Kati Honkanen (a), Jaana Poikolainen (b) & Liisa Karlsson (c)

a) Doctoral Programme of the Educational Sciences in Interdisciplinary Context, University of Eastern Finland, Savonlinna, Finland;

b) Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki, Lahti, Finland;

c) School of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Eastern Finland, Savonlinna, Finland

Children and young people as co-researchers – researching subjective well-being in residential area with visual and verbal methods

Abstract

In this article, we focus on child perspective methodology when co-researching well-being with children and young people. The paper explores how to produce and analyse data produced with children and young people, and how to further develop the method of co-researching with them? We combined visual and verbal methods by using photo elicitation interviews (N=16) and drawing group discussions (N=49) to study the subjective well-being of 2–16-year-olds in their residential areas. We found out that by combining two methods it is possible to achieve a wider view of children's subjective well-being. However, we must be aware that well-being is a complex entity and that there are barriers to use child perspective

methods. Co-researching requires situationality, reciprocity and the researcher's willingness to hear the perspectives of children.

Children and Young People as Co-Researchers – Researching Subjective Well-Being in Residential Area with Visual and Verbal Methods

Introduction

Our starting point for this article is positive subjective well-being in residential area as defined from the point of view of the participants, children and young people, of our research (Bradshaw et al. 2011; Poikolainen 2013; 2014). We start describing subjective well-being, child perspective research and residential experiences.

Well-being is an important but elusive concept, and it is open to numerous definitions and methodological approaches (Crivello et al. 2009). Well-being is socially contingent, a construct embedded in society and culture, and prone to change and redefinition over time (Manderson 2005). Research often concentrates on the problems of well-being from a negative point of view (Bradshaw et al. 2011; Poikolainen 2013). Although we do not measure well-being using traditional ill-being indicators that have been defined in advance. Instead we ask the children and young people what kind of issues have significance for their well-being. We need information based on children's views and definitions of well-being,

since these conceptions are culturally and situationally constructed. There are also likely to be differences in the meanings which adults and children attribute to well-being, based on time and generation (Fattore et al. 2007).

The well-being of children and young people has typically been studied from the adult's point of view, and traditional adult-centred research orientation has led to an adult's interpretation of child and childhood (Karlsson 2010; Poikolainen 2013). Although child perspective research has increased in recent decades (Barker and Weller 2003; Karlsson 2010; Punch 2002a). Since the end of the 1980s, an interest in listening to children's experiences and views has increased as a result of the general discourse on children's rights: children are defined more often as social actors in their own lives, not as the passive results of socialization (Karlsson 2009; Mykkänen and Böök 2013). Also, the importance of the subjective knowledge of well-being produced by children themselves has already been noticed and identified (Fattore et al. 2007; 2012; Karlsson 2010; Poikolainen 2014). Still we need more knowledge from children's perspective and further development of suitable research methods for children. This article seeks to find answers to these needs.

The research of child perspective aim to highlight the children's perspectives, experiences and ways of acting (Karlsson 2010). The definition of studies of child perspective is near to the concept of child-centred, which emphasizes the child as an active subject (James and James 2008). The choice of child perspective concept highlights the objective that children and young people act actively as producers of research data and knowledge with the researchers in this research. This approach places children centrally and attempts to understand their perspectives or standpoints on well-being (Fattore et al. 2007; 2012). Since the knowledge produced by children easily stays hidden, it is important to focus on children's perspectives

with particular sensitivity (Hohti & Karlsson 2012). Attempting to understand children's well-being from their perspective, starts from engaging with children as social actors and is driven by their experiences and opinions (Fattore et al. 2007; 2012).

During the past few years, research interests have increasingly been directed towards the significance of the residential area for well-being experiences (Permentier et al. 2011). Residential area is one context of everyday life where people experience well-being and ill-being (Poikolainen 2013). Although well-being is partly constructed collectively, it also consists of different individual experiences and factors to which the individuals give significance. A suitable approach for gathering information about the inhabitants' views on their residential area and its meaning is studying subjective experiences (Permentier et al. 2011).

Space and place are constitutive dimensions of children's lives (Farrugia 2014). Children and young people live in particular geographical, cultural, historical, interactional, material and situational spaces. Awareness of matters that affect the everyday life of children and young people directly or with mediation helps us to understand their everyday life and opens up opportunities for the development of children's living environment. We need information about how children experience and see their living environment, in order for their views to be taken into account at the policy level when planning residential areas, formal education and other activities and environments. Children and young people are the local experts, especially on their own lives.

In this article we examine the subjective well-being and residential area experiences of children and young people by using as research methods photo elicitation and drawing

discussions (e.g. Barker and Weller 2003; Cook and Hess 2007; Rogers 2012; White et al. 2010). By using these methods, we try to find and bring out the children's perspectives. We also recognize, that there is no such thing as pure child perspective (Hohti & Karlsson 2012), because children neither adults do shape their perspectives in isolation from other actors and the society around. The concept of well-being is also socially constructed and shared (Fattore et al. 2007). This perception reflects both personal and society's values and attitudes. In this article, we focus on methodological issues. We ask: how to produce and analyse data constructed by children and young people about subjective well-being, and how to further develop the methods of co-researching with children?

Epistemological Choices

The essential question in this article is an epistemological choice: what kind of information is seen as valuable (and produced by whom) (Karlsson 2009; Poikolainen 2014)? We have adopted a sociocultural approach. By this we mean well-being is always an individual as well as communally produced experience that is bound with time, place and actors (Fattore et al. 2012). Epistemologically, this means the data is generated and knowledge is being constructed in communication between research participants and researcher (Fattore et al. 2007; Huberman and Miles 2002). Even though we emphasize the importance of listening to children and young people, we are aware that using creative visual methods does not give the researcher privilege to get access to what people really think or feel (Buckingham 2009). The narratives of children or young people may not be transferred as such to the researcher. Instead, the shared narrative is processed in the encounters, which are conscious or unconscious (Kinnunen 2015). Current discourse that defines, structures and contextualizes

well-being, needs to broaden in order to take account of all possibilities, inconsistences and contradictions (Manderson 2005).

As a frame for the research we use a dynamic ecological model, which describes the essential levels in the everyday lives of the children. The most important notion here is that the growth process of children and young people is related to the growth environment (Bronfenbrenner and Evans 2000; Rogers 2012). Also, children's lives are layered entirety, which at the same time contains different level phenomena and may even be contradictory. An ecological perspective enables political, social and cultural contexts to be taken into account when studying subjective views (Rogers 2012). Children's actions are always tied up with the environment, place and time in interaction with adults and peers, and wider micro and macro cultures (Karlsson 2010; Rogers 2012). For example, in Finland, the equalization of socio-economic differences between residential areas broke down in the 1990's, and differences and segregation again began to grow (Seppänen et al. 2012). However, it must be observed that children's experiences and views of their neighbourhood differs from those of adults. For example, children living in a suburb in a family with low income or unemployment do not necessarily indicate negative well-being even if the parents might experience their well-being as unstable (Poikolainen 2014).

Photo and Drawing Elicitation Interviews as Child Perspective Methods

Recent research has emphasized the importance of listening to children's perspectives on issues that are important and relevant for them (Christensen et al. 2015; Einarsdottir et al. 2009; Fattore et al. 2007; Nansen et al. 2015). Researchers have shown a growing interest in

children's experiences, and have wished to highlight the child's voice in their research. This is also our aim in this article.

Children use many forms of expression other than spoken language, and we need to look out for methods that allow children and young people the opportunity to describe their perspectives (Karlsson 2010). Through the combination of visual and verbal elements children are offered a multi-expressive opportunity to take part in the research process as active participants. Simultaneously it is possible to overcome some of the disadvantages that conventional interviews with children present – for example, it may be challenging for children to verbalize memories or they may tire quickly during interviews (Zartler 2014).

Karlsson (2009) emphasizes that the experience of participation and the opportunity to talk about matters concerning everyday life give children and young people a feeling of strength, empowerment, and this in turn is connected with well-being. Traditionally, children have been seen as the objects of research, but this perspective has been changing slowly (Karlsson 2010; Punch 2002a). However, if we see the child as an active, social actor and as a culture constructor we have to see the child as a subject. When the activity itself – the child's photography, photo elicitation, drawing and discussions – is the object of the research, there is room for children's emergent and context based multiple views, experiences and ideas.

The use of photographs has increased in studies where the interest is on the child's point of view and opinions, and several childhood studies have produced research material by taking photographs and then letting children talk about them in interviews. Research interests have concerned children's experiences of, for example the journey to school, local communities, school, playschool and day care as well as everyday life (see e.g. Barker and Weller 2003;

Cook and Hess 2007; Einarsdottir 2005; Leonard and McKnight 2015; Mykkänen and Böök 2013; Punch 2002a; Pyle 2013; White et al. 2010). In photo elicitation, the aim is to use photographs as triggers in the discussion and to facilitate interaction between researcher and child (Cook and Hess 2007; Mykkänen and Böök 2013).

Children's drawings have been often used to examine the children's psychic and age stage development (e.g. Cherney et al. 2006). However, drawing is also a useful method for clarifying the child's points of views. In earlier studies, for example, children have drawn places where they feel welcome or where they feel left out (Barker and Weller 2003). Drawings have also been used when studying children's experiences and expectations of school life and the journey to school (e.g. Barker and Weller 2003; Cook and Hess 2007; Einarsdottir et al. 2009), neighbourhood, home and family (e.g. Punch 2002a).

Drawings themselves form a rich visual picture of how children see the world (Punch 2002a). Drawing has been noticed as a familiar task for children (Einarsdottir et al. 2009). Young children especially like to draw, and drawing has proved to be a more popular form of self-expression for under-12-year-olds. Older children are often restricted by a lack of artistic expression or rather the fear that they cannot draw (Barker and Weller 2003; Punch 2002a). Discussion with the drawer gives more information to the researcher than the drawing alone. Without discussion drawings may be easily over interpreted by the researchers. The combination of children's narrative and drawing conveys the meanings children have constructed and are prepared to share (Einarsdottir et al. 2009).

Buckingham (2009) reminds us that creative visual methods do not explicitly add or improve opportunities for people to express themselves. Participatory methods have been criticized

also internally in childhood studies (e.g. Tisdall and Punch 2012). Criticism focuses especially on participatory and empowering methods that are often largely managed by researchers and not participants (Gallacher and Gallagher 2008; Holland et al. 2010; Thomson 2007). Gallacher and Gallagher (2008, 513) are concerned that participatory methods are in danger of being seen as a 'fool-proof' technology: *we have not been arguing against participatory methods as such – we have no particular issue with researchers asking children to draw, dance or build – we are simply concerned that such methods are not used naively.'*

Thomson (2007, 214) asks, if we accept that the competent adult is a myth, and all individuals are human becomings, then what are the consequences of developing participatory methodologies based on a fixed category such as children? She also points out a lack of fit between the bottom-up political philosophy of participatory methodologies and the top-down approach of pre-labelling participants prior to their entry into the research space. Holland et al. (2010, 361) argue that researchers are better equipped or more willing to critique participation in policy-making than in academic research.

Traditional interviews have been criticized because they are adult-oriented and not suitable for research with children (e.g. Karlsson 2006). Researchers have also questioned how truthful the information produced by children is. For example, Hill (2006) points out that much of what children say could well be echoed by adults. On the other hand, Ridge (2003) discovered that children struggle to protect their parents from the realities of the social and emotional costs of childhood poverty on their lives. Children are also highly sensitive to the context in which research takes place (Hill 2006).

In our research project, we have been sensitive both when designing the research, when doing co-research with children and during the analysing process. We also use open-ended questions, such as "please tell", which are less restrictive than a traditional interview. By using photo and drawing elicitation interviews as research methods, we aim for the narrative storytelling that provides several ways for the opportunity for talking and describe in other ways about things that are meaningful to the tellers, in the way they choose. It can also make visible tacit knowledge and the inner voice (Karlsson 2013).

We do not just want to state that we use child perspective methods. Instead we want to ask how the data producing process is built, how children have been given the opportunity to truly express their views and how to inspire children to tell. In addition, it is essential to consider how the interpretations are made. Challenges of child perspective research outlined above have been taken into consideration in our research methods, which are presented in the next chapter.

Research Context, Child Perspective Data and Methods

In this chapter, we focus on describing the empirical data and shortly the research context. We are considering how to produce and analyze data by locating the key elements that need to be taken into account when researching with children. This research and qualitative data examples can be used more widely when researching with children.

We gathered research data in three residential areas of Finland's 9th biggest city, Lahti, which has around 104 000 inhabitants (TILDA 2014). The suburb of Liipola is the main research area of the study, and most of the research data has been collected there. We chose this suburb

because it has been defined as a challenging growth environment for children and young people when examined using different socio-economic indicators that determine the status of the area: the unemployment rate of the area is considerably higher and the education level lower than the average of the city, and the share of rented apartments is large, also when compared nationally (Seppänen et al. 2012; TILDA 2014). In order to contrast the results, two other areas were chosen. These were the city centre and the fringe areas of the city where the socio-economic differences are even more marked than in the suburb. According to the definition of the Finnish environmental administration, a suburb is not in direct connection with the urban area, while a fringe area is situated five kilometres from the edge of the city centre. It has no real urban district either, but it is clearly not countryside. We have roughly followed the definitions of the Central Statistical Office of Finland regarding the distances of services from the place of residence in our area definition (Statistics Finland 2012).

We define children as under 13-year-olds, and older than that as young people. This definition is based on the research of the Finnish Youth Research Society in which children of various ages were asked whether they experience themselves as children or as young people (Myllyniemi and Berg 2014). The definitions of young participants of our research were in line with this definition.

We obtained research permission from the Department of Education and Culture in the City of Lahti, because the children's drawings were produced in the research groups in the local comprehensive school. We presented the research project in the schools of the study area. We also had research permissions from all the participants, both children and their parents.

The research data consists of photo elicitation interviews (N=16, 187 photographs) and children's group discussions based on children's drawings (N=49, 91 drawings). Participation was voluntary and based on the consent of both children and parents. The participants were found through parents' evenings at the comprehensive schools, through the community recreation centre of the suburb, and with the snowball method whereby participants in the research recommended potential new participants.

Method one: Photo Elicitation Interviews

The children and young people (N=16) were advised to photograph places where they spent time and in which they feel good, as well as situations which produced a sense of feeling good. The research data producing took place from the autumn of 2013 until the autumn of 2014. Every child had a disposable camera about two or three weeks. The children and young people who participated in photo elicitation interviews came from eight families and the age of participants ranged from 2–16 years. Photographing took place in a variety of compositions, because the children decided themselves the ways of data producing. Nine photo elicitation interviews were arranged. Three participants were interviewed individually, aged 7, 8 and 13. Thirteen participants were interviewed with siblings. Four siblings who were 2, 4, 6 and 9 years old were interviewed twice, and the rest once. Siblings of one family were 4, 9 and 12 years, 5 and 7, 12 and 14 and the last 14 and 16. Nine of these children or young people lived in the suburb, four in the city centre and three in the fringe areas.

A total of 171 photographs were taken by the children and young people themselves, while 16 photographs were photographed by one parent, but according to the child's wishes. Even

though some of the photographs were overexposed, a total of 187 useful photographs were obtained.

The methodological challenge is not necessarily how to stabilize a method, for example elaborating guidelines, but rather how to keep the methods open enough to become more interesting for children and young people (Kullman 2012). Participants decided for themselves when and where to take photographs. This was one way to modify the research method according to the need of children and young people and not firmly stick to the researcher's introductions.

Child perspective methods have been criticized, in that sometimes emphasizing participation is not actualized because the researcher influences the children to participate in certain ways and not in others (Gallacher and Gallagher 2008). We aimed to affect as little as possible children's opportunities to participate in the research and we pursued to give them free space to form views. For example, some children of one family gave the camera to the parent, or the parent and the children together decided that the parent took the photographs and the children points out the targets. Also two young girls took the initiative to use a mobile phone camera, not only disposable camera. The need to use mobile phone camera arose when girls realized that some of the photos had been spoiled due to technical problems. Disposable cameras were used, because we wanted to prevent the participants from editing or deleting photographs. This decision made by researchers could have been different considered afterwards. Maybe the researchers should have given all the decision-making to the children and young people. Although researchers made some guidelines and decisions according collecting data, these were changed according to children's needs.

Disposable cameras have also been used in earlier research (see e.g. Einarsdottir 2005; Mykkänen and Böök 2013) and, therefore, the poor technical quality of the cameras and photos surprised us. Some photos were grey, you could not see what those represent. 'They are ruined' said 9-year-old boy in the beginning of the interview and pointed some of the photographs. However, even though some of the photographs were overexposed, a total of 187 useful photographs were obtained.

After the photographs had been taken, we[1] arranged photo elicitation interviews in which the child or young person had a conversation with the researcher about the contents and meanings of the photographs. The photo elicitation interviews were carried out in places that children, young people or children together with parent were chosen, e.g., the children's homes, cafés and the researchers' offices. The conversations lasted around one hour. Children of the same family participated simultaneously, and their mother was also present. Family interviews were arranged because the children and parents hoped for this, and the aim was to create a sense of security to small children in a new situation. The presence of a parent can reduce tension that may occur when meeting the researcher and having a conversation. On the other hand, the presence of the parents in the photo elicitation interviews with a child can restrict the subjects that could be expressed by the child. It is also possible that children want to protect their parents from difficult topics, as Ridge (2003) found out.

The young people either participated alone or with a sibling. Transcriptions were made following the spoken language (Calibri, font 12 and spacing 1, in total 157 pages). One conversation was not transcribed because the children of the family talked simultaneously a great deal, which made it more reasonable to use that data by listening to it.

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[1] Interviewers: researchers Kati Honkanen, Jaana Poikolainen and research assistant Hanna Ruusunen

At the beginning of the photo elicitation interviews, all the photographs were spread on a table or the floor so that both the researcher and photographers were able to see them at the same time. The aim was to create a situation that would encourage talk, especially when the story about the photo is told by a child or young person (see e.g. Mykkänen and Böök 2013). The question forms or instructions in the interviews were mainly open, such as 'tell me about this photo'. We also used an open thematic interview form (Punch 2002b) to ensure that important research themes were talked about, for example, specifically where they liked to spend time and why. During the conversation, the participants talked also other aspects of their life rather than just about the photographs and directly related matters.

Method two: Drawing group discussions

Group discussions based on children's drawings were arranged in the comprehensive school of the suburb. 49 pupils of grades 1–4 (aged 7–11) participated in these research groups. Children were given instructions to draw two different pictures: a nice place in the suburb and a situation that made them happy. The aim was to capture definitions of well-being in certain places in their residential areas. Six one-hour children's research groups took place in the comprehensive school of the suburb during the school days of spring 2014.

On average, eight children, participated in every group session. The majority of the participants lived in the suburb. The children's drawing research groups were only organized in the suburban school, because the suburb was the most important focus of the development programme of the residential areas of the Lahti region. Children who participated in children's research groups were not the same children than in photo elicitation interviews.

The aim was to become familiar with each other and also to create a relaxed atmosphere. To achieve these aims the group activity began with a 'getting to know you' game. The children were mainly from the same class, but the researchers were visitors. After the initial play the children drew independently although in a group, and the researchers meanwhile chatted about the drawings with the children and made notes on the children's talk. When the drawings were ready, everybody finally gathered in a circle in which everyone was allowed to tell the whole group about their own drawings.

Sometimes group effects were perceived in drawings: some of the children drew side-by-side and the drawings became identical. This is not necessarily problematic from the point of view of the results, because the drawings still represent the children's thoughts as members of the group (Punch 2002a). However, majority of the children drew an independent picture following their own preferences. Collective discussion on drawings might also have brought up new perspectives the children perhaps had not been thinking.

All pupils from the grades 1–4 were invited to participate research groups during the school days. About one-third of the pupils did not participate in research groups. We do not know exactly how many of these non-attendance children could not participate due to parents' refusal and how many of them decided themselves to default. But, we do know that not all parents gave permission for their children to participate in, so a few children had to be guided out of the classroom and group because of this. This happened even when the child wanted to participate with their classmates. In these cases, the child does not have the power to make a decision on the matters concerning themselves. Written research permission of the parents

partly ensures research ethics, but can also be an obstacle, even restricting listening to the child's voice.

Analysis

When children and young people produce research data, it is important that in the analysis their point of view is also retained (Pyle 2013). We used qualitative inductive content analysis both for the photographs and the transcribed photo elicitation interviews by adapting the parallel compositional interpretation analysis method developed by Rose (2012) and applied by Mykkänen and Böök (2013). At the first stage of the analysis, we grouped the photographs according to their theme. For example, family member, home, playground, etc. Next, we analysed an interpretation of contents produced in the interview because, if only the visual materials were analysed, the interpretations would remain incomplete (Rose 2012). The meaning of the picture often became evident to the researcher when the child or young person told the story, or narrative, about it. The stories behind the photo were also sometimes surprising. For example, a father only appears in three photographs but they were often talked about in the photo elicitation interviews. For instance, a 2-year-old girl photographed steps from the suburb's fitness track. She said *'steps near to home'* are her favourite place. The father of the girl, according to her narration, would wait for her down below when she herself safely climbed the steps. This example shows that photo elicitation is a proper supplement, because the conversation broadens the possibilities of gain more detailed knowledge.

The children's views gives the keys to the researchers to construct children's meanings. With the help of these keys researchers encoded the photos into three categories: supporting

environment of well-being, social relations and action. We analysed the children's drawings as a whole, supported by the researcher's notes about the stories the children told. The drawings were analysed in the same manner as the photographs, using inductive content analysis. The visual contents of the drawings were written into the matrix one at a time. The target of the analysis was the output; the drawing made by the child. The interpretation of the drawing's contents were made by researchers on the basis of discussions with children.

After analysing the drawing narratives and the drawings themselves, we noted that the important conceptions here were place and space. Place and space are among the founding concepts of modern human geography. Place is commonly used in geographical perspective to designate a particular area. (Roche 2016.) In recent years post-structuralist approaches have risen which view space as dynamic, emergent and participatory. Specifically, there has been a significant push to think space relationally, as co-constituted by the associations, networks and interactions of diverse agents and materialities. (Country et al. 2015.)

In the conversation with the children and young people about the photographs, the places (e.g. home) changed into certain spaces (e.g. private) where well-being is constructed and experienced. Place often refers to a certain familiar physical place such as home or school. The concept can also refer to a sense of belonging and a feeling of comfort and security (Duhn 2012). Here the place means a recognizable physical built or natural place which has clear boundaries that you can see, or you know the boundaries (Duhn 2012). Space refers to a mental state, meaning emotions and senses, for example, of feeling good or experiencing well-being in a certain place. Children and young people described places of well-being, which turned into spaces (see Farrugia 2014). For example the earlier mentioned photograph 'steps near to home' presents transformation from the place to space.

This analysis method is open enough to combine visual and verbal data, which enables children's perspectives to come out. The most essential thing in both data producing and analysis is, that the researcher must be able to be as transparent as possible to receive and combine varied ways children express their views.

Children and Young People as Competent Co-researchers

The article was concerned with two questions: how to produce and analyse data produced with children and young people, and how to further develop the method of co-researching with children? The starting point was epistemological matter, the children and young people were placed as knowers of well-being.

This research reinforced the observations of earlier studies (e.g. Einarsdottir 2005; Mykkänen and Böök 2013; Pyle 2013) that the use of the camera expands the children's power: children are given permission and responsibility for taking photographs and for making their own choices, by, among other things, photographing those subjects that are significant to them personally. In addition, in the photo elicitation interviews, the children can decide through their photographs which matters are discussed. At the same time, the children can connect verbal interaction to visual and do not need to resort only to verbal communication. We noted, like Pyle (2013), that photographs not only facilitate a child's possibility to communicate, but also improve the researcher's ability to be in interaction with the child. Interpretation of the photographs cannot be made without the photographers, because they are the only ones who know the context and background stories (e.g. Barker and Weller 2003).

We can achieve a wider and more layered view of children`s thoughts by combining two methods. First, when the children look for the photographing object they consider the issue in their body, motion and space. It allows functional contact with the research topic. Secondly, photo elicitation interview and drawing discussions brings new moment to stop and look at outputs: photos and drawings. This moment allows possibility to stop and think, explore the phenomenon and express thoughts verbally.

It is also important to examine research practices critically. Even though the power of the child and young person increases with the help of the photography and drawing methods, it must still be understood that they are not totally free when choosing their targets for description. The research context, as well as the intentions and expectations of the researcher may influence the production of the data. The relation between an adult researcher and a child is not totally equal, and this has an influence on the conversation, i.e. which topics are selected for discussion. Mykkänen and Böök (2013) also noted that other members of the family may become "gatekeepers", who direct the photography. They may, for example, have prevented themselves being photographed. Social norms also influence the choice of photography targets. Some rooms of the home do not appear in the photos probably because they are seen as too private to show others, for example. Children also influence each other, and therefore it is interesting, to see what kind of perspectives children produce and what those tell about children's and children's society's way of perceiving phenomena.

Many environments where research is carried out are adult places. In our research, too, the children were drawing in the school environment, for example. Even though school is the children's learning environment, it is also controlled by adults, and this may affect the children's outputs (Punch 2002a). In the school context, social pressure sometimes affects

what topics the children present in the drawings and how those are discussed. In this research, children's perspectives were pursued also in other environments than in the institutional context of the school. Using children's places in research allows children's perspectives to be collected from an alternative location than the school institution, where research often takes place.

Kinnunen (2015) reflects the realization of reciprocity in research with children: the researcher builds trust but at the same time determines the limits of the encounter with children. Children tell their narratives, but what right does the researcher have to analyse and report the results? How can the researcher re-tell the narrative of the child and not interpret too much or too little? These questions were considered during the research and we did seek reciprocity with children and young people. By this we mean that we aimed to do analysis and interpretation with children, not for the children. At the same time, we recognize the emphasized role of the adult researcher in the research process. However, we must, as researchers, dare to use our competences, so that children's perspectives could be recognized. Without researcher's contribution, children's perspectives may stay hidden in the well-being research.

After all, we can react critically to child perspective research and ask: do the research methods used highlight all aspects of children's and young people's well-being? The answer is no: children's and young people's well-being is a complex entity and, to form a comprehensive picture of it, we need to combine different data and views. We must also be aware that theoretical and analytic approaches influence what can be found in the research data (Honan et. al 2000).

What issues should be taken into account when developing further methods of co-researching with children and young people? It is important to take situationality and ethical sensitivity into account. As Kullman (2012) states, there are simply no ready-made ethical and child-friendly methods that manage to capture the diversity of daily life, and methodological modesty entails admitting that our methods are necessarily limited and need to be adapted to the situations at hand. Even though it is difficult to find ideal methods for research with children because their preferences and competencies vary (Punch 2002a), we found out that discussion related to photographs and drawings makes it possible to examine the subjective well-being of children and young people and their experiences of their residential area. By combining visual and verbal research methods, researchers may reach the perspectives of children and young people, who may even become co-researchers. As a result of reciprocity between the child or young person and an adult, the researcher, can shape a platform to form common narrative and produce knowledge (Kinnunen 2015; Karlsson 2010).

This research focused on the positive aspects of well-being. The same methods could be used for examining ill-being or other themes, for example. However, the essential point in this research is that well-being has not been defined in advance by the researchers; instead, children and young people have been given an opportunity to describe how they experience well-being in their residential areas. Through that process, the phenomenon of children's subjective well-being in their environments has become more visible. Interesting is that children's view of their residential area is much more positive than could be assumed based on the statistics, for example. Thus, by using child perspective methods, it is possible to achieve new knowledge which cannot be obtained by examining only the perspectives of adults.

By using photo and drawing elicitation interviews we achieved subjective knowledge about the well-being of children and young people. The views and experiences of children and young people should be widely utilized when developing residential areas and services for families. For example, when planning and building residential areas, attention should be paid to the views of the children and young people: what must be retained, built, improved and so on. The knowledge produced by children and young people helps parents and professionals working with children to perceive the principle features of well-being from their own point of view. Furthermore, by using visual and verbal research methods it is possible to attain a rich and varied view of the child's and young person's perspectives. Co-researching also allows children become more aware of the phenomena, for example about well-being and things which influences it. They also get used to express their opinions and this will help them to affect their own lives in other situations.

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