6).

In the Schutz perspective we are in presence of two different kinds of constructions, the first level are the constructions of common-sense world, constructions that the different social actors make and take for granted, the obvious reality. At the second level we have the constructions that the social scientist makes, these constructions represent the theories about the world, and these constructions are not obvious, these theories need to be confronted with the rules of social sciences in order to have validity.

In the same tradition of thought of Alfred Schutz, Berger and Luckmann (1967) consider that the reality is socially constructed, and the reality is: “as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition” (Berger Luckmann 1967,1), and it is a very interesting aspect of the conception of the reality, because the reality has two dimensions (Eberle 1993, 5). One aspect is the objective aspect because the reality is recognized as independent of the volition of the social actors, but at the same time the reality has the subjective aspect, because the reality is constituted, as construction, in to social life, with specific cultural and historical background. These last aspects, culture and history are fundamental aspects to define the specificity of the social constructionism theory, as Conrad and Baker point out:

Social constructionism is a conceptual framework that emphasizes the cultural and historical aspects of phenomena widely thought to be exclu-

sively natural. The emphasis is on how meanings of phenomena do not necessarily inhere in the phenomena themselves but develop through interaction in a social context (Conrad Barker 2010, S65).

The history and the culture are inextricably linked in the process of how the reality emerges and how the social actors perceive this reality. That statement has very important implications for how the social sciences work, as will be explained later in this chapter.

When the name of this tradition of thought is used, it is important to have in consideration how diverse it is. To Burr (2004, 2) it is difficult to say that social constructionism is a homogeneous theoretical framework, however there are some characteristics in common, and she specifically has mentioned these four characteristics: first our “taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world”, second “we commonly understand the world categories are historically and culturally specific”, third “knowledge is sustained by social process” and the fourth “knowledge and social action go together”, and this last aspect needs more explanation. The knowledge about the world is born in the social process, and this knowledge affects the way in which the human being and the institutions behave in the social world. There is an endless circle between knowledge and behavior, where both dimensions are affecting continually.

Social Constructionism and Language

Another important characteristic of the social constructionism theory is about the language. The language is not only a means to know about the meanings, but it co-constitutes reality. Then the language has part in the epistemological and ontological constitution of the reality, as Nighitingale (Nightingale Cromby 2002, 706) says:

That language actually co-constitutes reality. The play of linguistic meaning and signification is shaped and constrained by embodiment, materiality, socio-cultural institutions, interpersonal practices and their historical trajectories (all of these structured by, and reproducing structures of, power) such that language does not independently and thoroughly constitute our world

In this way it is important to have in consideration what kind of definition of language it is used, and language in this case is understood in its symbolic dimension (Searle 1996, 59), and the language is necessary in order to know about knowledge and meanings of our world. In this symbolic dimension the language is the basic element to create our social system, in a way that the social system becomes a communicative system (Luckmann 2008, 277). As communicative system, the social system has the fundamental quality of collective memory: "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the communicative construction of collective memory is the most important component of the social construction of reality" (Luckmann 2008, 278). The knowledge about the world goes through generation to generation in the process of social interaction, and this collective memory is a clue aspect of the social constructions, and the collective memory is a dynamic phenomenon that changes in the process of social interaction: "Commonly defined as a conception or practice sustained across generations, tradition becomes an invention consciously designed to deal with present problems"(Schwartz 1991, 221). The collective memory works like a basic knowledge about the world, and that is our reality. The social actors are permanently constructing the reality from the collective memory and in the social interaction process.

The social systems as communicative system produce rationality and sense, two aspects to give the possibility to distinguish between different social systems (Luhmann 1995, 437). The rationality and sense at the same time are the basic elements to produce the social system as a communicative system. Our constructions of the world, in this world of rationality and sense, are full of meanings. These meanings are one of the key aspects of the social interaction. These meanings are exchanged inter-subjectively for means of the symbolic essence of the language.

The Importance of the Social Interaction

If the reality is a social construction, how was this construction born? The answer is the social interaction process, and more specifically in the relationship between the different social actors. As Gergen (1985, 5) points out:

The terms in which the world is understood are social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people. From the constructionist position, terms of understanding is neither automatically driven by

the forces of nature, nor the inexorable outcome of genetic endowment. Rather, they are the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship

The human being in a world, that is cultural and historical world, produces with others the reality. The relation between different persons and social actors has important implications to understand the constitution of our world. First, the construction of the reality that is around every single person is born in co-constitution:

My hope is to demonstrate that virtually all intelligible action is born, sustained, and/or extinguished within the on-going process of relationship. From this standpoint there is no isolated self or fully private experience. Rather, we exist in a world of co-constitution (Gergen 2009, XV).

The second implication is the inner world or in a more psychological way our self. The different psychological functions are born in the process of social interaction, as Liebrucks says: "Further the social constructionists argue that culturally specific behavior patterns and psychological functions of individual persons are formed by discursive means, that is, their genesis depends on social interaction" (Liebrucks 2001, 385).

It is impossible to understand our world, external as well as internal, beyond the relationships. Like Gergen says the human being is a relational being: "This vision, relational being, seeks to recognize a world that is not within persons but within their relationships, and that ultimately erases the traditional boundaries of separation" (2009, 5).

In this perspective it is possible to see that in every aspect of the world, our reality, some relational process was the genesis. And if we ask questions about world constructions as social scientists, we need to ask for the relations that have been involved in these constructions.

The Social Constructionism and the Epistemological and Methodological Implications

The social constructionism perspective has important implications about how the scientific knowledge in social science must be constituted, and what are the specific methods suitable for this scientific enterprise. It is not possible to think that the same conception can be used in social science like it is used in physical sciences, because concepts like objectivity or measurement have very different meaning, as Luckmann (2008, 280) says:

Social reality is not simple given to, and grasped in, direct or instrumentally mediated observation. Therefore 'objectivity' and 'measurement' in the social sciences cannot mean the same thing as in the physical sciences

One of the most important aspects that are necessary to have in consideration in the social sciences specificity is about the meanings of the dates. Our social world is meaningful world, when the social scientist collects different dates, the meaningful aspect need to be preserved in order to capture the historical and cultural dimension of the world. Again Luckmann says when he refers to the dates:

Because they were constructed in meaningful social actions in a historical social world, they are to be reconstructed as data in a way that preserves rather than destroys their essential meaningfulness and historicity (Luckmann 2008, 282).

This is a very important challenge to any research process in social sciences, how to preserve the meaning of the social world that social scientist tries to understand, and how to catch the specificity of the historical and cultural dimension where the social life happens.

Now it is important to take again a look at the work of Alfred Schutz, because it is necessary to answer the fundamental question about methodology of the social sciences, in order to develop scientific theories of the meaningful social world. In words of Schutz (1990, 62) the problem is:

Indeed, the most serious question which the methodology of the social sciences has to answer is: How is it possible to form objective concepts

and an objectively verifiable theory of subjective meaning-structures? The basic insight that the concepts formed by the social scientist are constructs of the constructs formed in common-sense thinking by the actors on the social scene offers an answer

The social scientist is knowledge builder at the second level, which means that the social scientist takes the common-sense knowledge (constructs of the first level) in order to make constructs at the second level. The constructs of the second level are the theory; and this theory must be in consistence with the scientific principles of verification. The methodology in social sciences needs to preserve the meaning of the social world where the different social actors are part. But the methodology needs to be also consistent with the rules of logic and verification of the scientific knowledge. As Schutz (1990, 43) says:

The system of typical constructs designed by the scientist has to be established with the highest degree of clarity and distinctness of the conceptual framework implied and must be fully compatible with the principles of formal logic

Emotions as Social Constructions

Emotions are an important dimension of our capacity to be in contact with the world, and emotions like fear, anger, joy, compassion or sorrow are the first level of the sensible and concrete dimension in our wellbeing (Kitayama et al. 2000, 93). What about the nature of the emotions? Can the emotions be social constructions?. The answer for the social constructionists is that the emotions are a sociocultural phenomenon. As Armon-Jones (1986, 33) says:

According to constructionism, emotions are characterized by attitudes such as belief, judgments and desires, the contents of which are not natural, but are determined by the systems of cultural belief, value and moral value of particular communities

So, the emotions are not a universal psychological state of the human being, but emotions are a sociocultural human product. In other words the emotions are part of the process of social learning:

Constructionists defend the view that emotion attitudes are culturally determined by the claim that the attitudes involved in emotions are learnt as part of the agent's introduction to the beliefs, values, norms and expectations of his/her culture (Armon-Jones 1986, 33).

The emotions are learned in a specific cultural and historic context which means that the human being learns that some specific range of emotions is more appropriated than others in the social arena. This social learning is not a conscious process or mental state, but it is part of our common-sense world that we have received generation from generation. As Harré (1985, 259) says:

That social world is full of stories, exemplary anecdotes that reveal the forms of proper and improper social encounters. Each of these features that mark particular social worlds has a part to play in creating an order in a manifold of otherwise inchoate thoughts and feelings

If the emotions are affected by the historical context then emotions can change with the time, and there are different aspects of the social life where it is possible to see how these changes are produced:

There are then four features that can vary: vocabularies and socially recognized displays; what are taken to be emotionally significant or salient bodily states; an ontology of relevant objects, people, states and happenings; and the local moral order. None of these could be expected to be historically constant (Harré Finlay-Jones 1986, 220).

Nowadays there are many social researches about the consideration of the history of emotions (Plamper 2010, 237). For example for Reddy (2001, XI), "desire" is a very Western construction that is not possible to be treated as universal characteristic. The same can be said about other emotions like the romantic love (Passerini 2009, 159). Another interesting dimension of this social constructionist perspective is about the feminist theories of the emotions. In short these theories make a deconstructive turn about the emotions, showing how these standard theories of the emotions are related with the power and domination of one gender over other (Lutz White 1986, 405). The main point in this case is; the emotions are not universal neither natural

biological states but sociocultural constructions and are connecting with the power structures of the society.

Social Constructionism and its critiques

There are different kinds of critiques that often are made to the social constructionism theory, but probably one of the most common is about of the realism of this perspective (Nightingale Cromby 1999, 1). The critics say that for the social constructionism perspective the reality is socially constituted, so it is not possible to speak about any independent reality, like mountains or buildings, which is not acceptable. One of the important implications in this case, refers to the impossibility to generate objective scientific knowledge. Connected with the absence of realism there is another critique about the relativism of the social constructionism. The critique of relativism claims that if there is no reality independent of the observer, then every conception about the reality depends on the socio-cultural and historical circumstances and all the possible conceptions can be right. However it is important to have in consideration that the social constructionism has different representatives (Searle 1995, XI) and they do not necessarily deny the existence of the objective reality. As Eberle (1993, 6) says, in reference to the work of Berger and Luckmann:

Society must be grasped in its duality as an objective and subjective reality. The objective social reality, although produced by social action, appears to the individual as separate and independent from him or her. The subjective side consist in the consciousness an actor has, shaped in in pervasive processes od socialization, and sustained and modified in daily interactions

For Searle (1995, 31) the answer in this case is to recognize that we are living in a world with two different kinds of facts: brute facts that are not dependent of the human institutions for their existence, and institutional facts that are dependent of the human institutions for their existence, especially of the symbolic function of the language.

There is other criticism that is interesting to comment in this section. This critique makes reference to the disembodiment of the social constructionism; more specifically the critics (Nightingale Cromby 1999, 1; Cromby 2004, 797) claim that normally social constructionists forget that every person is not only discourse. This means that

people live in concrete bodies and material world as well, so the language and symbolic process are not the unique process to have in consideration in order to explain the social life. As Cromby (2004, 799) says:

Such discussions demonstrate that in subordinating embodied subjectivity to language and discourse, constructionism has generated problems. Downplaying the embodied materiality of human existence makes constructionism unconvincing, implying that our worlds, or at least all that is humanly important in them, consist of nothing other than discourse and its effects

Other social constructionists like Harré (2002, 23) agree with this problem, the disembodiment of the social constructionism from the material world. Harré proposes to consider the material world in connection with a specific social narrative, for example; the human being is constituted from the narrative of the natural sciences, in different inorganic elements, but for many people that don't have this specific knowledge, this narrative doesn't make sense. So the important thing is not take away the materiality of our body or the materiality of the natural world, but to explain in what sense this materiality is incorporate in some specific narrative of the social life.

Chapter II “Well-Being Concepts, Theoretical Approaches and Ways of Measuring”

In this chapter the main aim is to explain the concept of well-being. The well-being as a concept and life experience is a very complex phenomenon. It is necessary to explore other issues that are related to the well-being. It is important to know about the theoretical approaches that are behind the different concepts of well-being or the other concepts, like quality of life or happiness, that are used with the same meaning. Finally it is also important to know about the different ways that the well-being can be measured, and what kind of implications these different measurements can have.

Well-being Concepts and Definitions

There are many different conceptualizations of the well-being (McGillivray 2007, 1), but all these concepts and definitions are related to the idea of how good is life or how satisfied any person is with his own life (Saari 2011,10). However there is consensus that the wellbeing phenomenon is a very complex and multifaceted concept. Well-being as concept is related and used in many cases interchangeably with other concepts like happiness, quality of life, subjective well-being, satisfaction, utility and welfare (Easterlin 2001, 465). According to Michaelson (taken from Forgeard 2011, 98) the well-being is a “dynamic process that gives people a sense of how their lives are going through the interaction between their circumstances, activities, and psychological resources”, so the well-being is a multifaceted process where different dimensions of our life are in combination. For Diener (2009, 1) the concept of well-being is a very old question:

Since the time of the ancient Greek, and even before that, people have wondered about the nature of ‘the good life’. What is it that makes life desirable? What determines a high quality of life? One answer to these questions is that a person feels and thinks his or her life is desirable regardless of how others see it. This phenomenon has come to be called ‘subjective well-being’ which refers to the fact that the person subjectively believes his or her life is desirable, pleasant and good.

In this definition it is possible to see one important aspect that influences all the theory and the field of the investigation about the well-being; the question of the objectivity or subjectivity of the nature of the concept of well-being. For some scholars it is

possible to speak about the objectivity of the concept of well-being, because it is possible to recognize some universal needs that the people need to satisfy. At the same time it is possible to make different kind of measurements in order to know to what extent people satisfy these needs. For other scholars, like Diener, it is necessary to distinguish between objective and subjective well-being. In objective well-being it is possible to recognize universal needs whereas in subjective well-being it is necessary to have in consideration the psychological aspects of any personal evaluation about the quality of life itself and also the cultural aspects that can affect the perception of the good life. Some scholars propose a combination of ideas and measurements. Well-being is a complex phenomenon and it is necessary to mix objective and subjective methods to understand this complexity (Forgeard et al. 2011, 98).

To Veenhoven (2004, 4) the well-being: “denotes that something is in a good state. The term does not specify what that something is and neither what is considered ‘good’. So, it is typical catchall term without a precise meaning”. This vagueness is one of the reasons that makes well-being research as complex as Gasper points out: “Well-being seems to have intuitive plausibility as a concept, but in practice we encounter a bewildering diverse family of concepts and approaches, partly reflecting different contexts, purposes, and foci of attention” (Gasper 2004, 1)

In another conception of well-being Raibley (2011, 12) considers the well-being as agential flourishing:

Well-being as agential flourishing states that an adult human person is doing well at a time. The paradigm case of the flourishing agent is a person who successfully realizes their values and is stably disposed to do so. This person must have values, must desire to realize these values, and must possess a body and mind that are suitable for efficacious action on behalf of these values.

In this case the well-being is a dynamic process and it is dependent of the free will of people. Every person can be the builder of his or her own well-being. Of course there are external circumstances that can impede this possibility or affect seriously the potential for this pursuit.

Well-being conceptions and the role of the cultural dimension

One crucial aspect about the well-being concept, as has been commented, is related to the universal characteristic of the well-being, the universal needs that people need to satisfy to achieve their own well-being. This universality can be as well that for every people, independently of the culture, the meaning of well-being is the same. However, for many scholars the well-being is clearly a cultural construction (Gergen 2009, 20 ; Diener 2009, 1). The idea of well-being is created in a specific cultural setting with specific cultural values and perceptions about what is good or not. One interesting example about how the cultures can affect the worldview it is pointed out by Nisbett (2003, 20):

My research has led me to the conviction that two utterly different approaches to the world have maintained themselves for thousands of years. These approaches include profoundly different social relations, views about the nature of the world, and characteristic thought process. Each of these orientations-the Western and Eastern- is a self-reinforcing homeostatic system. The social practices promote the worldviews; the worldviews dictate the appropriate thought processes; and the thought processes both justify the worldviews and support the social practices

If we have in our world different cultures, with different worldviews and even thought processes, it is difficult to believe that these different cultures can have the same idea about the human well-being. Maybe one of the challenges in this case it is to know how the material world and the physiological needs in combination with the cultural and historical context produce a unique way to define and evaluate the well-being.

Another interesting line of thought, about the cultural effect over the conception of the well-being, comes from the perspective of the social changes in our Western society (Bauman 2007, 25). The Western society has been affected by important social changes; the globalization, the emergence of the consumer society and the permanent strengthening of the individualism. All these changes represent the cultural context where different ideas and perceptions about well-being are created. These social changes have been analysed from different perspectives, for example trying to explain how specifically the conception of wellbeing has changed or how this change

affects the self-reports about the well-being that every person makes. Sointu (2005, 256) explains how the change has been produced:

In other words, the wellbeing of a citizen in a traditional nation state - produced and conceptualized through institutionalized strategies of national governance- has been eclipsed by an increasing emphasis on wellbeing that is actively produced by the choosing consumer

It is clear from this perspective that the well-being as conception and as expectation to be pursuit, has experimented a movement from institutionalized social structures to individualistic election, in other words the responsibility for the well-being is now, in our globalized society, a personal challenge. But if the well-being as ideal is now a self-responsibility, how does this affect the self-perceptions of well-being? Elliott and Lemert (2006, 3) point out:

What is unmistakable about the rise of individualist culture, in which constant risk-taking and an obsessive preoccupation with flexibility rules is that individuals must continually strive to be more efficient , faster, learner, inventive and self-actualizing than they were previously-not sporadically, but day-in day-out

Well-being as concept and as ideal has changed, because our society has been in constant change. This is one of the important arguments to claim that well-being should be understood in terms of social construction, as a cultural product. This change, the new conception of the well-being and the challenge that represents for the people in the Western society is not necessarily positive (Bauman 2007, 115; Elliott Lambert 2006, 4)

Well-being and similar Concepts

The well-being concept belongs to the group of familiar concepts like quality of life, happiness, subjective well-being, welfare, life satisfaction, human development, to mention some of them. For some scholars these concepts are not the same, they have different meanings but in many dimensions they are overlapping each other (McGillivray 2007, 1). For others like Easterlin (2001, 465) these concepts can be exchanged, and used as proxies. For example the comparison between well-being and welfare can express the difference at the level of unit of analysis (Matikka 2001,

25). The welfare research concentrates in the conditions of good life in the societal or macro-level, whereas in the well-being research the level of analysis is personal or micro-level. In relation with the happiness Veenhoven sees the happiness: “as the overall appreciation of one’s life-as-a-whole, in short, how much one likes the life one lives” (2008, 450). In this way the happiness is clearly a subjective concept because it is dependent of the self-perceptions of the people, it is a state of mind that the people can verbalize and communicate to the others. So, happiness and subjective well-being, as concepts, are very close to each other. The relation and overlapping between these concepts; quality of life, happiness and subjective well-being can be observed in this statement of Diener (2000, 34), one of the important researchers of well-being:

This subjective definition of quality of life is democratic in that it grants to each individual the right to decide whether his or her life is worthwhile. It is this approach to defining the good life that has come to be called ‘subjective well-being’ (SBW) and in colloquial terms is sometimes labelled ‘happiness’

This conceptual relation and overlapping between these concepts show us that well-being presents some ambivalence (Drewnowski 1980, 15). The ambivalence makes reference to the acceptance of the well-being as objective concept or a subjective one. When the well-being is associated or related to material conditions, the recognition of the well-being as an objective concept is easier, but at the level of the personal experience it is more difficult to accept well-being as an objective concept. There are scholars that prefer to use terms like happiness or subjective well-being. However the resolution of this ambivalence is not simple because it is not easy to answer this question: How can we talk about human well-being, whatever definition we used, without considering the personal point of view of the people? As a provisional conclusion, it is necessary to recognize that the well-being is a very complex phenomenon and the strategies used in order to cope with this complexity, for example the distinction between objective and subjective well-being, not necessarily solve this complexity.

Well-being and theoretical framework

There are different social scientists from different disciplines who have been interested in developing theoretical frameworks to understand the idea of well-being. One of them is Amartya Sen who has developed the approach named Capability Approach (1987, 33). To Sen the well-being is a complex phenomenon, and to evaluate the well-being he proposes that the human life can be understood as groups of “doing” and “being”. These two groups together are called “functioning”. Every person has the possibility of different functioning that is valuable for him or her, but this functioning depends on the capabilities. The capability is the opportunity to make the functioning possible. One important aspect in Sen’s point of view is that it goes beyond the most narrow perspective of income or commodities in evaluating the degree of well-being. The well-being is more than to have some level of income or the possibility to have some commodities. It needs to be understood in terms of what the people can do and can be, and the real opportunities that they have in their disposition.

Other scholar that has a specific approach to the well-being is Erik Allardt (1973). To Allardt well-being is a system with three different dimensions of needs; having, loving and being. ‘Having’ refers to material conditions, which people need to satisfy to survive, ‘loving’ is about the social needs, like social support and self-identity that is developed in the social life, and finally ‘being’ that refers to the personal growth. These three dimensions are important to understand and to satisfy the well-being. Other aspect that Allardt stresses is that the well-being can have objective and subjective approaches in every dimension, for example the loving dimension can have objective measures and subjective as well, like self-report about the subject’s own perception of these feelings.

Finally the third theoretical framework it is about well-being as equality. To Baker and Linch (2004, 20) the equality has five dimensions that are fundamental to the human life and well-being; the first is economic equality and it means the egalitarian distribution of resources, the second is equal opportunity to be part of the work world and to learn, the third is cultural equality, and that means equal respect and recognition, fourth is political equality, this represents equality in power relations, and finally the affective equality, and that means equality in relations of care, love and solidarity. This last dimension of the equality has been object of a closer analysis (Lynch Baker 2009) for these scholars. They explain in this way the affective equality:

Being deprived of the capacity to develop supportive affective relations of love, care and solidarity, or the experience of engaging in them when one has the capacity, is therefore a serious human deprivation for most people: it is core dimension of affective inequality (Lynch Baker 2009,1).

From these five dimensions of the equality, emerges the very complex form in which the equality can be affected, and at same time the well-being of the people. These five dimensions create consciousness of the fact that the inequalities can happen in different situations of the economic and social life, and for example some person or group can have satisfied the basic economic needs but at the same time suffer from strong cultural inequality.

Evaluating the Well-Being

There are two different ways in which the well-being has been evaluated; these two ways represent also two different conceptualizations of the well-being. The first way is the objective or universalistic measures of the well-being that represent one important tradition in social sciences (especially in economics and sociology). This perspective has the name of the social indicators movement (Noll 2004, 151). The social indicators movement was born in the United States in the sixties, and it was a reaction against the reductionist conception of human development that only considered the economic indicators, like income or gross national product, as indicators of well-being (Rapley 2003, 3). From these days the social indicators movement has been in permanent expansion and the number of indicators, indexes, and the methodology for his elaboration has been changed with more complex and sophisticated instruments. For example nowadays it is possible to see very different national and international comparison of the well-being like; quality of life index, satisfaction with life, United Nations development index, happy life years, prosperity index and more (Saari 2011, 10). Clearly this trend represents the necessity to have different approaches to the human development that has been monopolized for years by indicators that only take in consideration the commodities to answer the question of the well-being. The social indicators represent an important step to a more complex and rich perspective of well-being; these indicators give the possibility to the social scientists and policy makers to know more deeply about the social development and the well-being, and recognize many hidden problems that the standard economic indicators do not show. However the social indicators are not free of epistemological and

methodological problems. For example it is not easy to accept that the idea of the well-being, whatever the instrument or indicator for its measuring is used, could be a universal concept free of cultural and historical influences. There are also methodological problems, because the statistic systems can be very different at the level of development in order, for example, to make international comparisons. Finally there is another problem that can be more political or ideological (Nectoux et al. 1980, 89) than scientific, in relation with the social indicators. The social indicators have now a very good social prestige, because they are easier to understand and they can be used to create rankings, in international or national comparisons. In this way the social indicators contribute to legitimize some institutional practices.

The second way to evaluate the well-being is a subjective and constructionist perspective. From this perspective well-being is a culturally and historically influenced concept, and the methodological strategy to study it needs to be a qualitative way. Ethnography, case studies, deep interviews, visual and art methods, all of these methodologies are used for this kind of studies of the well-being. The result of this conception depends on the own perception of a person, group or community about the well-being. These studies are very complex to elaborate and it is not possible to make simple conclusions and comparisons. The image of well-being that it is possible to get is more specific and the interpretation is permanently open to the researchers (Sofaer 1999, 1101). The constructionism and qualitative perspective of the well-being studies is increasing (Merriam 2002, 15) because the problems of the social indicators have to capture the complexity of the well-being phenomena, specially the cultural and historical dimensions that constantly are affecting the idea of well-being that every person, group or community has. These constructionist and qualitative perspectives are used also in the field of health problems and persons who have physical or mental disabilities (Jurkowski et al. 2009, 144), because this kind of perspectives and methodologies give to researchers and practitioners a very deep knowledge about well-being from the point of view of the subjects.

These two different approaches of the evaluation of well-being; objective or universal perspective and the subjective or constructionist one can be for many scholars complementary (Forgeard et al. 2011, 79), and it is possible to use mixed methods (Wolley 2009, 7). Mixed methods are based on the complexity of the well-being concept and also, for the different unit of analysis that these two perspectives can be applied

for. When well-being research is designed in national or international scale it is not possible to do constructionist or qualitative research, on the other hand, when the well-being research has the aim to know about the well-being of a group of persons or a community, the design of quantitative indicators as the only means can be irrelevant. The evaluation of well-being, as well as the concept of well-being, is a very complex task. The evaluation can be quantitative, qualitative a combination of methods, but in any case the complexity is impossible to eliminate. This complexity is caused by the fact that well-being is a changing concept, like other social phenomena.

Well-being and Philosophical Issues

Related to the well-being concept and theoretical approach there are also important philosophical perspectives. Concretely there are two important philosophical traditions of the definition of well-being (Vázquez et al. 2009, 15) specifically they are the hedonism and the eudaimonia. Both traditions come from the old Greek; hedonism represents the pursuit of happiness here and now, the presence of positive feelings and the absence of the negative ones. On the other hand, the eudaimonia represents that well-being comes from the realization of the human potential, like creativity and the realization of the deep values that are meaningful in the human life.

	Hedonic Well-being	Eudaimonic Well-being
Representative authors	Epicurus Hobbes Sade Bentham Bradburn Tennen	Aristotle Frankl Ryff Deci Seligman
Basic concepts	Hedonic Well-being Pleasure Positive/negative affect Affective balance Positive emotions Net affect	Eudaimonic Well-being Virtues Self-fulfilment Psychological growth Aims and needs Psychological strengths

	Life satisfaction	
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Table 1 “Philosophical Traditions of Well-being” (Adapted from Vázquez et al. 2009, 15)

The differences between these two traditions (from the table 1) are important because they have influence not only in the definitions or theoretical approaches but also in how the measures of the well-being are made. Naturally it is possible to make a combination of measurements of well-being, taking elements or concepts from both perspectives. However with a mixed method the complexity of the measurement increases and the interpretation of the data can be more difficult and even have contradictory results. This difference between the two perspectives, hedonic and eudaimonic, can show interesting effects in the human behaviour. For example Konow and Early use the concept of hedonistic paradox: “The hedonistic paradox states that homo economicus, or someone who seeks happiness for him- or herself, will not find it, but the person who helps others will” (Konow Early 2008, 1). In this way the real well-being can be found, not in the immediate satisfaction of any need, but in living according to the important values of life.

Conclusions

After this brief analysis of the well-being concept it is necessary to make some conclusions that are important for developing this work. First, although it can be obvious that it is not less important, the well-being is a very complex phenomenon. The concept of well-being is complex because of the philosophical traditions from which the idea of well-being comes, the difficulties to make evaluations and measurements and because of the political and social implications of these measurements. The conception of well-being and the possibility to measurement the well-being is increasing the political importance, because the traditional measures that come from a more narrow economic perspective, like income per capita, are nowadays not sufficient. However

the evaluations of well-being are not easy to make. They can be qualitative-subjective, quantitative-objective (for example indicators) or some kind of mixed methods, but in every case there are many epistemological and methodological issues that need to be resolved. The second important aspect about well-being is related to the historical and cultural context that affects this phenomenon. The well-being as a concept is changing, and this change is connected to the change of the Western society. The globalization and the increasing importance of the market are two examples of how the well-being, as concept, has been affected by these two societal changes. But the well-being is a cultural phenomenon as well; there are differences between the conceptions of well-being that are related to the specific cultural contexts. For example between the Western and Eastern societies, there are values and conceptions about the human life that sometimes can make it difficult to compare the well-being of these societies through indicators. Finally the third important aspect to have in consideration is about the family or the group of concepts that have similarity with the well-being. Life satisfaction, quality of life, happiness and subjective well-being are some of them. These concepts have in common the intention or aim to evaluate how good the human life is for some group of persons, in a specific moment in their lives. But of course these concepts are not the same, for example happiness is a concept related to the hedonistic tradition, where the important thing it is the experience of positive feelings.

Chapter III “Well-being and Young People”

In this chapter the aim is to show the most important theoretical insights about the relation between the well-being and young people. Different factors affect the well-being in young people. It is also important to have in consideration that the concept of ‘young people’ is not stable and obvious but in permanent change (Jones 2009, 1). In this work the focus is in the well-being of young people that are commonly called adolescents.

Youth and Adolescence in context

The concept of youth is an evolving concept and it is also connected to the societal process and change. Like the definition of well-being, the youth concept can be considered as a social construction and in this way affected by the historical and cultural context (Tonon 2012, 1). From the point of view of the age range the definition of young people is diverse. For example in Finland young people is defined to include any person that is 29 years old or younger than that (Youth Work and Youth Policy 2006), but in Estonia the definition considers young people any person below 26 years old (Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013). In the case of the adolescence the same problem exists; there is not just one definition. For example to the American Psychological Association:

There is no standard age range for defining adolescence. Individuals can begin adolescence earlier than 10, just as some aspects of adolescent development often continue past the age 18. Although the upper age boundary is sometimes defined as older than 18 (eg., age 21 or 25), there is widespread agreement that those in the age range of 10 to 18 should be considered adolescent (2002, 1).

In this work the target group consists of young people between 14-18 years old.

General View

From the general perspective it is possible to recognize many different factors that can affect the well-being of the young people, for example in the Unicef report (Unicef 2007) there are 6 dimensions that are considered the most important aspects of the child well-being: material well-being, health and safety, educational well-being, family and peer relationships, behaviours and risks and subjective well-being. For

others scholars (O'Brien 2008) these 6 dimensions are very important when international comparisons are made, but on the other hand it is important to have in consideration the limitations of these international comparisons because the specificities of every group of young people:

...it is impossible to talk about adolescents and their development as if they were a homogenous group. Their lived experiences are situated in specific cultural and national context and are relative to the recognition of their particular ethnic, gendered, racial and classed identities (O'Brien 2008, 60)

But in general view, many other scholars agree that the well-being in young people is a multidimensional phenomenon (Edwards 2003, 7; O'Brien 2008, 59; Redmond Hamilton 2010, 10) and it is necessary to be in consideration aspects like material wealth, relationships (parental and peers), mental health, sexual life, consumption patterns, life styles and risk. In one interesting research in Wales (Newton et al. 2011) the researchers found similar dimensions of the young well-being from the perspective of the young people themselves (target group was 16-19 years old people):

Our results suggest that key dimensions of wellbeing for young people include the people in their lives (specifically friends and family), how they socialize (i.e. through technology, drinking, sports), the spaces and times in which they socialize (schools, homes, weekends). These findings support the work of others working in this field, who have highlighted the importance of family, friend, leisure, school/education/learning, behaviour, the local environment, community, money, attitudes and wealth. The centrality of interpersonal relationships with family and friends as well as the value of 'activities' and 'things to do' appears to be a consistent theme across current research on young people wellbeing (Newton et al 2011, 6)

Well-being and Well-becoming

One important aspect about of concept of well-being in young people has relation with the concept of young people as persons in developing stage of the life (Berk 2007, 8). In this conception the young people is some kind of incomplete adult with

different range of capabilities than the adults. On the other hand we can see the young people in a different way, for example from the perspective of the capabilities approach, as Nussbaum (2003,54) points out:

We thus need to adopt a political conception of the person that is more Aristotelian than Kantian, one that sees the person from the start as both capable and needy-in need of a rich plurality of life-activities`, to use Marx's phrase, whose availability will be the measure of well-being

When these two different conceptions of the young people are taken into consideration, it is possible to speak about well-being and well-becoming. Well-being is different from the well-becoming because the children and young people are considered as persons as they are, and the youth is not seen as a life stage before becoming a complete person in the future: "Wellbeing speaks more to the idea of child as a person rather than as an incomplete adult"(Redmond and Hamilton, 2010, 22). Behind these different conceptions there are different ideas as well, about how the culture and the societal change can affect our perspective of the young people, as Jones (2009, 166) says:

The sociological construction of youth which developed in the twentieth century was largely concerned with social location-whether young people were structurally connected with the wider society through their age cohort or through their kin-generation structure, with young people seen in either case as social beings in waiting, on fringes of society, rather than integrated with it

When the culture and the changing values are taken in to a deeper consideration, the conception of the youth as a concrete stage of life must be relativized.

Relationships and Well-being of Young People

The importance of the relationships dimension in the well-being can be better understood from the perspective of the attachment theory (Ainsworth 1989, 709). This theory focuses the attention in how the emotional and affective bonds of the human being are developed in the course of the life cycle and how they affect the well-being. Thompson points out the importance of the attachment theory:

Attachment theory has become the dominant approach to understanding early socio-emotional and personality development during the past quarter-century of research. It is easy to understand why. The questions studied by the attachment researchers are some of the compelling, longstanding issues of developmental psychology. How do early experiences, particularly in close relationships, affect social and personality development? What are the central features of parenting that have these influences? What internal and external factors mediate continuity and change in socio-personality functioning early in life (Thompson, 2000, 145).

The importance of the attachment, and in general of the relationships of the young people has been recognized in many studies (Ma Scott 2008, 177; Walsh 2010, 976; Nickerson Nagle 2005, 35). These relationships have a deep influence in the development of a child and in the capabilities that children and young people have to cope with the problems of diary life. From this perspective there two important factors that have influence in the relationship world of the young people: the family (Demo Acock 1996, 457) and the peer (Diamond Lucas 2004, 313). It is not easy to speak about the concept of family because of the changing characteristic of the concept (Weigel 2008, 1426). However, although the concept can be diverse, the importance of the family as a social phenomenon remains (Bjarnason et al. 2012, 51).

Family and Parenting Process

There are different aspects of the family and parenting process that affect the well-being of the young people and the adolescent in particularly. Vazsonyi (Vazsonyi et al. 2003, 129) describes three dimensions of the parenting process that affect the relationship between them: harmony, autonomy and conflict. The first is the harmony, which describes the way in which the relationship works, for example the degree of acceptance, closeness, responsiveness and the process of communication that take part in the relationship. When the relationships have been more harmonious that can be predictor of better social competences of the adolescents. The second is the autonomy, which describes the process of the growth and independence that happens in the adolescence and the way in which the parents react and take control over the process. There are different aspects of control, for example; psychological control, restrictiveness, monitoring, supervision, support and peer approval. The third aspect

is the conflict, which means the tension and bicker processes between parents and adolescents. This conflict can be a positive aspect of the adolescent individuation depending of the family context, for example if the family milieu is more harmonious. On the other hand, the Joronen and Åstedt-Kurki findings (Joronen Åstedt-Kurki 2005, 125) have showed that comfortable home, emotionally warm atmosphere, open communication, familiar involvement, possibilities for external relations and sense of personal significance in the family are positively related to the well-being of the adolescents. Walsh (Walsh et al. 2010, 976) says that parental support and monitoring can be negatively related to risk behaviours like substance abuse, smoking and alcohol. From the perspective of the attachment theory Doyle and Moretti (2000) describe the positive effects of the attachment in the adolescence:

The adolescents who grow up in conditions of adversity and inadequate access to resources may not suffer from psychopathology if they share secure attachment relationships with their parents. Conversely, adolescents who develop in a supportive and resource rich environment, albeit with less secure attachment, may have poor outcomes at least in some domains (Doyle Moretti 2000, 12).

Other important variable that has relation with the youth well-being is the parenting style. Driscoll (Driscoll et al. 2008) describes four types of parenting styles that are related with the level of support and control that parents have over the child.

Parenting style	Support	Control
Permissive	High	Low
Disengaged	Low	Low
Authoritative	High	High
Authoritarian	Low	High

Table 2 “Parenting Style” (From Driscoll et al. 2008, 185)

From this perspective Driscoll’s study shows that the authoritative style of parenting is positively related to children and adolescent well-being. The Driscoll findings agree with the findings of Milevsky (Milevsky et al. 2007, 39), in this case the conclusion

was that the authoritative style was positively related with high self-esteem and life satisfaction, but negatively related with depression in adolescents.

Finally the last aspect of the family and adolescent well-being that is analysed in this section is the parental divorce. There are many studies that show the negative effects over the youth well-being as product of the parental divorce in different aspects of a young person's life (Amato 2001, 355), for example Amato and Cheadle (2005, 191) point out that adolescents of divorced parents experience in the adulthood diverse problems compared with adolescents of continuously married parents, like psychological distress. Sørksen (Sørksen et al. 2005, 725) found symptoms of anxiety, depression and problems in subjective well-being, self-esteem and school behaviour in longitudinal study of 14-18 years old adolescents that have been children of divorced parents. Despite of these studies one aspect remains unclear, this is if the conflict between parents that precede the divorce affects more the well-being of young people than the divorce in self (Morrison Coiro 1999, 626), and that is a very complex aspect in the divorce research. In fact there are studies as Kelly's research (Kelly 2000,963) that show how many of the psychological problems that children show after the parental divorce were present before the divorce as well.

Adolescent Peer Relations

The other important group of relationships of the youth are the peer relations. It is possible to recognize these relationships from a more holistic vision, that is, from ecological models of human development (Bronfenbrenner 1994, 38). This means that human development needs to be understood as an entire ecological system. Specifically in the Bronfenbrenner theory there are different subsystems; from the microsystem to the macro-system that affect the process of human development. Microsystem is the immediate environment like the school and family and macro-system refers to institutional patterns of culture. In this ecological perspective (Smetana et al. 2006, 255), the adolescence development needs to be considered as a complex system of social relationships; peer groups or crowds, close friends and romantic relationships, as La Greca and Moore point out: "Adolescence is a critical period in social development, marked by an expansion of peer networks, increased importance of close friendships, and the emergence of romantic relationships" (2005, 49).

All these social relationships are developing in a wider cultural context that can be called the youth culture. The importance of the peer relations needs to be considered in four different aspects (Crosnoe McNeely 2008, 71): the first is the complexity of the network of adolescent social relations, which means that the groups, crowds, friends and romantic relationships represent a very complex system. The second is that the impact of the adolescent peer relationships is deeper than the social relations in other stages of life. In the third place, it is necessary recognize two different mechanisms that work in the adolescent peer group, the selection in to the group and the influence of the peer group over the adolescent. Finally the fourth aspect that is very important to recognize, is about the behaviours that are risk behaviours for the adults like drinking, unprotected sex, smoking and use of drug. The peer relations are the key factor in how the adolescents initiate or not these behaviours. Other aspect that is necessary to have in consideration in this complex system of relationships is the connection between the family and peers and the role of the siblings. According with Steinberg and Morris (2001, 83) a good familiar environment has a positive effect on the adolescent peer relations, and on the other hand the good sibling's relation is positively related with adolescent school competence, sociability, autonomy and self-worth. In this complex system of relationships, the peer relations have an important role in the adolescents' well-being but this role needs to be considered in an ecological way (Walsh et al. 2010, 976), in relation with the other adolescent relationships.

School environment and Youth Well-being

The school environment is another very important dimension in the formation of the youth well-being; in this social space there are different aspects that affect the young life, as Marin and Brown (2008, 1) say:

Adolescents spend a large proportion of their day in school or pursuing school-related activities. While the primary purpose of the school is the academic development of the students, its effects on adolescents are far broader, also encompassing their physical and mental health, safety, civic engagement, and social development. Further, its effects on all these outcomes are produced through a variety of activities including formal pedagogy, after school programs, caretaking activities (e.g., feeding, providing a safe environment) as well as the informal social environment created by student and staff on daily basis

The academic achievement, the relation with the authority (teachers) and the relation with the classmates are the most notorious dimensions in the school environment that can affect the young well-being. This is the reason why the youth perceptions about school are important, as Walsh points out: “Existing studies show that negative school perceptions predict greater involvement in risk behaviors, such as substance use, drinking, truancy, school bullying/fighting and impact negatively on mental well-being” (2010, 977).

On the other hand Bird and Markle (2012, 61) describe several factors that are related to the subjective well-being of the young people in school environment; personal goal setting, structured mentoring or life coaching, increasing gratitude, problem solving and interpersonal skills. Glover (Glover et al. 1998, 11) points out that there is strong evidence that the sense of security, social connectedness and positive regard in the school environment are related to the youth well-being.

Others aspects and concepts connected to the Youth Well-Being

Finally another important aspect related to the well-being of youth is the process of formation of the identity; research findings point out that the activities to promote identity formation have a positive relation with well-being (Palen Coatsworth 2007, 721) and these activities need to be of goal-directed behaviour and produce experiences of flow and personal expressiveness. The researchers have found that certain kind of goals and the experiences gained during the goal pursuit have an impact on well-being (Massey et al. 2009, 501). Positive relations were found between the gratitude phenomenon and well-being (Froh et al. 2009, 633). In this case well-being was defined as positive affect, global and domain specific life satisfaction, optimism, social support and pro-social behaviour.

Youth well-being and life satisfaction are two strongly related concepts. Life satisfaction can be defined as “the cognitive aspect of the subjective well-being” (Park, 2004, 25). According to Park (2004, 25) the life satisfaction of young people is related to four factors. First, the life satisfaction is positively related to physical health and healthy behaviours; second, the life satisfaction is negatively related to violent behaviour; third, life satisfaction is negatively related to psychological disorders like depression; and finally life satisfaction is positively related to a group of personal psy-

chological characteristics as internal locus of control, high self-esteem and extraversion.

Conclusions

As the phenomenon of well-being in general, the youth well-being is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that has its own characteristics and complexities. First of all, the way in which we define the concept of youth. As the theoretical review showed, the youth concept is a historical and culturally situated concept. As a social construction, how a young person should be considered? As a person that is becoming an adult or as a complete human being? For this reason it is possible to define the concept of well-being separately from the concept of well-becoming. In our historical and cultural context the scientific literature describes a group of physical, psychological and social contexts that affect or are related to the youth well-being. The dimension of the relationships appears as one of the most important. The family process and specially the parenting function, and the peer relations are two key dimensions of the social world in the youth well-being. This evidence suggests the importance of our character as relational beings (Gergen 2009, 29). These relationships are in the centre of the well-being experience.

Chapter IV “Investigation”

This is an exploratory and small-scale qualitative study (Denscombe 1998, 1), in three different groups of adolescents, two from the municipality of Espoo and one from the municipality of Kirkkonummi. The intention of this study was to know about the dimensions and conceptions of well-being. The study was made from the perspective of social constructionism. The purpose of the investigation was to know from the perspective of the adolescents about the most important aspects of the well-being, and how they define this concept. As qualitative and exploratory investigation this study has not any intention to make generalizations of the results.

Ethics

All the information about the goals and intentions of the investigation were delivered to the participants. The participants were voluntaries and all the information is anonymous. The names of the persons of the timelines have been changed.

Research Design and Methods

1.- Groups

The investigation was conducted in three different groups of the adolescents; one group came from one of the youth centres of the Municipality of Kirkkonummi and two from the Municipality of Espoo, one came from the Espoo’s central library and the other from a youth centre at Espoo

	Kirkkonummi YC	Espoo L	Espoo YC
Number of participants	6	6	5
Cultural background	Finnish people	Finnish and immigrant	Immigrant
Sex and age	4 females 2 males (15-16 years old)	3 females 3 males (15-18 years old)	5 males (15-18 years old)

2.- Methodology

The study used mixed method design strategy (Morse Niehaus 2009,1). The main method to collect the data was the focus group methodology, and the others were: graphic elicitation (time lines), short questionnaire and visual elicitation (photog-

raphy). All the process was conducted in four different rounds between October of 2011 and April of 2012 in these three different places, but only two of these three groups completed all the rounds, the group of Kirkkonummi (Kirkkonummi YC) and the group number 2 of Espoo (Espoo YC) Every round had between 45-60 minutes of duration.

3.- Sample and Recruitment

In all these three groups, the participation was voluntary. The young people were informed about the investigation and asked whether they wanted to participate or not. In two of these three groups (Kirkkonummi YC, Espoo YC), they received a gift after the process was finished (movie tickets).

4.- Focus group questions

In the focus group the questions were six:

- a) What kind of dreams do you have?
- b) What kind of situation could prevent you from achieving these dreams?
- c) Do you have some fears in your life?
- d) Are you happy?
- e) Can you imagine being even more happy?
- f) What does well-being mean for you?

These questions are connects each other: dreams told us about what kind events are specially expected for us, fears are other side of the coin. Happiness, as the literature show, is the hedonist dimension of the well-being, and finally the definition of the well-being is the verbalization of the young people about the concept.

All these six questions were asked in two rounds, questions a-c in in the first round and questions d-f in the second round.

In these different focus groups the idea was to balance the achievement of information with the motivation of the participants, and that was the reason to limit the time for one hour. These two rounds of focus groups were recorded and transcribed.

5.-Research places

The research places were three different spaces. One was a meeting room in a library, and the other two were free time rooms in the youth centres. The conditions to

work, and specifically to develop the focus groups and the other research technics were in general very good. However in the youth centres the level of environmental distractions (music and other adolescents, for example), was sometimes the main barrier to have deeper conversations.

6.- Role of researcher

The most important aspect of the research process was to achieve the level of confidence, in order that the different groups of adolescents would answer without any pressure the different questions that I asked. I presented my work as a research of an independent educational institution, and without any authority to ask questions of the themes they don't want to talk about. In the first meeting with these three different groups, important part of the time was spent in the conversation about the goals of the investigation, and about questions that persons of different groups made to me, this situation was of special interest in one of the groups of Espoo (Espoo YC(2)). This group asked me different personal questions.

7.- Analytic procedure

The analytic procedure was made through the description and categorisation (Marshall Rossman 2011, 214) of the dates. After this all this information was put together in the interface point (Morse Niehaus 2009, 56). The interface point is the point where the general interpretation was done.

8.- Findings

Examples of the timelines

The timeline is one of the graphic elicitation methods that can be used in order to know about the important aspects of the lives of young people (Bagnoli 2009, 560). In this section four of the fifteen timelines are analyzed, showing different perceptions of the important life events of young people.

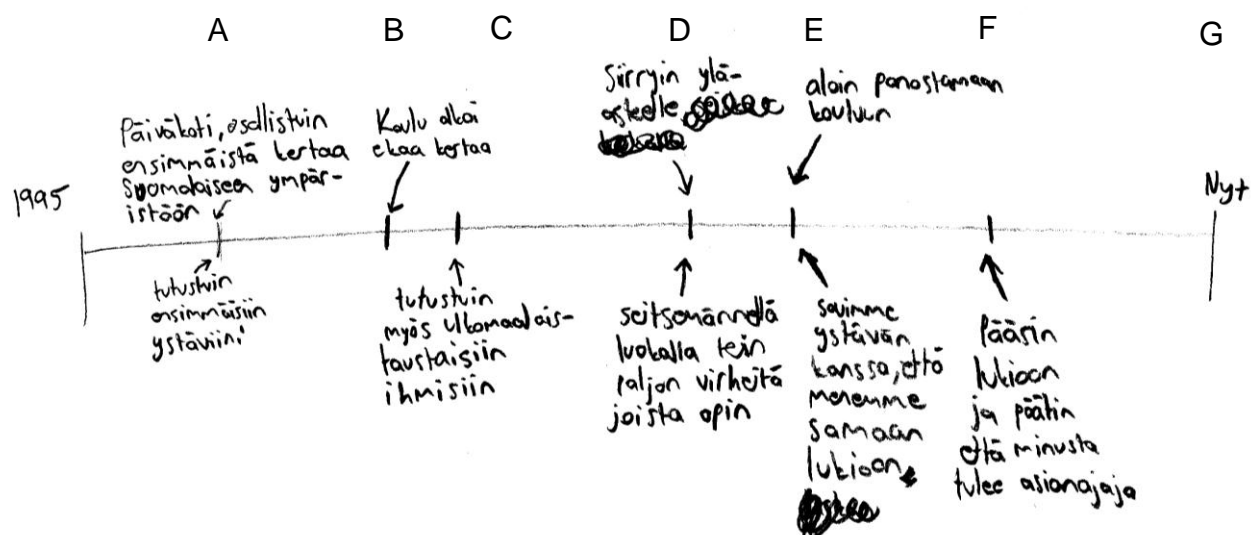


Image 1

Translation

- Kindergarten, I participated for the first time in the Finnish environment (above). I met my first friend (below)
- School started for the first time
- I met also people with foreigner backgrounds
- I started the secondary school (above). In the 7th degree I made a lot of mistakes which I learned about (below).
- I started to put more pressure in my school's achievements; I made a commitment with my friend that we will go to the same high school.
- I got to high school and decided to become a lawyer

The first of these timelines is Ibrahim's line. He is 16 years old boy, he was born in Finland but his parents are immigrants from Kosovo. He drew the timeline with many details. Like many other adolescents in this investigation, the different events in the school life are the most meaningful in his life. The recognition of the Finnish cultural environment and the different kind of the relationships are as well, another important aspect. But there are other two events or points very interesting in his timeline; one of

them it is the reflection about the mistakes or bad behavior that he did in the past and about he learnt from these experiences. The other event in his timeline shows a very important decision on the future, when he decided to be lawyer.

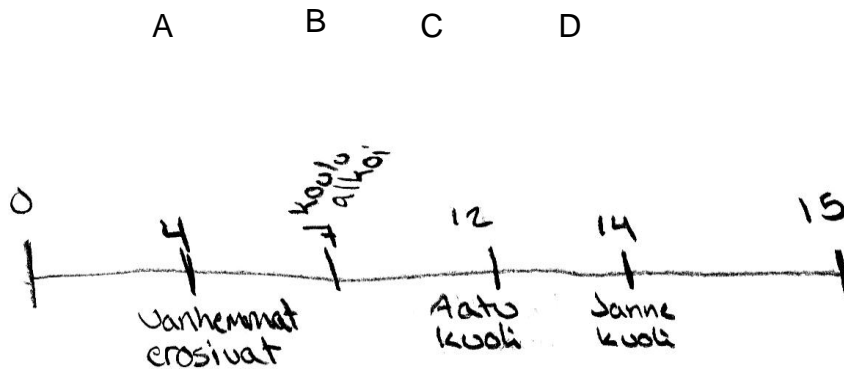


Image 2

Translation

Girl of Masala:

- a) My parents divorced
- b) Primary school started
- c) Aatu died
- d) Janne died

The second timeline is the line of girl. She is 15 years old. This is a very impressive timeline with only four events in hers life and three of them are dramatic, the divorce of the parents and two different deaths of the known people.

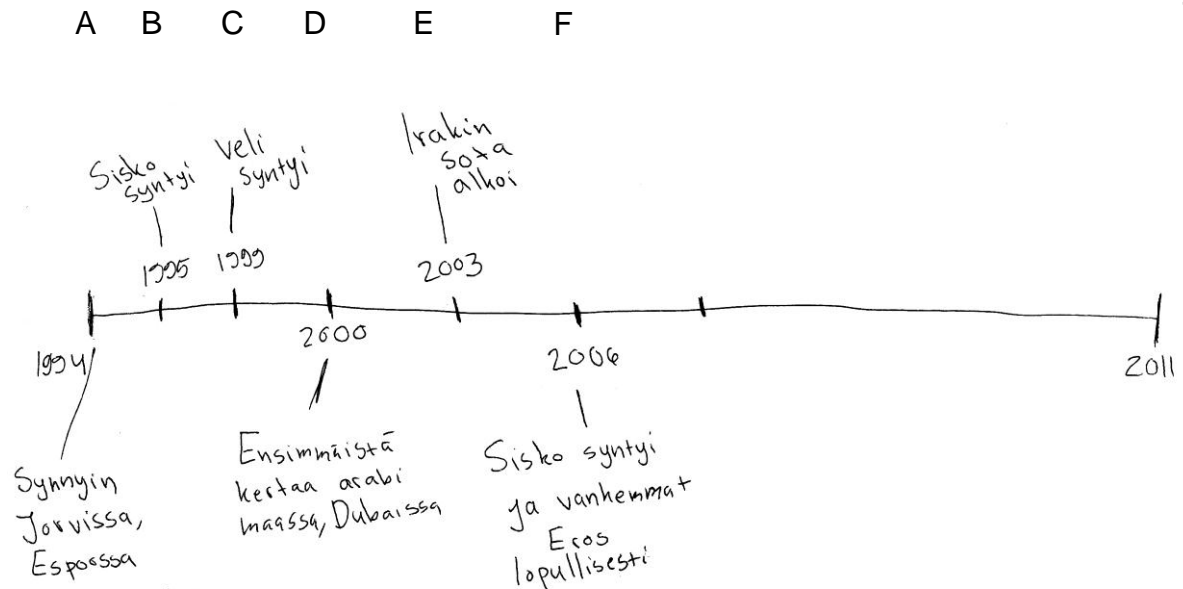


Image 3

Translation

Girl of Iraq:

- My birth in the Jorvin hospital, Espoo
- My sister birth
- My brother birth
- My first time in one Arabic country, in Dubai
- Iraq war star
- My sister birth and my parents were divorced definitely

The third timeline is as well, line of girl. She is 18 years old, She was born in Finland but like Ibrahim, hers parents are immigrant, in this case from Iraq. It is possible see two important group of events in hers life, one group are the family events, like births and the divorce of hers parents. The others events have relation with the cultural background of hers parents, the first time when she visit one Arabic country and the star of the Iraq war.

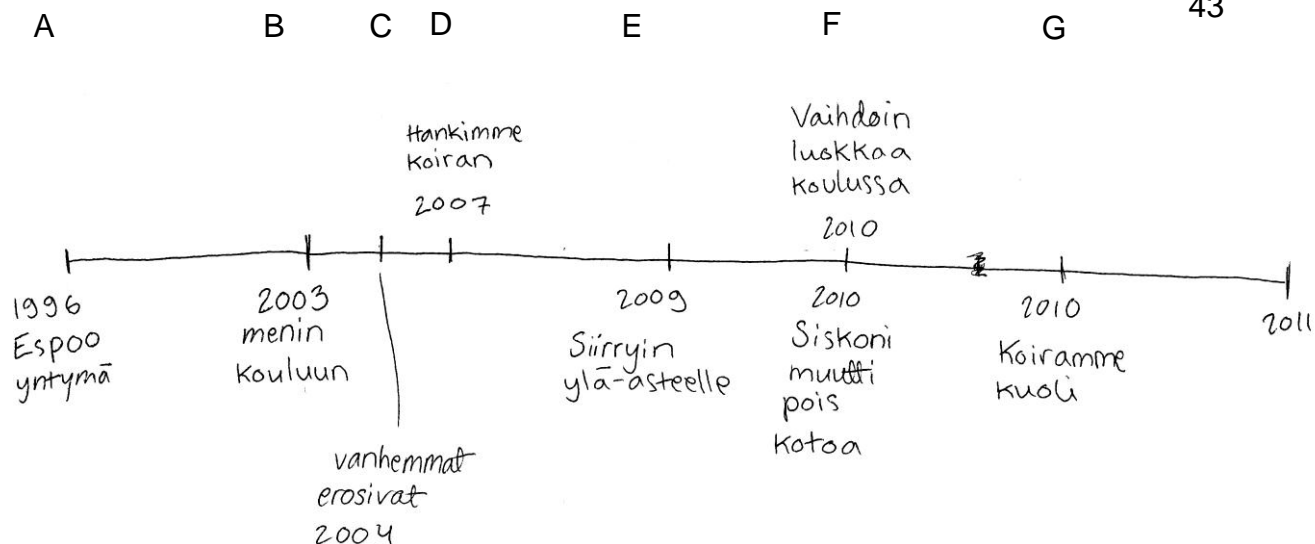


Image 4

Translation

Girl and the dog

- I was born in Espoo
- I went to primary school
- Parent divorced
- We bought a dog
- I started with secondary school
- I enjoyed the school, and my sister left our home
- Our dog died

The last timeline it is another girl. She is 15 years old, hers line show the family and the school events like the others adolescents, but in this case one important event in her life was when she gave a dog and, when the dog died.

	Family event	School event	First int. travel	New living place	New friends	International event	Losses	Others
Boy 17 Im..parents Somalia	XXX	XXX	XXX					
Boy 15 Im..parents Somalia		XXX		XXX	XXX			XXX
Boy 15 Im..parents Somalia	XXX				XXX			XXX
Boy 18 Im. parents Somalia		XXX						XXX
Boy 16 Im .parents Kosovo		XXX			XXX			XXX
Girl 15	XXX	XXX					XXX	
Girl 15	XXX	XXX					XXX	
Boy 16		XXX			XXX			
Boy 16		XXX		XXX				
Girl 16		XXX			XXX			
Girl 18 immigrant Irak	XXX		XXX			XXX		
Girl 15	XXX	XXX						XXX
Boy 16 immigrant Ghana	XXX	XXX		XXX				XXX
Girl,18, immigrant Kosovo	XXX	XXX		XXX		XXX		
Boy 18 immigrant Kosovo	XXX					XXX		XXX

Table 1 "Categorization of Timelines"

In the table 1, we can see the different kind of events that more commonly are part of the life of these 13 adolescents. Below there are the definitions of the different life's events and the frequency that they appear.

Definition of the categories and frequency

Family event: births, divorces and leave de house (9/15)

School event: star with the school (in any grade) (12/15)

First international travel (2/15)

New living place (4/15)

New friends (5/15)

International event: like war or country independence (3/15)

Losses: (2/15)

Others: (7/15)

Questionnaire

In this questionnaire the question was (was open questionnaire): what are the 5 more important aspects in your life? Number 1 is more important and number 5 is less important.

13 Youngers responded this questionnaire

The results were

Order	Concept	Frequency
1	Family	12/13
2	Friends	10/13
3	School	6/ 13
4	Foods	5/13
5	Many-Religion-Health	3/13

The more important difference between groups is in the order 3 and 4, the school was more important in Espoo YC and a food was more important in Kirkkonummi.

Focus Groups

Transcriptions of the focus groups

In the focus group the conversation was about six questions. The analysis of these questions is made through the categorization (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) of the most important concepts and textual fragments of these conversations. The original transcription, in Finnish language, is in the appendix section.

Other aspect that needs to be mentioned is about the process of the focus group in each place. In Kirkkonummi the conversations were in general shorter than in Espoo.

1.- What are your dreams?

Categories

	Relationship	Means	New experiences	Change the world	Live according to values
Kirkkonummi YC	Family	Job	Travel		
Espoo YC		Job		Be politician	Job according with religion

The answers to this question can be categorised in 5 different categories. For example in the group of adolescents of Kirkkonummi one of their dreams is to have their own family, and that belongs to the “relationship” category. When answering the question of dreams, family was not mentioned in the group of Espoo, but later when talking about good life it was considered very central. In Espoo, we can see the cate-

gory “change the world” concretely when the participants say that they want to be politicians, and that doesn’t happen in Kirkkonummi.

Kirkkonummi YC

Pekka: ” The dream for me is to get at least a profession, and a good job and home and family.”

Aada: ” (the dream) for me is a job, then I want to have a handsome husband with whom I can travel around and maybe children at some point. And then a fine home.”

Maria: ”my own family and a couple relationship and I would like to travel around the world”

Julia: ”I’d like to have a family and children and a house”

Espoo YC

Mohammed: ”I’ve got big dreams and I’m making them true. My dream is to go to University after high school. I’m now at high school, but then (I will go) to University and then become politician. If I have success in politics, I’ve had a dream already for some four, five years, a dream to become the president. A big politician.”

Sergio: ”but the first step is to go to University?”

Mohammed: ”Yes, but of course everyone can become president or a member of the parliament, but if people know that you are well educated then of course they will vote for you, but if you are for example someone, after secondary school you stop studying, then you start immediately a job, some small job, like cashier, then maybe they will not vote for you, you know, they may think that he doesn’t have enough education, he doesn’t know enough things. If you are well educated they can understand that this man knows something, he can. The first step is to go to communal elections of Espoo and through that I will go to the parliament.”

Ibrahim:” I’m also now at high school, I’ll also go to university, law first and then I want to become lawyer. Through that I thought I could also become politician. Let’s

see until where will I get, I can't say any more precisely yet. At least it would be quite nice to be involved in politics"

Ali: "my dreams are maybe a bit smaller than the ones of my two friends. I'm now at the ninth grade and after that my plan is to become practical nurse. And from there I will go straight to fire brigades and there will I stay if I'll get there. If I'll get there, we also have in our religion so that if you help other people it is a good thing, so basically I'm at the same time realizing the thing of my religion and at the same time I'm working and getting paid. So I try to get that kind of occupation, and working at fire brigades is like that."

2.- What kind of situation can prevent you from achieving these dreams?

Categories

	Internal factors	External factors
Kirkkonummi YC		present
Espoo YC	present	present

In the conversations appear two types of different factors; external and internal that can prevent the achievement of the dreams. External factors like a disease or an accident and internal factors like the fear of losing the control of one's own behaviour. This last category appears more clearly in the group of Espoo.

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi YC

Elina: "not to get a good job for example. Then, I live alone, I'm a hermit I mean I don't get any man, neither a good home, I'm living in a studio department just in Masala"

Aada: "If I would get badly wounded or something would happen to me. I do not believe that any other thing could prevent that"

Julia: "well, you don't necessarily get a man who wants to get children and you do not necessarily have money for a house"

Maria: "well, the job can prevent getting money. If you don't get good jobs with good salaries then you can't buy what you want"

Espoo YC

Mohamed: "The thing that can prevent my dreams is if I become a more lazy person. At this moment I am like a bit lazy, I don't work so much for any cause, because I am a person that gets things easily, for example at secondary school I did not read a lot but still I got good grades, I am just talented. So I get everything easily, like good grades. If I become even lazier, here at high school it's a bit different because you have to study, otherwise you don't succeed. Now I have read a bit, but if I become even lazier, it won't work. And with bad grades you don't get far. Then of course it can also happen that my mind changes somehow, that suddenly I start to want something else, not my actual dream, or my situation of life gets worse, say, my mum and dad die or something, of course then you can get depressed and all that"

Ibrahim: "Well, I've got some of those things that Mohamed just said, like for example family can influence this thing quite strongly. And I am just the opposite of what Mohamed said, I read a lot of books, just before getting here I was also reading social studies, exactly the things about politics, just before I got here. I do read a lot and if I would not I don't know whether I would have things going as well as Jaska. I have to read if I want to get good grades. I force myself to read, in the beginning at the secondary school I forced myself, and then you get used to it."

3.- Do you have some fears in this life?

Categories

	Physical threat	Threat of loss affective relationships
Kirkkonummi YC	Darkness and vertigo	Family and friends
Espoo YC		Family

Two different categories of fears appear, one is about more physical threat and the other represents fear to lose affective relation. In the conversations of the group of Espoo the category of physical threat did not appear and the fear of losing affective relations was more focused in family members.

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi YC

Maria: "at least something, there are little things, I don't know, at least darkness, still. Darkness is scaring, I don't like to walk alone in the dark. Darkness is so different from lightness"

Elina: "I'm afraid of losing people that I love, I mean in a way I don't fear but at certain times, if they quarrel or something, my friends, so I'm afraid of losing them and then, of course you never know what happens"

Pekka: "yes, I would guess that everybody has the fear of losing a mate, a friend, a member of the family"

Julia: "that you can lose close people and then dark and high places, very high ones"

Pekka: "sometimes I feel like I'm not afraid of anything but when you get into a scaring situation then you really do fear"

Espoo YC

Mohammed: "for example I'm afraid, because I really care so much about my family, if something happens to my family that is my worst fear"

Ahmed: "For me the only fear is the family, because if something would happen to my family that would influence my life a lot, plus if I would not reach my aims. That is not fear either, because there are always several alternatives that can be done"

Ibrahim: "I've got the same, first comes the family and if something would happen to my family, that would be the worst of all. And sometimes I get fears like, will I succeed? Will I succeed to get into the Faculty of Law and everything? And then I start to get stressed quite fast, like I have to start reading and so I start to read so much and after reading I feel I have not done enough, those are the kind of things I'm afraid of."

4.- Are you happy? Why?

Categories

	Health	Be beloved/ relation	Personal achieve
Kirkkonummi YC	Healthy/ without disease	Friends, parent, siblings	School
Espoo YC		Friends	School

The reasons for happiness that the participants of these two groups mentioned can be divided in three categories: health, relation and personal achieve. In Espoo health was not mentioned.

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi YC

Julia: "I am quite happy"

Elina: "yes, because I'm healthy, I don't have any diseases, I've got lovely friends and good relations with my parents"

Maria: "Yes I am, because I've got nice friends, nice mother, nice sister and my school is going well, there are no problems in my opinion".

Espoo YC

Mohammed: "yes, I have good life at the moment, good relations, everything ok in life and things with girls are not causing trouble"

Ali: "yes I am happy, life is good, relations with women well enough, with friends everything fine and school also quite fine"

Yusuf: "I am super happy every Friday. Normally I am happy."

5.- Can you imagine being even happier?

Categories

	More or better relations	Personal success
Kirkkonummi YC	present	
Espoo YC	present	present

In this question there are two aspects that are mentioned, more or better relations and personal success. In Kirkkonummi the comments regarding the possibility to be happier are concentrated in having more or better relations.

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi YC

Maria: "I want more relations, I want more friends"

Pekka: "If there wouldn't be quarrels with friends and then maybe the same things the others have mentioned"

Julia: "more human relationships"

Pekka: "lengthening the home-coming times would be a nice thing"

Espoo YC

Mohammed: "For example I have now my week of exams going on, tomorrow I have the first exam. If I get a good grade from every exam, I am really happy and even happier than now and some stress is released from the school. If I'm aware that I know some things I don't have to stress all the time about it. Also, if the relations get even better, if my mum and dad for example trust me even more and we can talk about everything and things like that. Life and happiness just get better with that."

Ali: "I do have the possibility to be even more glad and then, if I for example reach my goal, if I get a work at the fire brigades and the school goes well and the things go well with family and everything, so of course I will become even more glad, there is no limits in the gladness, you can always become even more glad."

Ahmed: "yes of course, for example if you reach your goals it is a big release. The stress would go away from the future and if, say, the family things would go even better, as you don't always have a perfect relation even with your family"

6.- What does well-being mean for you?

Categories

	Be healthy	be beloved	to have	to live according to religious values
Kirkkonummi YC	present	present	present	
Espoo YC	present	present	present	present

Finally in this last question, it is possible to see four dimensions that are the main aspects of the well-being for these two groups of adolescents. These categories can be described as health, beloved, to have and to live according to religious values, these categories are based from the theory of well-being of Erik Allardt and Amartya Sen.

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi YC

Elina: "to be well, a lot of loving people, parents and friends, without them you can't live, life would be quite lonely"

Pekka: "and then to be able to live long enough, but not if you have to live being sick"

Jari: "quite much the same, good life, long life"

Julia: "then that you don't be ill too many times, that you have a good physical resistance, and no hereditary diseases"

Espoo YC

Yusuf: "Good life for me means that I simply succeed, I can take care of my family and people close to me. I don't demand for anything more from my life, no richness, no fame, I don't need success, I just want to manage my life, manage to get bread for my family, nothing else and to be able to support my parents, my sisters and brothers. My parents will be older then, they will need help"

Ahmed: "I don't have any big goals in my life, for me it's enough with the basic life there is here."

Sergio: "What does basic life mean?"

Ahmed: "basic life here would be to have a home and as my friend just said, bring bread for the family, for wife and children, create like a family, and it's not necessary to be so famous"

Ali: "Good life means for me that first of all I've got a family and then I am able to feed them and I've got a good occupation and a good wife and a good place to live, I don't need much more, and when my friends or family need help so to be able to help. That is in my opinion a life that is good enough for me."

Ibrahim: "it's just the success, a good family in the future, that you can simply take care of the children and anyway it includes the thing that money is not the most important, but you still need money if you want to maintain your family, so I would like to

have enough money in the future so that I could have my family and take care of my children. And I've got nothing more to add, except for the religion of course"

Mohammed: "for me good life means that you've got a good job, not a stressing job, so there's no need to work too much and it doesn't affect my health and then I have good relations with my family and my friends and all these kind of things, and that I would have kind of success in my life and my family also succeeds kind of well and my family doesn't have any problems. That they are healthy too."

Visual elicitation

These pictures were taken for the young people themselves, and represent the own perception about good and bad places or things. The good places are always connected with the places that they can have relationships with others young people (friends or school classmates). The bad places are related with the possibility to cope with violence and with the alcohol symbolism. Every picture has below four letters, the three first mean the group of adolescents (KYC and EYC), and the fourth the condition of good or bad thing (G or B)



EYCG



EYCG



EYCG



EYCB



KYCB



KYCG

Interface Point

The objective in this section it is to place in interplay the different results that come from all the methods used in this investigation. There is an important question that needs to be answered: is it possible to have a consistent idea about what is important in life, and what the well-being really means for this specific group of adolescents? What kind of social and cultural factors can influence their perceptions about good life?

If we take at first two of the methods, timeline and questionnaire, it is possible to see a very clear concordance between the results. There are three important aspects or factors that appear as important in life: family, friends and the school. These three factors are absolutely consistent with the literature about the meaning of well-being for the young people as Newton points out:

Our results suggest that key dimensions of wellbeing for young people include the people in their lives (specifically friends and family), how they socialize (i.e. through technology, drinking, sports), the spaces and times in which they socialize (schools, homes, weekends). (Newton et al. 2011, 6)

But why they are important? Family and friends represent the world of relationships, beloved persons. As Gergen (2009, 29) says, we are relational beings. The school has two important dimensions in a way that affects the life of the adolescents, first, it is an important space for the relationships and second, the school is the world of the personal achievement, where the parents and of course the adolescents themselves have a lot of expectations. Are there some cultural differences between these groups of adolescents? For all the adolescents without difference of cultural background these three factors were important but there are differences in the conception of these factors. Family in the concept of the youth with Somalian or Kosovan background means a more extended group of people than for the Finnish youth, and in this way they have a broader social network than the Finnish group.

Now it is the time to place in interplay the results of the focus groups. I analysed at first the questions number 1-3. In these three different questions the answers of the two groups show differences; different dreams, worries and fears. Dreams represent expectations and possibilities to have something we don't have or to be or something

we are not. These different categories show us the different cultural and social background that these groups belong to. Why the adolescents from the Somalian and Kosovan background want to change the world? That can be connected to the experience of the immigration and to the connection to the parents' country. They want to change their own social position in Finland and the future of the parents' country. They have and feel close connection with the different original countries, which was mentioned many times in our conversations, and becoming politicians is seen as the possibility to make changes. About the fears, in both groups the possibility to lose some beloved person is a source of fear, but in the group of Finnish cultural background there are physical fears as well. In this group the adolescents said that they have fears for darkness and vertigo as well. The third aspect, the factor that can prevent achieving the dreams, can be interpreted as the control over the circumstances. In the group of Kirkkonummi (Finnish cultural background) they feel the external circumstances can have influence as impediments, and in Espoo (immigrant's background) the opposite happen, the internal circumstances are the important ones. That situation can be explained with the locus of control concept (Holm-Bearinger Bulm 1997, 230), which means that in the adolescents of Kirkkonummi the external locus of control has more influence (the perception of managing the world), there are external factors, out of their control, that can be the limitations. The situation in Espoo is different; the internal locus of control apparently is more influential.

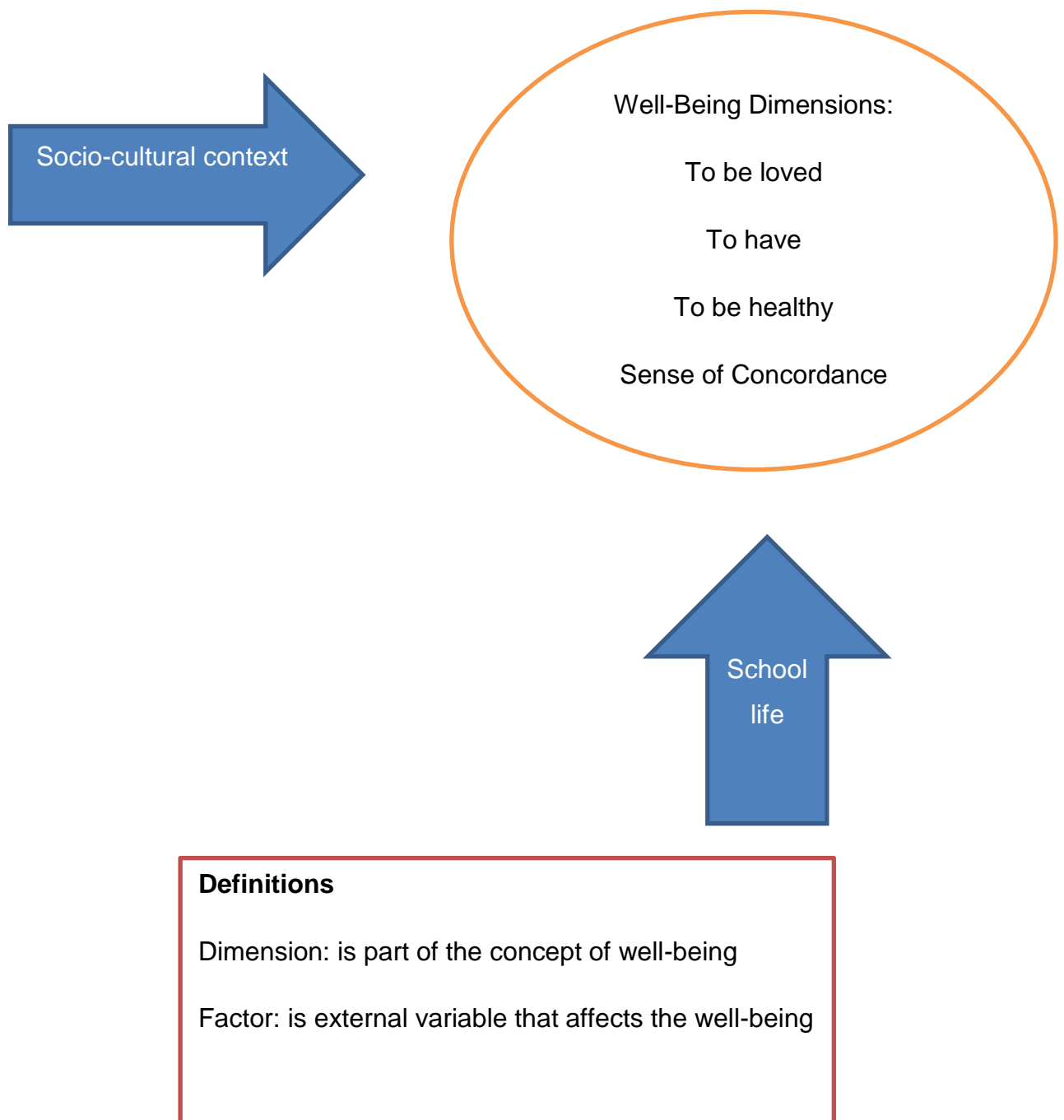
If we take the other three questions of the focus group (4-6) it is possible to have a more clear idea about the meaning of the well-being for this group of adolescents. The question about happiness shows, that it is connected to three main aspects; health, relationships and personal achievement (school). The definition of the well-being that they made, points out four aspects: health, to be beloved, to have and to live according to religious values (the last aspect appears only in Espoo). And again it is possible to see, that the conception and experience of the well-being is related to the world of relationships, with the feelings of being healthy, with the material dimension (to have) and with the feeling of congruency between the religious values and the diary life (in the specific case of the group of Espoo). This last aspect, religious values, is a clear demonstration of the impact of the cultural dimension in the construction of the idea of well-being. Being healthy is an interesting aspect of the contradictory way in which the idea of well-being is constructed. To be healthy and to live

without diseases is mentioned as an important part of the well-being but on the other hand for example smoking was frequent in the majority of the adolescents of this group.

Now it is possible to add the pictures in this general analysis. All the pictures that represent good things are connected with places where the adolescents spend time with friends, in other words the relationships dimension is again in the centre of the well-being experience. The other group of pictures show aspects that represent negative things. The group chose to depict places or objects related to alcohol, violence and segregation experiences. Risk behaviours like alcohol consume, show the contradictory relation with this aspect of their life which it is not too different from adults. They know about the risk of the alcohol consumption, but on the other hand they feel the attraction for this consume. The peer relation is an important factor that explains this contradiction.

As a conclusion of the interplay of the different methods, the social construction of the well-being in these two groups of adolescents show the following: the well-being has five dimensions; to be loved (family and peer relationships), to have (material conditions of life), to be healthy (free of disease) and the sense of concordance between normal life and religious values. There are as well factors that have relation with the well-being like external variables. These factors are; the school life and its special importance as place for the peer relationships and personal achievement, and finally the socio-cultural context that represents the most general environment where the well-being is developing. This last aspect shows us, how the cultural background influences different kind of concepts like the concept of family, and as well the pressures and contradictions that society puts on the adolescents life, when at the same time the adolescents are shown the risk of different kind of behaviours but on the other hand it is showing all the time a world full of attractions and stimulus, where these behaviours are accepted, situation that happens for example with the consumption of alcohol. In the figure 1 it is possible to see the interaction between all these aspects.

Figure 1 “Well-Being Dimensions and Factors”



Well-Being and Activities of the Youth Centres

The youth centres activities that I had the possibility to see (Espoo YC and Kirkkonummi YC) were centred in one of the dimensions of well-being, the peer relationships dimension. These centres were a safe place where the adolescents have the possibility to develop their social skills and spend leisure time with other adolescents. The youth workers supply permanent supervision for these activities.-There is an important question that in my opinion it is necessary to ask: Can the youth centres be places for the development of other dimensions or factors of well-being as well? Would it be possible to offer activities related to these different dimensions of the well-being? Dreams, expectations and future life in general, are some of the factors that influence the well-being and themes that are possible to work with. Activities that can work with emotional and professional aspirations can offer not only information and orientation, but motivation to the adolescents. Working with the multidimensional concept of the well-being gives, in my opinion, the possibility to consider the youth centres as a good place to implement different kind of projects that can create a bridge for the adolescent between their present life and the world of the adults.

Conclusions

The results of this investigation give the possibility to make conclusions in different levels of analysis. First of all we have the multidimensionality of the well-being concept. The different research methods used show the concepts of well-being of the studied groups formed of four dimensions; 1) To be loved, the relationships world, where the family and peers appear as extraordinarily important. 2) To be healthy, the experience of being free of any disease or health problem. 3) The sense of concordance that in the case of the group of Espoo represents the feeling that the normal life is lived according the religious values. 4) To have, the last dimension, represents the specific material life conditions, where the material aspirations are important like money to buy things or a comfortable place to live.

As general factors that are related with the well-being dimensions we have: a) The school life, because that is the place where the personal achievement and the expectations of the parents are very strong. b) The dreams, personal expectations and future, because the adolescents are not only connected to the present but also have aspirations about the future life, and the dreams are important as motivational resources. c) The social and cultural background. Dreams, expectations and common sense definitions are made from a particular social and cultural background. For example family is a central aspect of the world of relationships, but what family really means is not the same in different cultural groups. Dreams are very important motivational resources, but dreams come from different needs and wishes about the world. Values are important, but values have been influenced by different traditions and especially by different religions.

The third element that needs to be considered is the potential of well-being concept as a practical tool regarding the activities of the youth centres. The well-being has different dimensions. The youth centres that I had the possibility to know work with the peer relationships dimension fundamentally. The development of other activities in the youth centres related with dimensions or factors, like aspirations, expectations or emotional needs, opens the opportunity to create a more rich and powerful place for the adolescents.

Future investigations can explore different ways to develop in the youth centres activities and practices that have connection with different dimensions of the adolescent

well-being. That can be an interesting way to improve the potential of the youth centres as part of the youth work system.

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Appendix

Selections of conversations from the focus groups, in English and Finnish language (questions number 1-6)

1.- Mitä unelmia teillä on?

Kirkkonummi YC

Pekka: "The dream for me is to get at least a profession, and a good job and home and family."

"Kyllähän se unelma on semmonen et saa ammatin ainakin, ja hyvän työpaikan ja kodin ja perheen" (A5 29-30 min)

Aada: " (the dream) for me is a job, then I want to have a handsome husband with whom I can travel around and maybe children at some point. And then a fine home."

"mullon työpaikka, sitte mä haluan komeen aviomiehen jonka kaa mä matkustelen ja sit ehkä lapsii joskus. Ja sit hieno koti" (A5 30-31)

Maria: "my own family and a couple relationship and I would like to travel around the world"

"oma perhe ja parisuhde ja mä haluaisin kiertää maapallon ympäri"

Julia: "I'd like to have a family and children and a house"

"Mä haluisin perheen ja lapsia ja omakotitalon" (31-)

Espoo YC

Mohammed: "I've got big dreams and I'm making them true. My dream is to go to University after high school. I'm now at high school, but then (I will go) to University and then become politician. If I have success in politics, I've had a dream already for some four, five years, a dream to become the president. A big politician."

"Minulla on isot unelmat ja mä oon toteuttamassa mun unelmaa. Unelma on mennä yliopistoon lukion jälkeen, mä oon nyt lukiossa, mut yliopistoon, sitten mennä poliitikoks, politician, sitten jos mä etenen pitkälle politiikassa mullon ollu unelmana jo

muutama vuosi, joku neljä viis vuotta, mullon ollu unelmana et mä pääsen presidentiksi. Isoksi poliitikoksi.” (05:10 B 3)

Sergio: ”but the first step is to go to University?”

Sergio: ”mutta ensimmäinen askel on mennä yliopistoon?”

Mohammed: ”Yes, but of course everyone can become president or a member of the parliament, but if people know that you are well educated then of course they will vote for you, but if you are for example someone, after secondary school you stop studying, then you start immediately a job, some small job, like cashier, then maybe they will not vote for you, you know, they may think that he doesn't have enough education, he doesn't know enough things. If you are well educated they can understand that this man knows something, he can. The first step is to go to communal elections of Espoo and through that I will go to the parliament.”

”Joo, mutta voi olla myös tietenkin, presidentiksi ja muutenkin kansanedustajaksi voi mennä ihan kuka vaan, oikeestaan, mutta ihmiset, jos ne tietää et sä oot hyvin koulutunut ni tietenkin he äänestävät mut jos sä oot esimerkiks joku, yläaste on mennyt, peruskoulu, sit sen jälkeen sä lopetat koulun, sit sen jälkeen sä alat suoraan jonkun työn, joku pieni työ, kassa vaikka, ni ei ne ehkä äänestä, tiedätsä, tai ehkä ne ajattelee et hän ei oo tarpeeksi koulutunut, hän ei tiedä tarpeeksi paljon asioita. Jos sä oot tarpeeksi koulutettu he tajuavat ehkä että tää mies tietää jotain, hän osaa. Ensimmäinen askel on mennä kunnallisvaaleihin, Espoon kaupungin, ja sen kautta mä meen eduskuntaan.”

Ibrahim: ”I'm also now at high school, I'll also go to university, law first and then I want to become lawyer. Through that I thought I could also become politician. Let's see until where will I get, I can't say any more precisely yet. At least it would be quite nice to be involved in politics”

”mäkin olen nyt lukiossa, mäkin meen yliopistoon, lakitietoo aluksi ja sit mä haluan siitä asianajajaksi. Sen kautta mäkin ajattelin et ehkä mäkin voisin mennä poliitikoksi. Katotaan mihin asti mä pääsen, sen tarkemmin mä en osaa oikein sanoa vielä. Ainaakin politiikkaan ois ihan kiva päästä mukaan”

Ali: "my dreams are maybe a bit smaller than the ones of my two friends. I'm now at the ninth grade and after that my plan is to become practical nurse. And from there I will go straight to fire brigades and there will I stay if I'll get there. If I'll get there, we also have in our religion so that if you help other people it is a good thing, so basically I'm at the same time realizing the thing of my religion and at the same time I'm working and getting paid. So I try to get that kind of occupation, and working at fire brigades is like that."

"minun unelmat on ehkä vähän pienempiä kuin mun kahden kaverin. Mullon silleen nytte mä oon yhdeksännel luokalla ja siitä mä meen lähihoitajan ammattiin. Ja siit ammatist mä aion suoraan mennä palokuntaan ja siihen jään jos mä pääsen. Jos mä pääsen sinne samalla meillon uskonnossa silleen niinku et jos sä autat ihmisii ni se on hyvä juttu, nii et periaattees mä oon samalla toteuttamas mun uskonnon juttuu ja samalla mä oon töissä ja sit mä saan siit rahaa. Niin mä yritän sellaseen ammattiin, et palokunta on sellanen "

2.- Mikä voi estää teitä toteuttamasta teidän unelmat?

Kirkkonummi YC

Elina: "not to get a good job for example. Then, I live alone, I'm a hermit I mean I don't get any man, neither a good home, I'm living in a studio department just in Masala"

"ei saa hyvää työpaikkaa esim, sitte, mä elän yksin, mä olen erakko tai siis mä en saa ketään miestä, enkä saa hyvää kotia, mä asun jossain yksiössä jossain kerrostalossa ihan Masalassa"

Aada: "If I would get badly wounded or something would happen to me. I do not believe that any other thing could prevent that"

"Se et mä loukkaantuisin pahasti tai et mulle kävis jotain. En mä usko et mikään muu vois estää sitä"

Julia: "well, you don't necessarily get a man who wants to get children and you do not necessarily have money for a house"

"no, ei välttämät saa miestä joka halua lapsia ja sit ei välttämät oo rahaa omakotitaloon..."

Maria: "well, the job can prevent getting money. If you don't get good jobs with good salaries then you can't buy what you want"

" no työpaikka voi just estää ne rahat, tai sen rahan tulemisen. Jos ei saa hyvii töitä joist saa hyvää palkkaa ni ei voi oikeen ostaa mitä haluaa"

Espoo YC

Mohamed: "The thing that can prevent my dreams is if I become a more lazy person. At this moment I am like a bit lazy, I don't work so much for any cause, because I am a person that gets things easily, for example at secondary school I did not read a lot but still I got good grades, I am just talented. So I get everything easily, like good grades. If I become even lazier, here at high school it's a bit different because you have to study, otherwise you don't succeed. Now I have read a bit, but if I become even lazier, it won't work. And with bad grades you don't get far. Then of course it can also happen that my mind changes somehow, that suddenly I start to want something else, not my actual dream, or my situation of life gets worse, say, my mum and dad die or something, of course then you can get depressed and all that"

"Se voi estää mun unelmia et jos must tulee entistä laiskempi ihminen. Tällä hetkellä mä oon aika silleen vähän laiska, mä en jaksu tehdä niin paljon töitä minkään eteen, koska mä oon semmonen ihminen että mä saan helposti, esimerkiksi yläasteella mä en lukenut paljon silti mä sain hyviä numeroita, mä on vaan lahjakas, et mä saan helposti kaikkee, esimerkiks hyviä numeroita. Jos must tulee entistä laiskempi, täs lukiossa on vähän eri tapa koska pitää lukea, muuten ei pärjää. Nyt mä oon vähän lukenu, mut jos must tulee vielä laiskempi kun mitä mä oon ni se ei onnistu, ja huonoil numeroil ei pääse pitkälle. Ja sit voi myös tietenkin se et jos mun mieli muutenki vaihtuu, et jos mä haluan yhtäkkiä johonki toiseen juttuun et mä en haluukaan nykyiseen unelmaan tai sit myös se et elämän tilanne vaan huononee, esimerkiksi vaikka äiti ja isä kuolee tai jotain tietenki sit ihminen voi masentua ja tällästä"

Ibrahim: "Well, I've got some of those things that Mohamed just said, like for example family can influence this thing quite strongly. And I am just the opposite of what Mohamed said, I read a lot of books, just before getting here I was also reading social

studies, exactly the things about politics, just before I got here. I do read a lot and if I would not I don't know whether I would have things going as well as Jaska. I have to read if I want to get good grades. I force myself to read, in the beginning at the secondary school I forced myself, and then you get used to it."

"no, mullon jotain tossa noit mitä äsken Jaska sano et esimerkiks perhe pystyy vaikuttaan aika voimakkaasti tähän asiaan...Ja mä oon just päinvastoin ku mitä Jaska sanoo, et mä luen aika paljon kirjoja just ennenki ku mä tulin tänne, mä luin yhteiskuntaoppii just tota noit politiikkajuttuja ennenku mä tulin tänne. Mä luen kyllä paljon ja jos mä en lukis mä en tiedä meniskö mulla yhtä hyvin ku Jaskalla. Mun pitää lukea, jos mä niinku haluan hyvii numeroita. Mä pakotan itteni lukeen et periaatteessa alussa yläasteella mä pakotin itteni ja sit siihen tottuu." n 16 min B 03

3.- Mitä pelkoja teillä on?

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi

Maria: "at least something, there are little things, I don't know, at least darkness, still. Darkness is scaring, I don't like to walk alone in the dark. Darkness is so different from lightness"

"ainakin jotain, on pienii asioita, en mä tiä, pimeetä vieläkin. Pimee on pelottavaa, en mä tykkää kävellä pimees yksin. Pimee on niin paljon erilaisempi ku valosa"

Elina: "I'm afraid of losing people that I love, I mean in a way I don't fear but at certain times, if they quarrel or something, my friends, so I'm afraid of losing them and then, of course you never know what happens"

"mullon ainaki se et mä pelkään et mä menetän mulle rakkait ihmisii, en mä tiä, siis en mä tavallaan pelkää mut aina välillä, jos ne riitelee tai sit muuten vaan, siis mun kavereita, et mä pelkään et mä menetän niitä ja sitte, eihän sitä ikinä tiä et mitä tapahtuu"

Pekka: "yes, I would guess that everybody has the fear of losing a mate, a friend, a member of the family"

Pekka: "joo, eiköhän kaikil oo se pelko, et kaverin, ystävän, menettää, perheen jäsen"

Julia: "that you can lose close people and then dark and high places, very high ones"

"et menettää läheisiä ja sitten pimeitä ja korkeit paikkoi, sellasii tosi korkeit"

Pekka: "sometimes I feel like I'm not afraid of anything but when you get into a scaring situation then you really do fear"

"välillä tuntuu siltä ettei pelkää mitään, mut sit ku joku tilanne tulee missä pelkää oikeesti ni kyl sit pelottaa"

Espoo

Mohammed: "for example I'm afraid, because I really care so much about my family, if something happens to my family that is my worst fear (otherwise I do not fear things like some animals, well, dogs are quite scary, hehehe. But I'm not afraid of anything so much, the worst is just that if something happens by coincidence, some illnesses or something).

"esimerkiks mä pelkään sitä et ku mä välitän todella paljon mun perheestä, jos perheelle tapahtuu jotain, ni se on mun pahin pelko. En mä muuten pelkää niinku jotain eläimiä, No koirat on aika pelottavia hehehe. Mutta en mä pelkää mitään silleen, pahin on vaan jos tapahtuu jotain sattumalta, jotain sairauksii tai jotain.

Ahmed: "For me the only fear is the family, because if something would happen to my family that would influence my life a lot, plus if I would not reach my aims. That is not fear either, because there are always several alternatives that can be done"

"mulla ainut pelko on perhe, koska jos perheelle tapahtuis jotain niin se vaikuttaa mun elämäni suuresti plus se että jos mä en pääse mun tavoitteisiin. Sekään ei oo pelkoa koska aina on useita vaihtoehtoja joita voi tehdä"

Ibrahim:"I've got the same, first comes the family and if something would happen to my family, that would be the worst of all. And sometimes I get fears like, will I succeed? Will I succeed to get into the Faculty of Law and everything? And then I start to get stressed quite fast, like I have to start reading and so I start to read so much

and after reading I feel I have not done enough, those are the kind of things I'm afraid of."

Ibrahim: "mulki on toi sama et ihan ekaks tulee perhe et jos mun perheelle kävis jotain emmä oikeen osaa sanoo mitä, ni se ois kaikkein pahinta ja välillä mulle tulee sellasii pelkoi, et onnistunhanko, onnistunkohan mä pääseen oikeustieteelliseen ja kaikkee? ja sitten mä alan stressaantuu aika nopeest sillee et sit mun on pakko alkaa lukee et sitä kautta mä alan lukee ihan sika paljon, ja sit kun mä oon lukenu nit sit se tuntuu siltä et mä en oo tehny tarpeeks, muun muassa noit juttui mä pelkään"

4.- Oletteko te onnellisia, miksi?

Kirkkonummi YC

Julia: "I am quite happy"

"oon mä ihan onnellinen"

Elina: "yes, because I'm healthy, I don't have any diseases, I've got lovely friends and good relations with my parents"

"joo, koska mä olen terve, mulle ei oo mitään sairauksia, ihania kavereita ja hyvät välit vanhempiin"

Maria: "Yes I am, because I've got nice friends, nice mother, nice sister and my school is going well, there are no problems in my opinion".

"oon, koska mulla on kivoja kavereita, kiva äiti, kiva sisko ja mul menee hyvin koulu, ei o mita ongelmia mun mielestä"

Espoo

Mohammed: "yes, I have good life at the moment, good relations, everything ok in life and things with girls are not causing trouble"

"joo, mullon tällä hetkellä hyvä elämä, hyvät perhesuhteet, kaikki ihan hyvin elämässä ja tyttöasiat ei paina mielessä" (n. 38-39)

Ali: "yes I am happy, life is good, relations with women well enough, with friends everything fine and school also quite fine"

"kyllä minä olen onnellinen, elämä hyviin, naissuhteet tarpeeksi hyvin, kavereitten kanssa kaikki hyviin ja koulukin ihan suhteellisen hyvin"

Yusuf: "I an super happy every Friday. Normally I am happy."

"olen joka perjantai superonnellinen. Normaalisti mä oon onnellinen"

5.- Voisitko olla vielä olla onnellisempi?

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi

Maria: "I want more relations, I want more friends"

"mä haluan ihmissuhteita lisää, mä haluan enemmän kavereita"

Pekka: "If there wouldn't be quarrels with friends and then maybe the same things the others have mentioned"

"jos ei ois välil riitoja kavereitten kaa ja jos, jos jos, varmaan samoi asioit mitä muillakin"

Julia: "more human relationships"

"enemmän ihmissuhteita"

Pekka: "lengthening the home-coming times would be a nice thing"

"kotiintuloaikojen pidennys ois ihan kiva asia"

Espoo

Mohammed: "For example I have now my week of exams going on, tomorrow I have the first exam. If I get a good grade from every exam, I am really happy and even happier than now and some stress is released from the school. If I'm aware that I know some things I don't have to stress all the time about it. Also, if the relations get

even better, if my mum and dad for example trust me even more and we can talk about everything and things like that. Life and happiness just get better with that.”

B 4 49:09: ”esimerks jos nyt vaikka mulla alkaa, nyt mulla on koeviikko menossa, huomenna mullon ensimmäinen koe, esimerkiks jos tulee kaikist kokeista aika hyvä numero, mä oon todella onnellinen ja vielä onnellisempi kun nytte, ja stressi lähtee, vähän stressiä lähtee koulunkäynnistä, jos mä tiedän et mä osaan vähän asioita, ni ei tarvii stressata koko ajan siitä. Se myös esimerkiks jos vielä paremmat suhteet tulee, jos äiti ja isä esimerks luottaa muhun vielä enemmän ja voidaan puhua kaikesta ja tällasta. Elämää ja onnellisuus vaan paranee siitä”

Ali: ”I do have the possibility to be even more glad and then, if I for example reach my goal, if I get a work at the fire brigades and the school goes well and the things go well with family and everything, so of course I will become even more glad, there is no limits in the gladness, you can always become even more glad.”

”kyllä mulla on mahdollisuus olla viel iloisempi ja sitte jos mä nytten pääsisin esim. mun päämäärään, jos mä nytten pääsen palokuntaan töihin ja koulu mene hyvin, ja perheen kaa menee hyvin ja kaikki, niin tietenkin must tulee iloisempi, iloisuudella ei ole rajaa, et aina voi tulla iloisemmaks”

Ahmed: ”yes of course, for example if you reach your goals it is a big release. The stress would go away from the future and if, say, the family things would go even better, as you don´t always have a perfect relation even with your family”

”joo totta kai, esim jos tavoitteisiin pääsee, se on iso helpotus, stressit lähtisi tulevaisuudesta pois ja jos esim. perheasiat jos niinku menisi vielä paremmin, ainahan ei ole täydellistä suhdetta perheenkään kaa”

6.- Mitä tarkoittaa teille hyvää elämää?

Selected comments

Kirkkonummi YC

Elina: ”to be well, a lot of loving people, parents and friends, without them you can´t live, life would be quite lonely”

"voi hyvin, paljon rakastavii ihmisii, vanhemmat ja kaverit, niit ilman ei pysty elää, elämä ois aika yksinäistä"

Pekka: "and then to able to live long enough, but not if you have to live being sick"

"joo kaikki noi mitä tässon just sanottu... ja se et pystyy elään tarpeeks pitkään, kukaan ei kipeenä elä"

Jari: "quite much the same, good life, long life"

"aika paljon samoja, hyvää elämää, pitkä elämä"

Julia: "then that you don't be ill too many times, that you have a good physical resistance, and no hereditary diseases"

aika paljon samoja, sit ettei sairastele kauheesti, etton niinku hyvä vastustuskyky, sit ettei oo mitään perinnöllisii sairauksii"

Espoo YC

Yusuf: "Good life for me means that I simply succeed, I can take care of my family and people close to me. I don't demand for anything more from my life, no richness, no fame, I don't need success, I just want to manage my life, manage to get bread for my family, nothing else and to be able to support my parents, my sisters and brothers. My parents will be older then, they will need help"

Hyvä elämä on mulle se, et mä vaan menestyn, mä pystyn pitään mun perheestä ja lähimmäisistä kii. Enempää mä en vaadi elämältä, mä en haluu mitään rikkauksii, mä en haluu kuuluisuutta mä en haluu menestyä mä haluun vaan sen et mä pärjään elämässä, mä pystyn tuomaan leipää mun perheelle, ei mitään muuta. Ja pystyn antaa tukee mun vanhemmille, sisaruksille. Mun vanhemmat on vanhempii sillon, ne on avun tarpeessa. B 04, 27:00

Ahmed: "I don't have any big goals in my life, for me it's enough with the basic life there is here."

"mulla ei oo mitään suurii tavoiteitta elämässä, mulle riittää ihan peruselämä mitä täällä on.

Sergio: "What does basic life mean?"

"Mitä peruselämä tarkoittaa?"

Ahmed: "basic life here would be to have a home and as my friend just said, bring bread for the family, for wife and children, create like a family, and it's not necessary to be so famous"

" peruselämä täällä näin olisi että on koti ja niin ku mun kaveri sano, että leipää tuoda kotiin, vaimolle ja lapsille, tehdään niin ku perhe, ja ei tarvitse mitenkään pahemmin olla kuuluisa" 27:40

Ali: "Good life means for me that first of all I've got a family and then I am able to feed them and I've got a good occupation and a good wife and a good place to live, I don't need much more, and when my friends or family need help so to be able to help. That is in my opinion a life that is good enough for me."

"hyvä elämä tarkoittaa mulle, että ensinnäkin mulla on perhe ja mä pystyn ruokki-
maan niitä ja mulla on hyvä ammatti ja hyvä vaimo ja hyvä asuinpaikka, en mä paljon
muuta tarvitse, ja sillon kun mun kaverit tai perhe on avun tarpeessa et pystyy aut-
taan ni se on mun mielest tarpeeks hyvä elämä mulle."

Ibrahim: "it's just the succes, a good family in the future, that you can simply take
care of the children and anyway it includes the thing that money is not the most im-
portant, but you still need money if you want to maintain your family, so I would like to
have enough money in the future so that I could have my family and take care of my
children. And I've got nothing more to add, except for the religion of course"

"just se menestys, hyvä perhe tulevaisuudessa, just et pystyy yksinkertaisesti hoitaan
lapsii ja kuitenkin siihen sisältyy just se et raha ei oo tärkeintä, mut kyl sä tarviit sitä
rahaa jos sä haluat elättää sun perheen, et sen verran haluaisin tulevaisuudessa ra-
haa että pystyy pitää omaan perheen ja hoitaan lapsii ja pitää niistä huolta. Eikä mul-
la oo muuta lisättävää paitsi et uskonto totta kai"

Mohammed:"for me good life means that you've got a good job, not a stressing job,
so there's no need to work too much and it doesn't affect my health and then I have
good relations with my family and my friends and all these kind of things, and that I

would have kind of success in my life and my family also succeeds kind of well and my family doesn't have any problems. That they are healthy too.”

”mulle tarkoittaa hyvä elämä sitä että on hyvä työ niinku vähän rento työ, ei tarvii tehdä liikaa, et se ei vaivaa mun terveyttä ja sitten mullon hyvät suhteet perheen ja ystäviin, ja kaikkee tällästä, ja et mä menestyn elämäs sillee ja perhekin menestyy jotenkin hyvin, ja et mun perheel ei oo mitään ongelmia. Et nekin on terveitä”