What is the life we value?

A capability-participatory approach to exploring young Chileans' diverse meanings of and opportunities for well-being

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The interest in conceptualising young people's well-being has increased drastically over the last decades. Nevertheless, these discussions are primarily based on adult-centred and Global North constructions. This lack of contextualisation negatively impacts Chile's policies and social programs and constrains young people's agency and right to participate in the decisions that affect them. This dissertation adopts a capability-participatory approach to conceptualise young people's well-being in Chile by positioning their voices and lived experiences at the centre of the research process. This work contributes to the theoretical debate about child well-being and capabilities in the majority world by recognising young people's subjectivities as a critical input to inform theoretical constructions. Methodologically, it presents a novel approach to defining well-being in Chile, emphasising the significance of co-constructing well-being definitions by incorporating the perspectives of young people living in diverse conditions. This study shows that the influence of socioeconomic status (linked to residential location and type of education received) and social constructions of childhood (linked to agency and right to participation) are critical conversion factors that influence students' opportunities to live the lives they have reason to value. Lastly, it reflects that including young people's voices is fundamental to re-think well-being policies in Chile, which could potentially influence both public institutions and non-governmental organisations.

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Abbreviations

BMSLSS	Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale
BSA	British Sociological Association
CA	Capability Approaches
CAE	Crédito con Aval del Estado
CASEN	Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica
ECLAC	Economic Comission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENCAVI	Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida y Salud
FONASA	Fondo Nacional de Salud
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ISAPRE	Instituciones de Salud Previsional
ISCWeb	International Survey of Children's Well-Being
IVE-SINAE	Indice de Vulnerabilidad Escolar
JUNAEB	Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas
LSP	Lego Serious Play Method
MCAP	Multdimensional Child and Adolescent Index
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAA	Prueba de Aptitud Académica
PAES	Prueba de Acceso a la Educación Superior
PNNA	Política Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia
PSU	Prueba de Selección Universitaria
PWB	Psychological Well-being
PWI	Personal Well-being Index
PWI-SC	Personal Well-being School Children
RNH	Registro Nacional de Hogares
SCC	Social Constructions of Childhood
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SDH	Social Determinants of Health
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SIMCE	Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación
SLSS	Student's Life Satisfaction Scale
SPID	Sistema de Protección Integral de Derechos
SWB	Subjective Well-Being
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

El escuchar es fundamental en cualquier circunstancia relacional entre personas. Para eso se requiere una actitud sin prejuicios ni expectativas que nosotros llamamos ‘soltar las certidumbres’.

Humberto Maturana

Listening is fundamental in any relational circumstance between people. This requires an attitude without prejudices or expectations which we call ‘letting go of certainties’.

Humberto Maturana

Chapter 1
Introduction

Introduction and motivations

In recent decades, understanding and measuring the well-being of children and young people has garnered significant interest from scholars and policymakers worldwide. However, most conceptualisations and measures used in Chile to study young people's well-being derive from adult-based constructions from the Global North. This thesis argues that this situation directly affects the political outcomes concerning well-being, limiting young people's opportunities to enhance their well-being and be agents of change in their lives. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to conceptualise well-being by including young people's perspectives as fundamental inputs of the knowledge production around this concept in Chile.

This thesis understands well-being as "the quality of people's lives" (Rees et al., 2010, p. 2). The literature shows that quality of life, as a construct, encompasses objective and subjective dimensions (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). The objective aspect of well-being includes indicators such as economic progress, development, poverty rates, access to education, and other socioeconomic characteristics (Casas, 2011; Casas and Frønes, 2020). Subjective well-being indicators predominantly encompass individuals' assessments of their lives based on their experiences (Campbell, 1976; Diener, 2009).

In Chile, the objective conceptualisation of young people's well-being is closely tied to measuring children's living standards through poverty constructs, such as the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica (Socioeconomic Characterisation Survey) (CASEN) (see MDS, 2017; MDSF, 2021; 2023c). While this survey includes a measure of child poverty in their reports, its definition is rooted in a monetary approach, through household income as the unit of measurement, and no child poverty-specific approaches are included (OCEC-UDP, 2021). This theoretical gap is problematic since such an approach to conceptualising young Chileans' quality of life presents an incomplete picture of young people's living conditions and does not accurately reflect their experiences.

This discussion is particularly relevant since Chile is one of the most unequal OECD countries (OECD, 2020). While poverty rates have decreased significantly over the past 30 years in Chile (Agostini et al., 2008; Larrañaga and Rodríguez, 2014), the wealthiest 20% controls 70% of the country's wealth (Martínez and Uribe, 2017).[1] The literature

[1] Experts agree that the market-driven reforms implemented during the 1980s represent a landmark in the structure of inequality in the country due to the privatisation of the national companies, the consolidation of private property and a transformation of social security

widely acknowledges that inequality is deeply entrenched in Chilean society, impacting the majority of the population's access to quality services and, consequently, constraining Chileans' quality of life on different levels (e.g., Oliva, 2008; Valenzuela, 2008; Valdés and Garcés-Sotomayor, 2017). However, current studies heavily rely on constructs derived from adults and monetary metrics to explore the relationship between the quality of life of young Chileans and socioeconomic factors, which fail to provide an accurate picture of young people's life experiences when living in unequal societies.

Moreover, the literature reveals an essential influence of subjective approaches in the country, rooted in the Children's World's International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeb) (see ISCWeb, 2019). While this subjective approach has opened a path for the discussion of young people's perspectives towards their well-being in Chile, these studies predominantly rely on quantitative measures of this survey (e.g., Alfaro et al., 2016b). Furthermore, the instrument's conceptualisation of well-being is adult-based from a limited group of minority world researchers. As a result, the definition of well-being and the indicators comprised in this survey are constructed based on a limited group of adults' perceptions of what well-being means, which raises concerns about the epistemological colonisation of knowledge concerning the meanings of young people's well-being worldwide and the invisible participation of young people in those constructions.

From an institutional perspective, Chilean definitions of childhood and well-being stem from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UNICEF, 1989)[2]. From these guidelines derives the Política Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia (National Policy of Childhood and Youth) (PNNA), which is the crucial institutional framework to address children and young people's quality of life in Chile, conceptualising well-being as the fulfilment of rights of all individuals below the age of 18. Hence, this policy is closely aligned with the UNCRC and aims to provide the framework for progressively establishing an institutional system that guarantees rights and guides public policies (CNDI, 2015b).[3] However, these guidelines are predominantly based on protection rights, overlooking the role of those related to participation.

through the reduction of the state's role in providing public services (Foxley, 1988; Garretón, 2012; Larrañaga, 2016). As pointed out by these authors, the privatisation of services, particularly education and health, has resulted in stark differences in quality between state-provided and private services.

[2] The UNCRC was ratified in the country in 1990 (see, UNTC, 2023).

[3] The Plan de Acción Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia 2015-2025 (National Action Plan for Childhood and Adolescence 2015-2025) (MDSF, 2015) stems directly from the PNNA. This plan integrates the policy outlines with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (UN, 2016) and the Final Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2015). Serving as the State's strategic blueprint, this plan aims to establish an Integral System for the Protection of Rights (SPID), focusing on four core rights axes: survival, development, protection, and participation.

Notably, while these institutional frameworks and policy guidelines conceptualise well-being as the full realisation of rights, based on the ratification of the UNCRC, children's and young people's rights are not recognised within the country's Constitution since citizens and rights holders are all individuals aged 18 years and above (CPRC, 1980). This thesis argues that such ambiguous interpretations of children and young people as rights holders in Chile are critical in shaping conceptualisations of childhood and well-being, which influences the status of children not only within the research process as passive actors, but also in society, limiting their agency and voices in the construction of well-being and the dimensions which comprise it.

Therefore, this thesis posits that problematising current conceptualisations of "the child" and well-being is critical to enhancing the comprehension of young Chileans' quality of life. To these purposes, the study introduces the capabilities-participatory framework as a novel approach to conceptualising well-being in Chile. This approach is rooted in the social studies of childhood, also known as childhood studies, providing the theoretical framework to acknowledge children and young people as social agents, where participation is not only a right but a fundamental exercise inherent to their status as social actors in the present (e.g., James and Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998; Tisdall, 2015a).

Furthermore, this theoretical standpoint to theorising about well-being is a critical contribution to the literature as it acknowledges childhood as a social structure interacting with other structures (e.g., Qvortrup, 2009; Wyness, 2019), allowing an exploration of the structural factors that shape young Chileans' well-being opportunities, such as those related to socioeconomic inequality and the institutional definitions of a child's well-being.

Moreover, this innovative framework is rooted in the capabilities approach, adopting the concept of *capability* to explore young people's well-being, conceptualised as an individual's freedom of choice among different valued opportunities (e.g., Sen, 1992; Sen, 1999), and which represents a key contribution to this discussion. Within this framework, well-being disparities are acknowledged as relational issues, providing a theoretical foundation for analysing the process of transforming inputs into outcomes rather than focusing solely on the outcomes through the notion of conversion factors (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2005a). Such a standpoint allows for exploring the relationship between life experiences and opportunities arising from the inputs available to young people and how they influence their well-being (Ziegler, 2010).

In this context, this study contributes a capability-participatory-based conceptualisation of well-being co-constructed with young Chileans, who define it as the freedom to live securely, develop a valued life project, build supported communities, and be recognised by others, particularly adults. Furthermore, this thesis reveals that socioeconomic

inequality and social constructions of childhood are critical structural factors shaping young Chileans' opportunities for well-being.

The inception of this project stems from my experience working as a children and young people's therapist and school counsellor in Chile. It is important to clarify beforehand that I use the term "young people" and not "children" when referring to the age group involved in this thesis, as requested by a group of Chilean students in my early days as a counsellor. They explained to me that that sometimes adults refer to them as "niños" (children in Spanish) in a derogatory manner. Hence, they pointed out feeling more comfortable with being called "jóvenes" (young people in Spanish).

Before undertaking this project, I spent several years in educational settings, primarily in socioeconomically disadvantaged schools, working with students facing high vulnerability and social exclusion. Through this firsthand involvement, I observed the structural barriers that young people from low-income backgrounds encounter in their pursuit of well-being. Such experience was vital for immersing myself in the institutional frameworks concerning young Chileans' well-being and understanding the channels at my disposal to support these students.

Within this context, I observed the disconnect between those institutional adult-centred frameworks and young people's life experiences, directly affecting their possibilities to improve their living standards and thrive. At this point, I realised how relevant young people's participation rights are and the tense relationship between these rights and a child's best interest. I noticed apparent inconsistencies between students' perspectives on their well-being and the policy frameworks, evidencing the exclusion of their voices and their lack of power concerning decision-making processes.

It was from this theoretical-empirical gap that my academic concern arose, pushing me to delve deeper into problematising the adult-centred conceptualisations and measurements of well-being in Chile, advocating for young people to become active participants in the social sphere and promoting their power to be agents of change in their lives. This project is the result of that process.

1.1 Thesis aims and contributions

This project's main objective is to include Chilean young people's voices in the theoretical discussion regarding their well-being by identifying the key dimensions that comprise such a broad concept. To these purposes, this dissertation proposes a capability-participatory approach to conceptualise and theorise well-being by co-constructing a list of valued capabilities with different groups of young Chileans.

Furthermore, this study aims to analyse the influence of structural forces on young people's possibilities to live well. In this context, the project examines the effect of socioeconomic inequality and social constructions of childhood as key structural-relational constraints that influence young people's opportunities for well-being. For these purposes, this thesis analyses the role of socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood as key conversion factors mediating young Chilean's opportunities to live well according to their expectations.

Lastly, this thesis problematises the lack of participation and decision-making power that young Chileans have regarding their well-being. It analyses the extent to which adopting a participatory research approach challenges current theoretical constructs and the institutional-policy rhetoric concerning young people's well-being in this country.

Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute on three levels: theoretical, methodological, and empirical, as follows.

1.1.1 Theoretical level

Theoretically, this project contributes to the conceptualisation of well-being by adopting a combined lens rooted in childhood studies and a capabilities perspective. Embracing a childhood studies approach provides the theoretical framework for recognising children and young people as active agents within the social world (James and Prout, 1997; Prout, 2005). This thesis adopts a relational approach to conceptualising agency, understanding it as a process in which young individuals can "endorse, change and challenge their social worlds through their active engagement with others in the world" (Wyness, 2018a, p. 133).

In this context, young people's agency can be observed through their interactions and participation in decision-making processes within their social worlds (Sinclair, 2004; Oswell, 2013). Hence, facilitating active participation in the research process to explore young people's lived experiences becomes a fundamental aspect of this theoretical standpoint (Ben-Arieh, 2008). This theoretical approach of agency becomes critical to conceptualising well-being from a child-centred perspective.

Furthermore, adopting a childhood studies approach acknowledges that childhood is a socially constructed concept deeply rooted in geographical, historical, and social specificities, which is critical for this thesis (e.g., Lee, 2001; Prout, 2005). This theoretical standpoint facilitates the exploration of childhood as a structural form in interaction with other structural forms (e.g., Qvortrup, 2009; Wyness, 2019). Adopting this theoretical standpoint to theorising about well-being is a critical contribution to the literature as it allows an exploration of the structural factors that shape young Chileans' well-being opportunities, such as those concerning socioeconomic inequality.

This thesis adopts a capabilities approach to address this gap as a novel theoretical framework to conceptualise young people's well-being and explore its relationship with socioeconomic inequality. The capabilities approach defines well-being through the concept of *capability*, understood as a matter of freedom of choice and opportunity (Sen, 1992; 1999). In this framework, well-being inequalities are viewed as relational issues, providing a theoretical foundation for analysing the process of transforming inputs into outcomes rather than focusing solely on the outcomes themselves (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2005a). Such a standpoint allows for the exploration of the relationship between life experiences and opportunities arising from the inputs available to young people and how they influence their well-being (Ziegler, 2010). As further elaborated in Chapter 3, education and neighbourhood are the critical inputs that guide this thesis discussion.

Moreover, adopting such a structural approach to childhood allows for examining the influence of Chilean social constructions of childhood on young people's decision-making power regarding their quality of life. This analysis entails studying the constraints on agency and participation spaces within the debate surrounding their well-being in the country. Such discussions represent a pivotal contribution to the literature because tensions within the institutional interpretation of children and young people's well-being, particularly regarding their status as rights holders, have historically limited the ability of young Chileans to be agents of change in their quality of life. Therefore, emphasising young people's agency and participation at a theoretical level offers a more comprehensive understanding of their well-being, challenging prevailing adult-centric views.

Such a theoretical standpoint allows recognition of young people's voices at the centre of the knowledge production process regarding their well-being, with the potential to influence broader spaces than academia by promoting inclusive policy-making in Chile and improving the accuracy in identifying and providing the required aid to the young population in the country.

1.1.2 Methodological level

Methodologically, this study presents an innovative approach to defining children's well-being in Chile by adopting a qualitative-participatory research framework. Adopting a participatory approach is epistemologically relevant for this study as it embraces a relational understanding of knowledge production, emphasising the co-construction of meaning among individuals through collaborative processes (Heron and Reason, 1997). This collaborative nature of knowledge production is especially pertinent in research involving this project, as it challenges the imbalanced power dynamics in knowledge production between adults and children (Gallagher, 2008).

Embracing a participatory research paradigm offers a methodological framework to recognise and empower young people's agency within the research process, positioning them as experts in their own lives (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Clark et al., 2005b). In this context, participatory research is theoretically rooted in rights-based approaches, where young people's participation rights are emphasised by situating their voices at the forefront of discussions on their quality of life (Bessell, 2017b). By promoting young people's agency and participation, this study challenges the existing subordinated status of children's knowledge concerning their well-being compared to that of adults, thereby addressing the power imbalances identified in the literature within the research on young Chileans' well-being. Hence, it proposes a framework that can serve as a starting point for future research by recognising young people's voices as fundamental in the knowledge production.

Within the participatory inquiry, this project adopts a qualitative methodology, problematising the dominance of quantitative constructs in the literature to measure young Chileans' well-being. Embracing a qualitative design is particularly relevant for this thesis as such an approach allows exploring the subjective interpretations and the significance individuals attribute to their lived experiences and circumstances, emphasising the context in which these experiences occur (Fattore et al., 2012; Tonon, 2015). Furthermore, as Tonon et al. (2017) emphasised, qualitative methods facilitate space for children to be the main protagonists of the research process. For these purposes, the study developed six focus group sessions with 34 Chilean students between 10 and 14 years old living in two regions of the country, distributed in four groups. Each group was composed of students from the same school (different school years), where two schools were private (paid tuition) and two public-statal (free tuition).[4]

Moreover, the study contributes to the methodological debate by proposing specific techniques for conducting qualitative and participatory research with young people. These techniques facilitated in-depth group reflection, proving essential for fostering collaborative discussions and co-creating knowledge. In this context, the study employed creative methods inspired by the mosaic approach (see Clark, 2005b; Clark and Moss, 2011), including mapping, constructing board games, and using Lego for representations. Using these instruments was crucial for identifying and reflecting on the dimensions contributing to well-being. Furthermore, employing these techniques prompted reflective discussions on the aspects of young people's lives that either support or impede their opportunities for living well.

[4] As further elaborated in Chapters 3 and 4, the Chilean educational system is divided into three main types of schools: state-subsidised public schools, which offer tuition-free education; state-subsidised private schools, receiving partial subsidies from the government with the remaining costs covered by families; and non-subsidised private schools, which do not receive any financial support from the state, requiring families to pay tuition fees.

Lastly, this research contributes to the debate about the different roles that young people have within the research process beyond the data construction stage, providing a methodological framework to include young people in early stages of data analysis and in disseminating results. In this context, the use of Lego emerged as a valuable technique for the co-researchers to analyse and synthesise their conceptualisations of well-being, allowing them to represent the critical dimensions that influence their quality of life through a ludic and tangible process. As further elaborated in Chapter 4, this activity was critical for the data analysis and identifying the valued list of capabilities. Furthermore, the co-researchers actively participated in deciding the organisation and presentation of the themes in the report presented to the schools that participated in the study. This stage was critical for verifying with the young participants whether the lead researcher's interpretations of the data accurately reflected their voices and perceptions regarding the meanings of well-being.

1.1.3 Empirical level

Empirically, the research contributes to the scarce qualitative literature concerning young people's well-being in Chile, recognising their voices as a fundamental input to produce knowledge concerning their well-being. In this context, the study identified security, life project, community, and recognition, as the key capabilities co-constructed with the participants as the fundamental dimensions that shape their quality of life. Hence, this thesis defines well-being as a young Chilean's possibility to live securely, develop a valued life project, build supported communities, and be recognised by others, particularly adults.

The capability of *security* entails living in tranquillity and calmness, encompassing safety, good health and comfort. The capability of *life project* involves the freedom to pursue a chosen life project, including the critical roles of education and employment aspirations. The capability of *community* refers to young people's freedom to build supportive relationships, particularly with friends, family and pets. Lastly, the capability of *recognition* entails young people's possibility to be recognised and valued by others. Within this discussion, young people's possibility of being heard by adults is fundamental to receiving support based on their needs and not an adult's perception of what support should be. These empirical findings can serve as the theoretical foundation for developing inclusive child-derived instruments to further theorise and potentially measure young people's well-being, overcoming the current adult-centred dominance of this debate in the country.

Furthermore, the study reveals novel findings concerning the influence of socioeconomic status (SES) and social constructions of childhood (SCC) —as key conversion factors— in young people's opportunities to live well. In this context, the thesis shows the direct

influence of SES on young Chileans' security and life project capabilities, where the influence of their neighbourhoods and schools becomes critical in shaping these capabilities. Moreover, this research's findings show how SCC constrain young Chileans' capabilities of community and recognition, problematising the limitations around agency and participation that young people face due to their status as children in Chilean society. Within this discussion, the analysis reveals that the relationship between recognition, well-being opportunities and participation are closely tied to a matter of social justice, expanding current understandings of young people's quality of life in Chile and making visible some of the structural constraints surrounding young Chileans' well-being.

1.2 Research questions

This PhD seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What dimensions of well-being can be identified among Chilean young people living in diverse conditions?
2. How do socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood, as social conversion factors, influence young Chileans' well-being opportunities?
3. How and to what extent does adopting a participatory research approach problematise current theoretical constructs and policy rhetoric regarding young people's well-being in Chile?

1.3 Dissertation structure

This thesis is structured into eight chapters.

Chapter 2 critically reviews existing theoretical approaches to children and young people's well-being, emphasising its study in Chile. In this context, the chapter categorises the study of well-being into four approaches: objective or standard of living, capabilities, rights-based, and self-reported. Within this discussion, the chapter argues that well-being is conceptualised from a rights perspective at an institutional-policy level, closely following the UNCRC principles. Furthermore, the review reveals that self-reported approaches, also known as subjective approaches, are highly prevalent in the country. In this context, quantitative measures based on the ISCWeb dominate the discussion about the topic. Overall, the chapter identifies a lack of participation of young Chileans in constructing the definitions of well-being, which are predominantly adult-dominated and based on Global North theorisations. Within this discussion, the review reflects a lack of qualitative studies exploring young Chileans' perceptions concerning their quality of life.

Chapter 3 introduces and describes the capabilities-participatory framework as an alternative theoretical-methodological framework to conceptualise and theorise young people's well-being in Chile. This chapter delves deeply into outlining this study's theoretical foundations, emphasising the theoretical value of conceptualising young Chileans' well-being from a capability perspective in combination with a childhood studies framework. In this context, the chapter discusses the main concepts concerning the capability literature involved in this study, distinguishing between capabilities, functionings, conversion factors, and inputs for theoretical clarity. Additionally, the chapter discusses in depth the concepts of agency and participation within the social studies of childhood.

In this context, the chapter argues that by adopting that dual theoretical lens, the capabilities-participatory framework recognises children and young people as social actors, where participation is not only a right but a fundamental exercise inherent to their condition of being social agents in the present. Moreover, such an approach allows an exploration of young people's well-being by focusing on their freedom of choice among different valued opportunities rather than exclusively adopting a monetary-based construct. Lastly, it proposed that by adopting the notion of conversion factors, it is possible to explore the constraints young people face concerning their power of decision when transforming their inputs available into valued opportunities.

Within this discussion, this chapter introduces socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood as fundamental conversion factors to guide the analysis and explore young people's barriers concerning decision-making power over their opportunities for well-being. In the case of SES, the chapter introduces the concept of segregation as an analytical tool to explore such a relationship and identify how socioeconomic inequality affects young Chileans' capabilities and well-being opportunities. On the other hand, within SCC, the chapter argued the importance of the socially constructed concept of the child, heavily influenced by the UNCRC. In this context, the construction of young people as immature and incapable individuals becomes critical. Furthermore, the interpretation of young Chileans' well-being by the PNNA, emphasising protection over participation, emerges as a fundamental barrier limiting young people's agency and participation concerning their quality of life.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological foundations of this study. It delves into the foundational ontological, epistemological, and ethical considerations that underpin this methodological choice. In this context, the chapter describes the participatory inquiry as the main methodological approach to pursue this study's aims. This research paradigm emphasises the co-construction of knowledge through interaction and collaboration. Therefore, it challenges power dynamics within the research process concerning the hierarchical relationship between adults and children.

Furthermore, the chapter provides an overview of the research design, the methods utilised for data construction, and the analytical strategy employed throughout the study. In this context, the chapter discusses the rationale behind opting for a qualitative-participatory approach to conceptualise well-being, which facilitates young people's subjectivities as critical inputs for knowledge production. Furthermore, the chapter describes in detail the different techniques and activities developed with the co-researchers, as well as the approach to analysing the data, which was predominantly based on the framework approach. In this context, this process was critical to identifying young Chileans' dimensions of well-being, which were then expressed through a list of capabilities.

Chapter 5 introduces *security, life project, community and recognition* as the critical capabilities identified during the study's data construction stage, which reflects young Chileans' conceptualisation of well-being. In this context, the chapter describes the capability of *security* as young people's possibility to live in tranquillity and calmness. This capability is closely tied to physical safety in their neighbourhoods and entails young people's possibilities of being physically and mentally healthy. Furthermore, it also involves young people's possibilities of living comfortably, which links to young people's possibilities to satisfy their basic needs. The capability of *life project* refers to young people's possibilities to pursue their career aspirations. In this context, the participants reflected upon the importance of developing a project based on their aspirations and expectations, not just any project. Within this discussion, education's role at the school and university level became critical aspects of this capability.

The capability of *community* involves young Chileans' possibilities to build intimate relationships with others based on care and support. Within this capability, friends, family and pets emerged as fundamental members of young people's communities. Furthermore, the possibility to choose the members of their communities arose as a critical dimension of this capability. Finally, the capability of *recognition* refers to young people's possibility to have their voices recognised and heard by adults. In this context, the opportunity for young people to be heard emerges as a crucial dimension and prerequisite for receiving support based on their needs rather than based on an adult's interpretation of what they need.

Chapter 6 analyses the role of SES as a critical conversion factor influencing young people's capabilities of security and developing their valued life projects. It examines how socioeconomic inequalities and segregation influence various aspects of young people's lives, including their safety, education, employment prospects, and healthcare access. The chapter concludes that due to structural inequalities, residential, educational and health segregation derive in young people from low SES facing greater constraints in their possibilities to live securely and to develop their valued life projects.

Specifically, the chapter analysed the impact of neighbourhood environments on safety, revealing that young people's sense of safety is more relevant to their well-being than exposure to danger. Interestingly, among high SES students, a subjective sense of danger was prominent, with concerns about potential dog attacks or robberies negatively impacting their feeling of safety. Conversely, low SES students, especially those in urban areas, did not express feeling unsafe despite acknowledging unfavourable situations they encounter daily with their neighbours. This finding suggests that the sense of safety among young Chileans could be socially constructed, influenced more by SES than by objective crime rates.

The chapter also surfaces the role of healthcare disparities within the Chilean system as critical in limiting young people's well-being. In this context, the participants illustrated the financial hardships faced by their families when illness strikes, citing the exorbitant cost of healthcare and the resultant loss of household income due to missed work opportunities. This discussion unveiled the concept of financial stress as a novel aspect in Chilean well-being literature, warranting further exploration in future studies. Interestingly, the analysis shows that both low and high-SES students experience financial stress, albeit with nuanced differences. While the former emphasised the need for money to fulfil basic needs and thrive, including healthcare and medications, the latter expressed pressure to maintain a particular lifestyle and social status through earning sufficient income.

Within this discussion, the chapter highlighted uncertainty as another significant source of stress impacting young Chileans' well-being, stemming from the instability brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, disruptions in learning routines and social interactions with peers adversely affected their overall sense of well-being. This finding further emphasises the significant impact of health inequalities on low SES students' well-being opportunities due to the limitations they face in accessing proper treatment.

Lastly, this chapter argued that the Chilean educational system perpetuates segregation and inequalities, impeding young people from low SES from developing their valued life projects. Contributing to this constraint is that the public educational system prioritises academic performance over fostering peer-social relationships. The analysis showed that high-SES individuals utilise school to establish social connections, while low-SES individuals prioritise academic performance to access more resources and potential scholarships or university admission. Consequently, young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds encounter numerous structural constraints that impede the free realisation of their valued life projects. In contrast, students from high socioeconomic backgrounds face fewer barriers in pursuing their career aspirations, as the labour market favours social networks over merit and academic achievement.

Chapter 7 examines the influence of SCC in young Chilean's quality of life by analysing the relationship between Chilean constructions of childhood, particularly concerning agency and participation, and young people's capabilities of community and recognition. In this context, the chapter highlights the significance of young people's agency in choosing their communities, particularly concerning friendships and developing relationships with domestic animals. The analysis underscores that adults heavily influence the decision-making power of young Chileans regarding their community-building opportunities.

In this context, the analysis reveals that the capability of recognition emerged as fundamental for young people's well-being since their possibility of being recognised by adults is critical to receiving the support they need based on their life experiences and not on adults' perceptions of what well-being entails. Within this discussion, the chapter identifies three critical barriers that constrain young people's possibilities to be recognised and participate in the decisions that affect them. First, the misrecognition of young Chileans as rights bearers arose as a fundamental limitation. In this context, the discussion revealed that the ambiguous conceptualisation of children's rights in Chile, which are not recognised at a constitutional level, is critical in limiting their possibilities to exercise their rights of participation. Second, the misrecognition of childhood as a social structure beyond age constrains the equitable distribution of voice and young people's inclusion in society. Therefore, challenging paternalistic and age-based SCC is fundamental to transforming societal attitudes toward youth and creating safe spaces for their contributions to discussions of well-being. Third, aligned with the previous point, the analysis reveals that overlooking childhood as a social structure fails to recognise socioeconomic inequalities as critical factors further constraining young Chileans' participation. Hence, the chapter argues that discussions about young people's well-being and their political participation must be sensitive to the structural inequalities existing in the country.

The chapter concludes that in discussing the limitations young Chileans face in their well-being participation spaces, it is crucial to recognise SCC and SES as interconnected factors shaping these spaces. The chapter argues that recognition entails not only acknowledging young Chileans' agency and their right to participate but also understanding childhood as a social construct. Such recognition offers a theoretical framework to examine how socioeconomic inequalities, particularly segregation, impact young people's well-being opportunities and their ability to influence decision-making processes.

Chapter 8 concludes by summarising the study conducted and its main findings. It finishes by discussing some fundamental limitations of this research and suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the existing theoretical approaches to children and young people's well-being in the literature. As established in Chapter 1, the concept of well-being in this thesis refers to "the quality of people's lives" (Rees et al., 2010, p. 2). Additionally, well-being encompasses objective and subjective measures of individuals' living conditions, shaping the construct of quality of life (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). Thus, well-being includes objective indicators such as economic progress, development, poverty rates, access to education, and other socioeconomic characteristics (Casas, 2011; Casas and Frønes, 2020) and is also constituted by subjective indicators reflecting individual subjective experiences (Diener, 2009).

In this context, the chapter categorises the conceptualisation of well-being into four main approaches: objective or standard of living, capabilities, rights-based, and self-reported or subjective approaches. The critical revision of these approaches is rooted in Lister's (2004) guiding framework, emphasising the importance of clearly distinguishing concepts, definitions, and measures for clear theorisation and reliable indicator development[1]. Each of these four main approaches is explored in the context of young people's well-being, focusing on Chile as a case study.

This chapter highlights that the unclear conceptualisations of childhood and well-being in the Chilean literature directly influence the comprehension of this phenomenon, ultimately constraining young people's possibilities to live well according to their expectations. In this context, the chapter problematises the limited recognition of young people's voices and agency in developing definitions and measures, representing a critical omission in the existing research. Moreover, this chapter identifies another overlooked aspect of well-being conceptualisations: the domination of the global north. A Eurocentric vision often permeates well-being understandings in Chile, undermining Chileans' intellectual freedom. In light of this, the chapter draws inspiration from authors such as

[1] It is noteworthy to mention that Lister developed this conceptual framework within the context of poverty. Consequently, in line with Lister's work, concepts operate at a broad level, encompassing meanings and discourses intricately linked to the socio-cultural-historical context of a particular society. In contrast, definitions offer more precise statements and facilitate the differentiation between living well and not living well. Finally, measures assist in identifying individuals who are living well within a given society. According to the author, an unclear conceptualisation may lead to incorrect definitions, consequently yielding inaccurate measures.

Nieuwenhuys (2013) and Quijano (1992; 2000)[2] to argue for context-specific understandings of well-being, where the voices of young Chileans become crucial inputs.

In this context, the chapter argues that moving forward to a theorisation of well-being from a multidimensional and rights perspective is critical, as it allows emphasis on young people's participation rights in the conceptualisation of child poverty and their well-being (Bessell, 2021), and in their possibilities to influence the decisions that affect them. In this context, such an approach recognises young people's agency as fundamental in constructing what well-being means and the dimensions of their lives that are affected by it.

The chapter comprises four sections. Section 2.1 explores the relevance of young people's lived experiences in conceptualising well-being, drawing on participation, citizenship, and agency concepts. Recognising young people's perceptions of their well-being holds academic and political significance since they can inform policy-making processes and promote civic engagement. Therefore, it empowers young individuals to become active social actors in their communities.

Section 2.2 acknowledges the multi-layered nature of well-being and discusses the fundamental relationship between child poverty, inequality, and well-being. Distinguishing child poverty from general poverty is crucial for gaining insights into its impact on children's lives and devising effective strategies to improve their well-being and future prospects.

Section 2.3 delves into the four categories for conceptualising young people's well-being: objective or standard of living, capabilities, rights-based, and self-reported or subjective approaches. Subsection 2.3.1 emphasises the limitations of monetary approaches in capturing children's lived experiences, advocating for multidimensional approaches to better comprehend their living conditions. Subsection 2.3.2 explores capability approaches, highlighting the significance of agency and freedom of choice in conceptualising young people's well-being. Subsection 2.3.3 examines the contributions of rights-based approaches, emphasising children's status as rights holders and the importance of participation as a fundamental right, which intersects with any approach recognising young people's voices as critical inputs. Subsection 2.3.4 delves into self-reported or subjective approaches, acknowledging the relevance of including individuals' assessments of their own lives.

[2] Quijano argues that colonialism did not cease with formal independence from colonial powers but rather evolved into a new form of domination. This persistent system, which he terms "coloniality", extends beyond political and economic structures to profoundly shape social relations, cultural practices, and knowledge production.

Finally, the concluding section summarises the key points discussed throughout the chapter, providing a comprehensive overview of the well-being conceptualisations and their implications for young people in Chile.

2.1 Young people as experts in their lives

As argued in Chapter 1, this research project is deeply influenced by the Social Studies of Childhood, often referred to as the Childhood Studies paradigm, which posits that children and young people are active agents within the social world (James and Prout, 1997; Prout, 2005). This paradigm represents a departure from earlier sociological perspectives that predominantly perceived children as extensions of the family (Prout, 2011). Consequently, this shift in perspective has also transformed the approach of social scientists, who now recognise children as social subjects rather than mere objects of research (James and James, 2012).

Thus, recognising young people's agency and subjectivities becomes paramount when adopting a Childhood Studies paradigm. Moreover, facilitating active participation in the research process to explore young people's lived experiences becomes a fundamental aspect of this theoretical standpoint (Ben-Arieh, 2008). Therefore, when adopting a Childhood Studies approach to explore the conceptualisations of children's well-being in the literature, it is essential to clarify the concepts of participation, rights, citizenship, agency, and power of influence. These clarifications serve to inform and enrich the ensuing discussion.

2.1.1 Participation, rights and citizenship

Young people's participation is a disputed concept in the literature. It is a critical concept for this research as it encompasses various aspects of young people's lives, including political, economic, institutional, academic, and private settings (Wyness, 2018b). From a sociology of childhood standpoint, according to Thomas (2007, p. 199), young people's participation involves "taking part in an activity" which includes a social aspect by recognising them in the social world as agents, and a political element, which provides young people with the space to challenge and change political discourses. In this context, Hart's ladder of participation (1992) offers a highly influential perspective for conceptualising young people's participation, illustrating different degrees of involvement, ranging from tokenism, characterised by symbolic participation and manipulation, to citizenship, where young people exert influence and share decision-making with adults.

However, achieving the highest level of participation remains a challenge, partly because adults often shape young people's participation space. According to Wyness (2018b), a dominant narrative in this field focuses on participatory practices initiated and framed by adults in institutional terms, often guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which emphasises providing for and protecting children while allowing limited adult-regulated spaces for participation.

Thus, participation is commonly addressed in the literature from a rights perspective. From this standing point, young people's participation is closely associated with Article 12 of the UNCRC, which stipulates that "every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously" (UNICEF, 1989). This right holds great significance for the rights of children and young people as it recognises their belonging to the community and acknowledges them as social agents capable of influencing their own lives (Archard, 2015).

Furthermore, as Baraldi and Iervese (2014) noted, when participatory practices are implemented, there is a potential power transfer to children. Therefore, involving young people in decision-making and actively considering their views and opinions can lead to a significant shift in power dynamics between adults and young people. In this regard, as explored further in Section 2.1.2., young people's power of influence emerges as a vital aspect of their participation rights, aligning closely with the notion of agency.

Nevertheless, the concept of participation from a rights perspective faces tensions in the literature. Lundy (2007) argues that barriers arise when putting into practice young people's right to participation, where the role of adults and their involvement is fundamental.[3] Therefore, children's ability to exercise their right to be heard and participate depends mainly on adults. Furthermore, while Article 12 is a critical right, it fails to fully recognise young people's citizenship, as adults still hold the power to determine the relevance of young people's opinions based on their age and maturity (Tisdall, 2015b).

Hence, problematising young people's citizenship becomes crucial in this discussion. Cabrera et al. (2005) state that citizenship encompasses two primary dimensions: *legal status,* recognising individuals as rights holders with corresponding responsibilities, and *effective participation*, involving a sense of community belonging and the ability to engage in matters that affect them. However, as highlighted by Lister (2007), for young people to fully participate as citizens in their communities, they must first be acknowledged and recognised as members of those communities. As argued in further detail in Chapter 3, adult constructions of children's and young people's capacities often hinder this recognition. Consequently, young people's participation in the community is

[3] See Lundy (2007) for a full description of the barriers linked to children's right of participation.

defined and constrained by adults' assumptions about what children can or cannot do (James, 2011).

Hence, participation emerges as a multifaceted concept, where acknowledging its relational attribute becomes fundamental (Wyness, 2018b). In this context, understanding the generational power dynamics is essential for this study, as the power imbalance between adults' and children's voices plays a significant role in conceptualising well-being. Therefore, thoroughly exploring young people's participation in the conceptualisation of well-being becomes critical for this thesis. Additionally, examining young people's agency and power of decision as crucial attributes encompassing active participation further enriches the understanding of this complex phenomenon.

2.1.2 Young people's agency and power of decision

When exploring the discourse regarding children's status in society and research, the concept of agency emerges as a pivotal point of discussion. Nevertheless, it remains a subject of dispute within the literature. According to Abebe (2019), agency is not universally experienced but dynamic, context-specific, and situational. In this context, the author suggests that agency is subject to negotiation and variability across various contexts, interactions, and influencing factors such as maturity, gender, geography, and livelihood circumstances. Moreover, children's agency is intricately connected to intergenerational relationships and the broader social structures that shape their lives. Thus, comprehending the intricate interplay between individual agency and the larger social fabric requires a nuanced examination of this concept.

As a result, this dissertation adopts a *relational* concept of agency, understanding it as a process through which individuals actively engage with others in their social world to "endorse, change, or challenge" their surroundings (Wyness, 2018a, p. 133). Consequently, young people's agency is significantly influenced by the social context in which they exist. Raithelhuber (2016) further contends that agency is reliant on and may only exist in relations. In other words, while individuals can make choices in isolation, the concept of agency becomes sociologically meaningful when it is contextualised within how social structures and relationships both enable and limit, respond to, and are interconnected with the choices made by others.

In light of understanding agency as a relational concept, young people's agency and power of decision are limited by the authority of the adults responsible for their care, leading to a subordinate social status compared to their adult caretakers. Consequently, children's agency is confined to the extent those responsible for their well-being allow.

As discussed more extensively later in this chapter and in Chapter 3, this notion of agency holds critical importance when examining the conceptualisations of well-being,

especially in the context of child poverty. The allocation of control over resources within a household becomes a pivotal aspect of these conceptualisations (e.g., Main, 2019a), amplifying the relevance of understanding and examining young people's agency in such contexts.

2.2 Exploring the links between child poverty and well-being

Diverse conceptualisations of young people's well-being can be found in the literature. This thesis suggests that these conceptualisations can be grouped into four main categories: objective or standard of living, capability-based, rights-based, and subjective or self-reported well-being. Each approach has its proper definitions and indicators, interconnected with the concepts of child poverty and socioeconomic inequality. Therefore, before delving into a detailed discussion of each well-being category, it is essential to establish how child poverty is conceptualised in this study and how it links to inequality and well-being. This discussion serves as the theoretical groundwork for the subsequent analysis and exploration of the different well-being perspectives.

As previously indicated, this thesis broadly defines well-being as "the quality of people's lives" (Rees et al., 2010, p. 2). Ben-Arieh (2008) points out that scholars' interest in people's quality of life can be traced back to the social indicators movement, which emphasises the importance of social indicators in understanding and assessing well-being (see also Andrews and Withey, 2012). However, the debate surrounding the selection of indicators that best reflect people's well-being has been a topic of ongoing discussion in the literature.

In this context, the notion of quality of life includes specific objective indicators of positive change, such as economic progress and development, which include measures like poverty rates and access to education (Casas, 2011; Casas and Frønes, 2020). Additionally, it is comprised of subjective indicators that vary based on people's subjective experiences (Diener, 2009). Thus, as highlighted by Ben-Arieh et al. (2014, p. 1), the concept of well-being embraces "subjective feelings and experiences as well as to living conditions". As a result, individuals' perceptions of their own well-being can be influenced by their living conditions.

As Casas and Frønes (2020) pointed out, by considering objective and subjective aspects of well-being, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing young people's quality of life. Therefore, the following subsections provide an overview of how children and young people's living conditions are discussed in the literature, highlighting the notion of child poverty and its relation to well-being in the academic debate.

2.2.1 The study of child poverty

The concept, definition and measurement of child poverty is an ongoing debate in the literature (see Bessell, 2021). However, for this thesis's purposes, child poverty will be understood as "the poverty experienced by children and young people […] and differs from adult poverty in that it has different causes and effects, and the impact of poverty during childhood has permanent effects on children" (Minujin et al., 2006, p. 3).

While the causes of poverty remain a subject of ongoing debate among scholars (see see Brady, 2019), there is consensus on its detrimental effects on young people across various aspects of their lives, both in the present and the future. These consequences range from material deprivation to health issues, limited access to education, and social exclusion (e.g., Ridge, 2002; Adamson et al., 2007; Wickham et al., 2016). Moreover, poverty has long-term implications, impacting young people's ability to access the labour market (Lesner, 2018), and hindering their human flourishing and overall well-being (Bessell, 2021). Furthermore, the literature widely agrees that childhood poverty perpetuates intergenerational poverty patterns (e.g., Wagmiller and Adelman, 2009; McEwen and McEwen, 2017).

In this context, the effects of child poverty are extensively documented, and it has become a matter of public concern worldwide (e.g., UNICEF, 2007b; CEPAL and UNICEF, 2010; WHO, 2020). However, the theoretical understanding of child poverty remains a topic of contested debate in the literature. Scholars have increasingly shown interest in examining child poverty as a distinct phenomenon separate from general poverty, and this focus has gained momentum over the past few decades (Minujin et al., 2006; Minujin and Nandy, 2012).

Defining and measuring child poverty

The promulgation of the UNCRC in 1989 (UNICEF, 1989) has significantly elevated the discussion on young people's living standards and quality of life in the public debate. In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (UN, 2006) further advanced the discourse on child poverty by adopting a specific definition, recognising that:

> "children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care services, shelter, education, participation and protection, and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential and to participate as full members of society" (UN, 2006, para 46).

These two milestones have significantly influenced the growing body of literature on child poverty and well-being, especially from a rights-based perspective (e.g., Gordon et

al., 2003; Redmond, 2008; Bessell, 2021)[4]. In addition, these achievements have sparked a commitment to protect and promote children's rights and improve their living conditions in various academic disciplines and public and private organisations.

Starting from the UN's definition of child poverty, the literature reveals that child poverty is commonly examined through two distinct approaches: unidimensional and multidimensional (Gordon and Nandy, 2012). Unidimensional approaches typically focus on monetary definitions of poverty, using income or expenditure measures, while multidimensional approaches encompass broader dimensions to investigate the complex nature of poverty (Roelen et al., 2012). In this context, the role of resources as the unit of measurement (Roelen and Gassmann, 2008) and a discussion towards control over them takes a critical place (Main, 2019a). As a result, these two approaches provide different perspectives and data on child poverty. Additionally, different conceptualisations of children's agency emerge within these approaches, which warrant further exploration and analysis.

Monetary child poverty

Monetary-income approaches to defining and measuring child poverty are extensively prevalent in the literature (Minujin et al., 2006; Bessell, 2021). These approaches utilise household income measures as the primary means of identifying children living in poverty. Notably, in the Global South, a well-known measure is the World Bank's dollar-a-day measure, which uses a child's household monetary resources to establish the poverty line (Ravallion et al., 2008).

However, there is a consensus in the literature that the monetary approach does not fully capture the experiences of young people living in poverty (Pemberton et al., 2012). Moreover, solely focusing on the financial aspect of poverty has limitations in understanding the causes and consequences of children's experiences, as children themselves have limited control over their family's income, making these measures insufficient in capturing their life experiences (Main and Bradshaw, 2012). To gain a more comprehensive understanding, Roelen (2014) emphasises the importance of adopting multidimensional and intersectional approaches. According to the author, these approaches consider factors beyond household income, including age, gender, and place of residence (rural-urban), to explore how children's living conditions intersect with broader domains.

Therefore, by considering multiple dimensions, researchers can better grasp the complexities of child poverty and its impact on different aspects of young people's lives.

[4] The specific rights approach to child poverty and well-being is discussed further throughout this chapter, mainly in Section 2.3.3.

As discussed in different sections of this chapter, the relationship between household income and young people's well-being is complex and demands a nuanced analysis to comprehend its impact (Main, 2019a).

Furthermore, the monetary approach restricts children's agency concerning their living conditions to the opportunities afforded by their parents or caregivers to earn income and fulfil basic needs. As a result, their ability to influence their quality of life and transform their living conditions is limited to the confines of household income.

Multidimensional child poverty

In recent years, an increasing body of literature has come to a consensus that child poverty is a multidimensional concept, recognising the significant role of household income but emphasising that relying solely on this does not fully capture the complexities of children's experiences in poverty (e.g., Roelen and Gassmann, 2008; Main and Bradshaw, 2012; Abdu and Delamonica, 2018; Kim, 2019). While monetary and multidimensional poverty are interconnected, they represent distinct constructs and may sometimes contradict each other, resulting in mismatches between the two (Roelen, 2017a). Consequently, to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of child poverty, it is essential to acknowledge the socioeconomic context in which children live (CEPAL and UNICEF, 2010). Thus, child poverty can be better comprehended through a multidimensional perspective considering various dimensions beyond monetary measures.

When adopting a multidimensional perspective, Main (2019a) emphasises that the central attribute common to multidimensional approaches is the discussion of choice and control over resources. Within this context, the author identifies three dominant approaches to defining and measuring child poverty from a multidimensional perspective. First, the *relative deprivation approach*, influenced by Townsend (1979), defines poverty as a lack of resources that hinders individuals from participating fully in society. Secondly, the *capabilities approaches,* influenced by Sen (1999) and further developed by authors such as Nussbaum (2011) and Alkire and Foster (2011), posits that poverty outcomes stem from a lack of capabilities or freedoms, preventing individuals from living a life they have reason to value. Lastly, the author identified the *rights-based approaches,* which are not based on a specific theory of poverty, but where poverty is defined as the failure to realise children's rights (e.g., Redmond, 2008; Pemberton et al., 2012; Bessell, 2021).

In this context, the theorisation of child poverty from a multidimensional and rights perspective is critically relevant for this thesis, as it allows emphasis of young people's participation rights in the conceptualisation of child poverty (Bessell, 2021) and in their possibilities to influence the decisions that affect them. Consequently, this approach recognises young people's agency as fundamental in constructing what child poverty means and the dimensions of their lives that are affected by it.

Furthermore, adopting a multidimensional approach to child poverty allows moving beyond the monetary dependency that can constrain young people's agency and limit their potential to transform their lives. In this context, a multidimensional perspective focuses on the opportunities that arise from available resources and their impact on their well-being rather than solely on the resources themselves (Ziegler, 2010; Yousefzadeh et al., 2019). This point is further discussed in Chapter 4.

2.2.2 Child poverty in Chile

Despite the growing literature about child poverty worldwide, in Latin America it is still an under-theorised concept (Espíndola et al., 2017). After reviewing the available literature, two dominant positions for theorising child poverty in the region can be found. One is monetary and promoted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (see CEPAL, 2020), and involves an income-based measure.[5] The other is multidimensional and is promoted by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (Espíndola et al., 2017).

In Chile, poverty is measured through the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica (Socioeconomic Characterization Survey) (CASEN) (see MDS, 2017; MDSF, 2021; 2023c), which is based on a monetary approach, and since 2015, it includes a multidimensional one. Moreover, this survey includes the concept of child poverty, which is further explored in the following subsection.

Within the monetary approach, CASEN adopts a household income poverty definition following the framework provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in which its methodology for measuring poverty and extreme poverty is based on income inadequacy. It involves comparing a household income to two thresholds: the poverty line and the extreme poverty line. These thresholds represent the minimum income required to satisfy a set of basic needs (basket of goods) (CEPAL, 2022).[6] Therefore, the basket of goods is the fundamental unit of measure to calculate the poverty line. Moreover, since 2015, the CASEN survey also includes a multidimensional approach to poverty, and its methodology is rooted in the Alkire-Foster Method (Alkire

[5] In this context, the World Bank dollar-a-day poverty line and the basket of goods used in several Latin American countries are two widely known approaches.

[6] The basket of goods is calculated on a diet of 2,000 per day per person and it is updated on a monthly basis since 2012. By June 2023, the basket goods had a worth of $63,768 Chilean pesos (£59.79 approx.), the line of poverty reached $219,549 Chilean pesos (£205.84 approx.) and line of extreme poverty $146,366 Chilean pesos (£137.23 approx.). For more details see MDSF (2023b).

and Foster, 2011). It includes the dimensions of education, health, employment and social security, housing and environment, and networks and social cohesion (MDS, 2016).[7]

Finding the child in CASEN

According to the latest CASEN results, in 2022, 7.3% of Chilean children and young people (0 to 17 years old) lived below the poverty line, with 3.2% facing extreme poverty (MDSF, 2023c). Moreover, 18.4% experienced multidimensional poverty (MDSF, 2023b). As argued by Roelen (2018), this mismatch between the two data sets poses a problem as it demonstrates that monetary and multidimensional approaches to poverty capture different aspects and portray distinct realities for young people and their families. This lack of understanding of how different indicators reflect the experience of poverty fails to identify the population living in deprivation, leading to misguided policymaking (Roelen, 2017a).

In this context, while CASEN includes a measure of child poverty in their reports, its definition is rooted in a monetary approach, through household income as the unit of measure, and no child poverty-specific approaches are included (OCEC-UDP, 2021). Therefore, the current approach to child poverty in Chile reflects an incomplete picture of the problem and does not reflect young people's life experiences. This deficient definition and measurement directly impact young people's quality of life and constrains their possibilities to improve their living standards. Furthermore, it constrains policymakers' capacity to formulate precise and tailored policies that promote the well-being of young people.

Additionally, a solely household income-based definition and measure of child poverty fail to recognise young Chileans as social agents by acknowledging it as an extension of the family and not as a structure on their own (see Qvortrup, 2009). Additionally, it fails to recognise young people's participation rights since child poverty results are based on adults' responses, limiting their participation and right to influence in their lives.

Consequently, young Chileans' agency concerning their living conditions is constrained by the opportunities provided by their parents or caregivers to earn income and meet basic needs. Moreover, young people's experience of poverty is confined to their parents' perceptions of their life circumstances. Hence, there is a pressing need to develop a child-derived approach to theorising and measuring child poverty in Chile. This approach will lead to a more profound comprehension of its impact on young people's living conditions and facilitate the development of effective policies. However, re-conceptualising child poverty requires recognising young people as social agents and rights holders. In this

[7] All dimensions have the same weight of 22.5% for the calculation of multidimensional poverty, except networks and social cohesion that has 10%. A household is considered to living in poverty if it presents 22.5% or more deprivations.

regard, validating their voices and subjectivities becomes a necessary step in informing theoretical frameworks and stimulating public debate. This discussion is elaborated further in Chapter 4.

2.2.3 The role of socioeconomic inequality in young people's well-being

Within the discussion about poverty and well-being, the significance of socioeconomic inequality becomes pivotal, particularly in Chile, which, as further elaborated in Chapter 3, is characterised by high levels of inequality. Existing literature highlights the interconnectedness of inequality, child poverty, and well-being, each impacting the others (e.g., Main et al., 2019; Casas and Frønes, 2020). However, the precise influence of inequality on young people's subjective experiences remains relatively unexplored in the current literature. Furthermore, while these concepts are interrelated, it is imperative to establish clear definitions and distinctions for a more nuanced understanding (Alcock, 1997; Lister, 2004).

In a broad sense, inequality is a structural-social problem concerning the distribution of resources and services, significantly impacting individuals' access to essentials like healthcare and education (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). As a result, it leads to "disparities in levels of living" where certain privileged minorities have access to resources that the majority lacks (Ravallion, 2003, p. 740). This notion of disparities in living standards holds particular relevance in Latin American countries, where scholars often point to a "privileged culture" that perpetuates the unequal distribution of resources and wields significant political and economic influence (Bielschowsky et al., 2018). This aspect is further examined in Chapter 3, as it becomes vital to explore the unequal distribution of decision-making power when investigating socioeconomic inequality's impact on young Chileans' well-being.

Inequality is often measured using macroeconomic indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and income measures (Atkinson, 2002; OECD, 2020). However, it is crucial to note that a country's GDP increase does not necessarily equate to improving people's quality of life (Layard, 2011). Moreover, as previously mentioned, income measures alone fail to fully capture young people's well-being and life experiences (Main et al., 2019). Therefore, as proposed by Stiglitz et al. (2009), it becomes imperative to consider other indicators, particularly those related to subjective dimensions of well-being, that can reflect people's subjective life experiences more accurately and provide a better understanding of what is needed to enhance their quality of life.

In the existing literature, there is a limited exploration of the effects of socioeconomic inequality on young people's experiences and subjectivities, moving beyond household income measures. In the context of Chile, such studies are currently non-existent. As

detailed in Section 2.3.4, Main et al. (2019) have proposed a starting point for this research, examining the relationship between inequality, material well-being, and subjective well-being (SWB) in children across various countries (excluding Chile)[8]. Their findings indicate that child-level material deprivation can predict children's SWB; however, this relationship varies across countries. Hence, it becomes essential to consider sociocultural particularities when interpreting these relationships.[9]

Consequently, incorporating children's voices in the theorisation and measurement of child poverty is a fundamental step to exploring further the relationship between the experience of young people living in deprivation, socioeconomic inequality and its impact on their well-being. As argued elsewhere, this thesis does not aim at measuring child poverty in Chile. However, it intends to set a starting point by problematising this country's measures and re-theorising well-being by incorporating young people's subjective experiences as a critical input to conceptualise their quality of life and identify the different dimensions that include their perception of a good life.

In light of the discussion in this section, the construction of child-derived approaches becomes essential for the development and selection of robust indicators that accurately reflect young people's living conditions, enhance social protection, and ultimately improve young people's quality of life (Roelen et al., 2009; Main and Bradshaw, 2012; Roelen, 2017b). Adopting such an approach can provide deeper insights into the life experiences of young individuals impacted by poverty and its intricate relationship with socioeconomic inequality and overall well-being.

2.3 Conceptualising young people's well-being

After providing the theoretical roots of child poverty and its close relationship to socioeconomic inequality and the notion of quality of life, this section delves into a revision of the conceptualisations of young people's well-being available in the literature. Scholars widely acknowledge that the World Health Organization (WHO) constitution of 1948 played a significant role in shaping the understanding of children's well-being. Its definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1995, p. 1) marked a pivotal shift from the traditional illness-based approach. As highlighted by Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), this new approach enabled a broader conceptualisation of well-being, extending

[8] The countries involved in this study were Norway, South Korea, Poland, England, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Spain, Romania, South Africa, Turkey, Colombia, Algeria, Nepal and Ethiopia

[9] Furthermore, the authors raise concerns about the development of material deprivation indexes, suggesting that these should be constructed based on children's specific material needs within their sociocultural contexts.

beyond the scope of health practitioners and researchers and encompassing positive well-being attributes.

Furthermore, the WHO's foundational document acknowledges the critical role of child development and emphasises the need to consider the context in which this development occurs. This recognition set a precedent and departed from the normative conceptualisations of children's well-being and health that had prevailed for centuries (King and Taylor, 2017). As Raghavan and Alexandrova (2015) pointed out, the shift in perceiving children as social beings rather than merely belonging to families has profoundly impacted society's approach to ensuring their well-being and promoting their care. Furthermore, it increased the interest of scholars and policymakers in measuring and developing indicators that reflected young people's quality of life.

Nonetheless, despite the proliferation of measurement instruments encompassing diverse domains, there has been comparatively less focus on the conceptualisation of young people's well-being. In this regard, Ben-Arieh et al. (2014) assert that any conceptualisation of children's well-being should encompass a wide range of domains that consider a group's socioeconomic, cultural, and historical particularities, with particular emphasis on including minorities.

Within this context, the subsequent subsections delve into the diverse concepts of well-being prevalent in the literature. Consequently, this dissertation categorises these as objective or standard of living, capability, rights-based and self-reported or life satisfaction approaches. It is important to note that these categories are not fixed and confined to single approaches exclusively, as some authors draw on and combine different aspects of each approach to define and measure young people's well-being (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2007; Main, 2014; Main et al., 2019).

2.3.1 Objective or standard of living approaches

According to Easterlin (2000), the concept of standard of living emerged primarily within economics and was closely connected to the notion of utility, where individuals' well-being was determined by their preferences and satisfaction derived from consuming goods and services. Thus, this approach to well-being was initially focused on meeting material needs and external conditions as the foundation for well-being (Fleuret and Atkinson, 2007; Cho and Yu, 2020). As a result, the relationship between material resources and individuals' control over them becomes crucial in this understanding of well-being.

Measuring standard of living

Measuring well-being from a living standards approach often relies on objective indicators such as wealth, income, and GDP (e.g., Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005). Furthermore, GDP is the most common indicator to compare wealth and economic growth among countries, with its measure of well-being primarily centred on material wealth (Bérenger and Verdier-Chouchane, 2007). Therefore, from this perspective, well-being becomes closely related to monetary and material poverty (see Section 2.2.1), where income indicators are the key proxy to measure a nation's well-being.

However, a growing part of the literature started challenging the exclusive reliance on income and wealth-based approaches to measuring well-being, arguing that they are insufficient in capturing people's overall quality of life (Stiglitz et al., 2009; Decancq and Lugo, 2013). Moreover, recent studies have revealed that GDP alone does not comprehensively explain a nation's happiness (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). As a result, multidimensional approaches to conceptualising and measuring well-being have gained traction.

The development of a multidimensional approach to well-being has been spearheaded by a diverse group of researchers, including notable figures such as Sen (1988), Atkinson et al. (2004), and Alkire and Foster (2010). These researchers have questioned the income-based hegemony in the field, incorporating indicators such as health, education, personal activities, political participation, social relationships, environment and security (Chakravarty, 2017).

Measuring children's standard of living

The transition towards a multidimensional perspective of people's standard of living has also significantly influenced the study of children's well-being. As emphasised in Section 2.2, it becomes imperative to move beyond monetary definitions and measures when examining the living conditions of children and young people. Main (2019a) contends that exclusively exploring young people's well-being through a monetary-utilitarian lens is problematic, given the complex relationship between young individuals and money. Consequently, relying on unidimensional measures based solely on income fails to fully capture the particulars of young people's experiences and well-being. Therefore, adopting a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach that considers various aspects of children's lives becomes crucial in order to better understand their well-being.

Nevertheless, while multidimensional approaches to well-being offer a more comprehensive framework for defining and measuring well-being, they have primarily centred around the adult population, overlooking the unique experiences of young people. Consequently, a significant portion of the literature, influenced by the social studies of

childhood paradigm, raised concerns about the applicability of these definitions and indicators to childhood and youth experiences, advocating for including children's perspectives and emphasising their active role in measuring well-being (e.g., Ben-Arieh, 2005; Ben-Arieh and Frønes, 2007). In this context, as Ben-Arieh (2008) highlighted, the emergence of child-centred social indicators has been instrumental in studying well-being. These child indicators consider children's unique perspectives, experiences, and needs and provide a more nuanced and accurate representation of young people's well-being.

As a result of this paradigm shift, there has been a proliferation of multidimensional instruments aimed at measuring children's well-being over the past years. These instruments reflect a significant change in perspective, placing children and young people at the core of the well-being discourse. Moreover, due to the intrinsic connection between child poverty and well-being concepts, many studies on young people's well-being tend to share overlapping indicators (Roelen and Gassmann, 2008). Therefore, these instruments collectively contribute to a more nuanced understanding of children's well-being and play a vital role in shaping policies and interventions to improve their lives.

Some noteworthy studies in the field include the *Index of Child Well-Being* (Adamson et al., 2007; Bradshaw, 2007; Bradshaw and Richardson, 2009) used in the European context, which encompass dimensions related to health, subjective well-being, personal relationships, material resources, education, behaviour and risks, housing and environment. Another one is *The US Child and Youth Well-Being Index*, developed by Land et al. (2001), which also combines objective and subjective measures, including material well-being, health, safety, productive activity, place in the community, intimacy and emotional well-being. However, it is worth noting that these studies primarily rely on adult-reported measures of child poverty.

Recognising this theoretical and epistemological gap, Main and Bradshaw (2012) developed the *Index of Material Deprivation,* which notably involves children as informants in measuring material deprivation and analysing its impact on their well-being. This innovative approach problematises prior conceptualisations of children's deprivation and well-being, heavily relying on adult resources, such as household income. Instead, Main and Bradshaw's work proposes a child-derived measure that emphasises young people's lived experiences, considering them critical contributors to research and policy endeavours. This shift towards involving children as informants represents a meaningful advancement in understanding children's well-being more comprehensively while acknowledging them as social agents.

Young Chileans' standard of living

Despite progress in constructing multidimensional instruments for children's well-being, the Global North remains dominant in this field, with limited theorisation in the majority world. In the Latin American context, conceptualisations of child poverty and well-being still revolve around monetary indicators (Espíndola et al., 2017), lacking child-centric instruments in the literature. This gap highlights the need for more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to understanding children's well-being globally.

In Chile, there has been a historical tendency to conceptualise children's well-being from an adult-centric perspective, rooted in a needs-based approach and viewing children as a part of the family unit (see Larrañaga, 2010). Consequently, when it comes to conceptualising and measuring the well-being of young Chileans using indicators that aim to reflect their standard of living from a multidimensional standpoint, the instruments used are based on responses from adults. An example is the CASEN survey, as discussed in Section 2.2.2.

As a result, there is currently no specific instrument specifically designed to assess young Chileans' standard of living. This lack of child-specific instruments is problematic for three main reasons. Firstly, it fails to accurately reflect the life experiences of young people (see Section 2.2.1). Secondly, it neglects young people's agency and participation rights. Lastly, it overlooks the distinct nature of childhood as a separate social structure from the family unit.

Consequently, this theoretical gap underscores the necessity for child-centric and child-derived approaches to comprehending the well-being of young people and its intricate relation to socioeconomic inequalities and the experience of poverty. Developing specific instruments recognising their perspectives and subjectivities can provide a more comprehensive understanding of young Chileans' well-being while, at the same time, it recognises them as social agents and rights holders. Furthermore, such an approach is essential to ensuring that policies and interventions are accurately targeted and responsive to the unique needs and aspirations of young people in the country.

2.3.2 Capability approaches (CA)

The capability approach (CA), also known as the Human Development approach, is a normative framework for human welfare heavily influenced by Amartya Sen and further developed by Martha Nussbaum, finding relevance in diverse disciplines, such as poverty, economic development, social justice, and human rights. Sen (1988) rejected the dominant conceptualisation of standard of living, claiming that utility approaches based on income and wealth do not reflect an individual's life experiences. Therefore, the CA transcends the limitations of solely considering material resources and needs when

addressing people's quality of life. Hence, it can be categorised as an opportunity-based approach, focusing on people's freedom of choice rather than outcomes (Robeyns, 2000).

From this perspective, well-being is defined as people's freedom to choose among different valuable options and live a life they have reason to value (Sen, 1985; 1999). Thus, freedom of choice becomes a central attribute when theorising about people's quality of life (Nussbaum and Sen, 1993). For these reasons, Sen proposed a shift towards thinking about *functionings* (achievements) and *capabilities* (freedoms), emphasising the opportunities that derive from available resources rather than the resources themselves as ends (Robeyns, 2017).

Following Sen's work (see Sen, 1992; 1999), for this chapter's purposes, *functionings* will be understood as people's achievements, this is, what people can actually be or do, for example, being a university student. On the other hand, a *capability* will be understood as the freedom to achieve or choose something valued, for example, having the choice of being a university student, even when someone may not choose it as a path. In this context, Sen (1992, p. 33) states that resources are people's "means to achievement", which may include income but goes beyond it. Therefore, resources are fundamental commodities to achieve something valuable (functioning). Following the previous example, to be able to study at the university, in addition to financial resources to afford it, individuals may need a particular set of skills and previous knowledge to be a university student, for example, being able to read and write, or scoring an entrance score at an admission test.[10]

Moreover, this framework also refers to *conversion factors* which are key mediators between resources and outcomes, allowing the transformation of capabilities (freedoms) into functionings (achievements) (Robeyns, 2005a). As further discussed in Chapter 3, this conversion process becomes critical when exploring the relationship between resources, socioeconomic inequality and valued outcomes in young people.

Consequently, this approach departs from using economic growth as the sole indicator of well-being and instead recognises the significance of individual agency in shaping people's well-being (Clark, 2005a). It also acknowledges the subjective nature of well-being, understanding that people's options and the lives they value may vary from person to person. However, this subjective component has been raised as a fundamental barrier to operationalising the CA to effectively and practically measure people's well-being.

In this context, the CA has faced criticism in the literature for being perceived as overly individualistic. Critics argue that because the CA focuses on individuals' valued opportunities to be or do certain things, these opportunities may vary widely, reflecting

[10] Sen did not use this specific analogy as an example in his work. However, the capability of being a university student is used in this context to illustrate how the different key concepts interconnect within the capabilities approach.

the diversity of people's values. This diversity makes the operationalisation of the approach challenging (e.g., Srinivasan, 1994; Comim, 2001). Chapter 3 further elaborates on this criticism, arguing that focusing on the conversion process rather than solely on the valued opportunities allows for a discussion around the structural constraints that limit young people from transforming the available inputs into valued outcomes.

Measuring well-being from a capabilities approach

Within the capabilities approach, well-being is evaluated by examining people's functionings (what they can be or do) and capabilities (the freedom to choose those possibilities). However, selecting which capabilities and functionings to assess becomes a subject of significant debate in the literature. As highlighted by Robeyns (2005b), the decision between focusing on capabilities or functionings to measure well-being using the capabilities approach is influenced by the epistemological goals of the project, its methodology, and the role assigned to capabilities and functionings, all of which may vary depending on the nature of the specific project.

In the discussion of measuring capabilities and functionings, two primary approaches emerge. On the one hand, the literature drawing on Sen's approach does not prescribe a specific set of capabilities. The strength of this approach lies in its versatility as an evaluative framework for assessing well-being in various fields, including policy design and discussions about social change in society, whether theoretical or empirical (Robeyns, 2005a). Moreover, proponents of Sen's approach argue that creating a fixed capability list can be arbitrary and might not capture the nuances and complexities of different circumstances. Instead, they emphasise the importance of selecting specific dimensions of capabilities based on the particular phenomenon and context being studied (Robeyns, 2003; 2005b).

On the other hand, Nussbaum's work influences a significant part of the literature, which developed the capabilities approach as a theory of basic human justice, gender equality, and political entitlements (Nussbaum, 2011). Nussbaum embraced the concept of human dignity and argued that for human life to reach its highest potential, it must include specific capabilities (Nussbaum, 2008). Consequently, the author proposed a list of ten central human capabilities[11], deviating from Sen's approach and asserting that pursuing social justice is impractical without identifying the key capabilities a society should strive to achieve (Nussbaum, 2003). As Robeyns (2005b) highlighted, this distinction marks a fundamental difference between the two authors. While Sen primarily proposed a

[11] The capabilities proposed by Nussbaum are: Life; Bodily health; Bodily integrity; Senses, imagination and thought; Emotions; Practical reason; Affiliation; Other species; Play; and Control over one's environment. See Nussbaum (2003) for more details.

framework to assess individuals' quality of life, Nussbaum developed a theory of justice centred around capabilities.

Considering these epistemological differences, the literature presents various studies aiming to assess and operationalise people's quality of life by drawing the CA (see Chiappero-Martinetti and Roche, 2009). One worldwide influential instrument designed for this purpose is the method proposed by Alkire-Foster (2010; 2011), which focuses on measuring poverty and well-being by incorporating various dimensions and indicators tailored to specific contexts. As the authors assert, this method is adaptable and can be applied in diverse ways to suit different situations.

The Human Development Index (HDI), promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), emerged from the Alkire-Foster method. Since 1990, the HDI has been systematically developed, and its latest version includes three dimensions: long and healthy life, measured through a life expectancy index; knowledge, measured through an education index; and standard of living, measured through GDP (UNDP, 2022). By encompassing these dimensions, the HDI surpasses purely income-based measures and aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human development. However, some scholars criticise the HDI's arbitrary selection of indicators and their weighting within the index (e.g., Bérenger and Verdier-Chouchane, 2007). These critiques highlight the challenge of finding a balanced and representative set of indicators that adequately captures the complexities of well-being and development across different contexts.

Moreover, the HDI lacks child-specific indicators, and both Sen's and Nussbaum's approaches are primarily centred on the well-being of the adult population. Consequently, assessing young people's well-being from a capabilities perspective is still an emerging research field. Nevertheless, despite the adult-centred dominance in capabilities approach studies, there are notable examples that highlight the importance of discussing and exploring young people's well-being from the CA perspective in further detail.

Capabilities and young people's well-being

A decade ago, Biggeri et al. (2011) highlighted the lack of attention given to children's well-being within CA studies. However, over the last few years, studies have grown exponentially. According to Fegter and Richter (2014), two main categories of studies can be found: those aiming to identify relevant capabilities and functionings for young people and those analysing children's current well-being based on a pre-defined list of capabilities. Moreover, Domínguez-Serrano and del Moral-Espín (2022) report that most of the studies adopted a quantitative approach, commonly drawing on an adapted version of the Alkire-Foster method to explore childhood deprivation based on a capabilities analysis (see Alkire and Roche, 2012).

Within the qualitative studies, one part of the literature aligns with Sen's version of the CA, claiming that there should not be a pre-defined list of capabilities when addressing children's well-being. This growing body of research provides valuable insights into children's well-being within the capabilities perspective and underscores the importance of considering their unique needs and experiences and allowing them to define what is valuable for their well-being. For instance, Biggeri et al. (2006) identified a list of core capabilities in collaboration with young people in Italy, while Kellock and Lawthom (2011) explored capabilities valued by children in the UK without a pre-defined list, leading to the emergence of four valued capabilities from a child's perspective.[12] These studies demonstrate the significance of involving children in identifying and understanding what matters most for their well-being, providing a more inclusive and child-centred approach to assessing their quality of life.

On the other hand, studies based on Nussbaum's arguments commonly pre-define a list of capabilities, which is then analysed and validated with young people. For instance, Andresen and Fegter (2011) provided children with a pre-defined selection of capabilities to explore their ideas of what constitutes a good life. Similarly, Domínguez-Serrano and del Moral Espín (2018) pre-defined a list of core capabilities, which they transformed into indicators to assess young people's well-being in Spain, with children's voices at the centre of the analysis.

Both approaches provide valuable insights into children's well-being from their viewpoints. However, the type of participation young people have in these approaches differs, carrying significant epistemological implications. Therefore, defining young people's participation in capability studies becomes critical. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss in greater detail the importance of active and meaningful participation from an epistemological standpoint since this type of participation has the power to challenge adult-centred dominance in child well-being research, as in society in general. Moreover, this debate also problematises young people's agency and the power dynamics between adults and children and between researchers and participants. This discussion is further explored in Chapter 3, including the role of childhood studies in shaping social constructions of childhood in research and Chilean society.

The CA concerning children's well-being has been applied in different fields, through different methodologies and in combination with different approaches where education is predominant (Gladstone et al., 2020). Authors like Otto and Ziegler (2006) and Walker and Unterhalter (2007) have been highly influential, emphasising education's role in promoting social justice and expanding children's abilities through opportunities. For example, Kellock (2020) combined the CA with Community Psychology to understand

[12] The capabilities that emerged from this study were: Being Literate, Being Physically Active, Being a Friend, and Being Creative.

UK students' well-being and improve school communities' support. From a theoretical perspective, Reindal (2016) discussed the relationship between capabilities and education, focusing on special needs and inclusive education, arguing that the CA can contribute to understanding inclusion as the development of capabilities.

However, despite the growing interest in this field of research, the literature indicates that most CA studies on children's well-being are concentrated in Europe and the Global North nations (Gladstone et al., 2020; Domínguez-Serrano and del Moral-Espín, 2022). This concentration underscores a critical gap, urging more research on children's well-being in Latin America. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of emancipating from Eurocentric theoretical understandings (e.g., Quijano, 1992; 2000; Nieuwenhuys, 2013) and instead constructing local understandings that include the voice of young Chileans as crucial inputs for advancing research and the theorisation of well-being in this region.

Young people's capabilities in Latin America

As previously argued, the use of capabilities conceptualisation of well-being is scarce in Latin America, possibly due to the dominance of monetary approaches based on adult-informed instruments in the region (as discussed in Section 2.2). Nonetheless, some studies have started to include the capabilities approach, which represents a positive step in addressing this gap in the literature.

For example, García and Ritterbusch (2015) adopted a mixed methods approach to create a multidimensional instrument for measuring child poverty in Colombia. These authors incorporated young people's voices through qualitative methodologies to identify key dimensions comprising the Multidimensional Child and Adolescent index (MCAP). This initiative represents an initial effort to formulate a measure of young people's well-being grounded in capabilities conceptualisation within the region. It underscores the efficacy of incorporating youth voices in constructing such instruments and identifying the essential dimensions for assessment.

Similarly, Tonon (2022) advocates using a capabilities approach when enhancing young South Americans' participation, problematising the constraints young Argentinians face concerning their possibilities to make joint decisions with adults concerning their quality of life. This work underscores the potential of the capabilities approach in shedding light on the nuanced challenges faced by youth in the region. However, no evidence of studies adopting a CA to conceptualise young people's well-being exists in Chile, highlighting a significant gap in the literature. As elaborated in Chapter 3, this study aims to contribute to this gap and explore with young Chileans which core capabilities comprise the lives they have reason to value and improve understanding concerning their quality of life from a capabilities and participatory perspective.

2.3.3 Rights-based approaches

As argued earlier in this chapter, there has been a notable increase in the use of rights-based approaches to conceptualising the quality of life for children and young people, particularly concerning child poverty (e.g., Bessell, 2021). The adoption of such an approach to studying children's lives can be attributed, in part, to the fact that rights are endorsed by national and international agreements that establish minimum standards children should have, making it a compelling policy goal (e.g., UNICEF, 2007a; Byrne and Lundy, 2019).

Moreover, Ben-Arieh et al. (2014) assert that the essence of rights lies in their profound connection to enhancing the well-being of young people and facilitating the opportunities for them to achieve it. In this sense, incorporating rights-based perspectives in studying and addressing children and young people's well-being becomes crucial to ensure their overall development and better prospects for the future.

In this context, the emergence of rights-based approaches has brought about a significant shift in the status of children within society. Rather than being viewed solely as objects of protection, children are now recognised as emerging citizens, a transformative change emphasized by Hart (1991). This perspective aligns with the social studies of childhood theoretical approaches during the 1990s, which advocated for viewing children not as passive subjects but as active social agents (e.g., James and Prout, 1997).

While childhood scholars acknowledge the strong interconnection between children's rights and well-being, they also highlight that these concepts are distinct both conceptually and methodologically (Tisdall, 2015a). Nevertheless, the literature on children's participation has played a pivotal role in bridging these concepts, particularly emphasising the significance of incorporating young people's perspectives to improve their life experiences (Ben-Arieh and Tarshish, 2017).

Consequently, adopting a rights-based approach to conceptualise well-being enables the integration of agency, citizenship, and participation as fundamental concepts into the discussion of well-being (see Section 2.1). Moreover, as Murray (2019) points out, this approach facilitates the critical examination of the lack of children and young people's participation in policy debates.

It is essential to note that any approach acknowledging the critical nature of young people's participation is inherently rooted in a rights perspective. Thus, the rights-based approach has significantly influenced how scholars and policymakers study young people's lives across multiple levels and theoretical frameworks. It has brought about a paradigm shift, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of children and young people as active participants in shaping their well-being and future. However, as further

elaborated in the subsequent chapters, the discussion around young people's participation concerning their well-being is complex and heavily influenced by policy-makers' interpretation of the UNCRC (Wyness, 2013).

Brief contextualisation of children's rights

Scholars acknowledge various definitions of rights, often linked to broad conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the UNCRC concerning children's rights (Jones, 2011). For the purpose of this thesis, rights are broadly understood as entitlements that all individuals possess simply by virtue of being human (Donnelly, 1982; Nussbaum, 1997).[13] According to Frydrych (2018), there are two central rights theories. The first is the *will theory*, which pertains to liberty rights and aims to protect individuals from interference in their freedom. On the other hand, *interest theories* associated with welfare rights focus on ensuring that individuals have the necessary resources to lead a good life.

In defining young people's well-being, the rights-based approach places significant emphasis on fulfilling rights as essential for young people to live well and achieve their full potential (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014). This approach is strongly influenced by the UNCRC (Archard, 2012), which serves as the foundational framework for understanding and promoting young people's well-being. As discussed in more detail later in this section, the UNCRC comprehensively addresses various aspects of young people's lives, including civil, cultural, economic, cultural, and political rights (UNICEF, 1989). Moreover, while children's rights are often associated with welfare rights (e.g., Lansdown, 2005), such as the right to life, survival, and development (Article 6), they also encompass liberty rights, such as the freedom to express opinions (Article 13).

However, both welfare and liberty rights have limitations when conceptualising young people's well-being. Welfare approaches, while focusing on ensuring young people's material needs are met, may inadvertently reinforce power imbalances between adults and children, potentially leading to paternalistic attitudes and decisions that undermine young people's agency (Lansdown, 2005). On the other hand, while emphasising young people's freedoms and autonomy, liberty approaches may ignore their status as citizens with distinct rights and responsibilities within society (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). This failure to recognise young people's citizenship can marginalise their voices and participation in decision-making processes that directly affect their lives.

Therefore, as discussed in Section 2.1.1, recognising the interconnectedness between young people's rights, agency, and citizenship and acknowledging the role of adults in

[13] For more details about the specific entitlements or rights people have, see the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948).

shaping these relationships is essential when adopting a rights-based approach to conceptualise children's well-being. By addressing these complexities, the rights-based approach becomes a powerful tool in promoting young people's well-being and facilitating their active participation in society. Moreover, this approach empowers young people, respecting their rights and voices, and fosters a more inclusive and equitable environment where they can thrive and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

The right to live well: who are the actors involved?

The literature indicates that a combination of public institutions and private organisations work together to promote and protect children's rights (Jones, 2011). In this context, the UNCRC is the key legal framework that shapes children's rights and guides these institutions across various countries, and it is the most significant human rights treaty, where all countries except the United States of America have ratified it as the core legally binding document to frame children's rights in their specific contexts (Murray et al., 2019).

The Convention comprises a total of 54 articles, which according to Archard (2015), can be categorised into provision (related to services), protection (related to safeguarding and preventing maltreatment) and participation rights (recognising children as social agents). Additionally, the Convention proposes four general principles that are fundamental to conceptualising children's rights and are relevant in facilitating the implementation of other rights: non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interest of the child (Article 3), the right to life survival and development (Article 6), and the right to be heard (Article 12) (UNICEF, 1989). As Ben-Arieh (2008) pointed out, these four principles are closely linked to children's well-being. Although the UNCRC does not have a specific article addressing the concept of well-being, for the purposes of this dissertation, Articles 3 and 12 emerge as fundamental to guide this discussion:

Best Interest of the Child (Article 3):

> "…In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration…" (UNICEF, 1989, p. 4)

Right to be Heard (Article 12):

> "…states Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child…" (UNICEF, 1989, p. 5)

However, as pointed out by Archard (2015), these two articles are in direct tension since recognising young people's agency and participation rights conflicts with the notion of the "best interest of the child". The concept of the child's best interest involves—almost

always—decisions made by adults regarding what they believe is best for children. On the other hand, Article 12 grants children and young people the right to express their opinions on matters that affect their lives.

Moreover, according to Archard, while Article 12 promotes children's agency, it also imposes certain limitations. Firstly, this right is restricted to children and young people who are capable of forming their own opinions, excluding younger children who may not be seen to communicate effectively due to their age. Secondly, the weight of young people's views and opinions increases as they approach adulthood, with adults ultimately deciding the value of their opinions.

Consequently, while the UNCRC is a fundamental universal policy, it has certain limitations that are important to acknowledge, particularly concerning their participation. As highlighted by Hinton (2008), although the UNCRC suggests that young people's voices should be taken seriously, they have had little influence on decisions regarding the allocation of resources that affect their quality of life. Moreover, countries' interpretations, as observed through policies and social programs, still tend to emphasise children's protection and lack a participatory perspective that could promote their active citizenship (James, 2011).

This problematic conceptualisation of children's participation has various effects, which are discussed in further detail in Chapter 3. Most notably, it directly influences how nations interpret children's rights and, more importantly, shapes how children's participation should be understood and the role that children can have when measuring and monitoring their quality of life. This limited consideration of young people's perspectives hinders the realisation of their rights and limits their potential to actively engage in shaping policies and decisions that impact their lives.

Assessing well-being from a rights perspective

As previously mentioned, countries that ratify the Convention should establish an effective system to protect and monitor the fulfilment of children's rights. Consequently, two main groups of approaches and methodologies can be identified within the literature. One part of the literature focuses on analysing children's rights from a legal protection perspective, exploring young people's experiences of rights violations, such as child abuse and violence (e.g., Stalker and McArthur, 2012), the right to education (e.g., Lundy and O'Lynn, 2019), and the right of life and survival (e.g., Pemberton et al., 2012).

In contrast, another part of the literature, influenced by the social studies of childhood, focuses on children's perceptions, attitudes, and understanding of their rights (e.g., Kosher and Ben-Arieh, 2017). This approach is closely associated with recognising children's agency and participation as fundamental aspects when discussing their well-

being. Therefore, it acknowledges the significant value that young people's lived experiences offer in these discussions, both in shaping public policies and contributing to academic research (Camfield et al., 2010).

The case of Chile

In Chile, both approaches to assessing children's rights can be found. Various studies adopt a protection perspective, exploring children's rights violations at different levels in the country (e.g., Gómez-Urrutia and Jiménez-Figueroa, 2015; Contreras Taibo et al., 2018). Others concentrate on exploring provision rights, such as education rights (e.g., Blanco Guijarro, 2005; Muñoz-Oyarce, 2021), health (e.g., Ochoa et al., 2010), and mental health (e.g., Zúñiga-Fajuri and Zúñiga, 2020).

On the other hand, other studies in the field focus on promoting and advocating for young people's rights. One highly influential organisation in this regard is Defensoria de la Niñez (Child Advocacy), which has conducted several studies aimed at promoting children and young people's rights. A recent study by Defensoría-Niñez (2019) revealed that while the majority of the participants are aware of their rights' existence, close to 50% perceive that exercising their rights is contingent upon fulfilling their duties. Additionally, the study showed that a large majority of students perceive that adults do not respect their rights, a perception that increases with age. These results are consistent with Oyanedel et al. (2015), whose findings indicate that young people's awareness of their rights decreases with age, and the majority of them perceive that adults do not respect children's rights.

These findings are problematic for at least two reasons. First, while young people are aware of the existence of rights, they perceive them not as entitlements but as rewards given by adults based on their criteria of good behaviour. This misunderstanding leads to the second issue, where most students feel that adults do not respect their rights. Consequently, this misrecognition of young people's rights in Chile limits their agency and participation in decisions that affect them. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, this issue can be linked to the country's dominant social constructions of childhood, which perceive children and young people as incapable and immature.

These results are also problematic considering that Chile's core policy concerning children and young people's well-being plan is rooted in a rights approach (Politica Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia) (CNDI, 2015b), identifying *survival*, *participation*, *protection*, and *development* as key axes of the children's rights framework in the country (MDSF, 2015). However, based on the studies' results mentioned earlier, young Chileans do not perceive their rights to be respected in the country. Moreover, a recent report by Defensoria de la Niñez (2022) analysed young people's rights based on these four axes, revealing progress in survival and development but a decline in protection from violence.

Additionally, that report shows that while young Chileans are mostly aware of their right to participation, they argue that they are not able to exercise it systematically.

Therefore, while the available studies reflect the interest of scholars and certain institutions in promoting and protecting children's rights in Chile, more research is needed to explore why young people perceive their rights as not being respected. Moreover, the existing studies do not provide a clear understanding of how participation takes place, and as previously argued, clearly defining participation is critical in research with young people (e.g., Sinclair, 2004; Thomas, 2007). Moreover, a recent report by UNICEF (2022) shows a lack of resources to promote participation in the country. Hence, it is imperative to address this gap in the Chilean debate by critically examining young people's participation, as it is an often overlooked right that directly impacts their opportunities for well-being.

2.3.4 Subjective or self-reported approaches

The last category to conceptualise well-being refers to the subjective or self-reported approaches, commonly known as subjective well-being (SWB). In this context, SWB can be broadly defined as people's evaluation towards their lives (Campbell, 1976). Therefore, individuals' participation and life assessment become fundamental for this approach, where there is an inherent recognition of people's agency towards their well-being.

The interest of scholars studying subjective well-being has increased dramatically over the recent decades (Diener et al., 1999), where scholars suggest that the emergence of the Social Indicators Movement heavily influenced this interest (Veenhoven, 2007; Casas, 2011). Nevertheless, despite its progress and evolution, the study of SWB is still dominated by Global North constructions and adult-centred approaches (e.g., Campbell, 1976; Ryff, 1989; Diener, 2012).

In this context, Crivello et al. (2009) highlight the importance of considering the specific sociocultural context when conceptualising well-being. It is crucial to acknowledge that well-being is strongly linked to social constructions, and failing to do so may result in incomplete definitions that could undermine the effectiveness of policies. Thus, there remains a significant gap in this research field regarding including young people's subjectivities from the majority world in defining and identifying the dimensions that comprise the instruments to assess well-being from a self-reported perspective.

Theoretical roots of children's self-reported well-being

The literature on self-reported well-being comprises two main paradigms: hedonic approaches, commonly known as subjective well-being (SWB), and eudaimonic approaches, commonly known as psychological well-being (PWB) (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Samman, 2007; Rees et al., 2013). These two conceptualisations encompass distinct theoretical and methodological constructs, making it crucial to differentiate them.

According to Diener (2009), SWB encompasses *cognitive* judgments of individuals regarding their life satisfaction and also includes *affective* reactions, which can be either negative or positive. Moreover, a subjective concept of well-being recognises the relative nature of living well, which may vary among societies and individuals (Diener and Ryan, 2009). Consequently, this approach focuses on people's subjective assessments of their own lives, implying that the meaning of well-being and the influencing dimensions are not fixed and can vary across and within sociocultural contexts (Casas, 2011).

On the other hand, the PWB perspective centres on identifying the factors that allow individuals to maximise their potential (Steger et al., 2008). This approach to self-reported well-being is rooted in the Aristotelian concept of eudaimonia, where the highest good is the realisation of one's potential (Ryff, 1989). Typical approaches to the eudaimonic approach to well-being include Maslow's (1968) self-realisation and needs hierarchy[14], Ryff's (1989) six-dimension model of psychological well-being[15] and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination approach.[16] Consequently, the PWB approach employs fixed definitions and dimensions to assess individuals' well-being, and it is closely linked with an individual's sense of purpose and meaning (Samman, 2007).

While in some ways both perspectives can be seen as complementary, SWB is based on individuals' subjective perceptions, evaluations, aspirations, and interpretations (Casas, 2016). As such, it relies on a socially constructed conception of well-being (Diener, 2012), recognising that people have a say in defining what living well means for them. On the other hand, the PWB understanding presumes that the definition of a good life is predetermined by experts who know the specific behaviours required to increase well-being (Steger et al., 2008).

This distinction raises a fundamental epistemological discussion, emphasising the debate about young people's participation, agency, and power of influence within the research process and in the construction of knowledge. From a PWB perspective, researchers

[14] According to Maslow, human needs are arranged in a hierarchical pyramid, starting from the physiological ones, followed by safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization at the end which represent a person's best version of themselves. From this approach, it is important to satisfy the basic needs to then go up on the pyramid.

[15] This model includes the dimensions of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery and autonomy.

[16] These authors argue that human motivation is strongly connected to the psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

possess all the knowledge regarding well-being, constraining the space for individuals to construct meaning on their own. This hierarchical power dynamic can lead to participants assuming a passive role, a sensitive issue particularly relevant in studies involving children (Christensen and James, 2008). Meanwhile, for SWB, there is not just one truth but multiple truths that vary across and within societies (Casas, 2016). Hence, this approach allows more space for the co-creation of knowledge through children's agency and meaningful participation. Further exploration of this epistemological discussion will be carried out in Chapter 4.

Assessing young people's subjective well-being

Casas (2011) argues that while objective indicators of children's well-being are extensively covered, subjective indicators are less prominent and have been neglected in political discussions. However, in the last ten years, significant progress has been made in incorporating young people's perspectives when assessing their quality of life. A notable example is Children's Worlds, the International Survey for Children's Well-Being (ISCWeb), a global research initiative on children's well-being that has included large-scale samples of participants from 35 countries across its four waves since its first edition in 2011. This survey was initiated by the International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) and developed by researchers to assess children's and young people's well-being. Its results have provided access to substantial data sets and enabled comparing children's SWB indicators across different countries (e.g., Casas et al., 2014; Dinisman and Rees, 2014; Oyanedel et al., 2015; OECD, 2017).

Undoubtedly, the contributions of this instrument to the field are significant, particularly in shedding light on young people's subjective experiences as critical indicators to inform policy discussions, rather than solely relying on their parents' perspectives (Gross-Manos et al., 2021). However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the instrument adopts an adult-based definition of well-being and is rooted in applying five different scales constructed by adult researchers from the minority world (see ISCWeb, 2019)[17].

As a result, the definition of well-being and the indicators it comprises are constructed based on a limited group of adults' perceptions of what well-being means, which raises concerns about the recognition of young people as social agents with the right to be heard and have influence in decisions that affect them. The instrument inherently involves adults dictating what living well should look like. Moreover, as discussed earlier, this

[17] The scales are: the Overall Subjective Well-Being (OLS), the Children's Worlds Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-SWBS), the Children's Worlds Domain Based Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-DBSWBS). The Children's Worlds Positive and Negative Affects Scale (CW-PNAS) and the Children's Worlds Psychological Subjective Well-Being Scale (CW-PSWBS).

reinforces Eurocentric constructions of well-being, which can constrain and shape how children's quality of life is perceived and should be experienced in the majority world.

Another example is The Good Childhood Report in the UK (Rees et al., 2013; Pople et al., 2014). This report utilised a mixed-methods approach, wherein children played a central role in developing the indicators to be assessed. In the initial stages of creating this instrument, children and young people actively collaborated and provided input to identify the dimensions that encompass well-being. Subsequently, this input was transformed into a survey that has been systematically applied in the UK over the last decade.

These two examples highlight a fundamental epistemological and methodological difference relevant to this thesis. As discussed earlier, defining participation is crucial when conducting research with children and young people (e.g., Hart, 1992). In the context of instruments like the ISCWeb, while the voice of the child is central through a process of massive consultation, their voices are still framed within pre-defined adult understandings of well-being. On the other hand, projects like the Good Childhood Report position children's voices as fundamental in shaping the definition of well-being, and from there, measurement instruments are developed.

This methodological distinction will be further explored in Chapter 4. However, it brings to the forefront the discussion of how agency and participation are understood and shaped within the research process and public debate. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, it is critical to differentiate child-centred approaches from child-derived ones. Authors like Main and Bradshaw (2012) suggest that it is essential to shift from child-centred to child-derived approaches, where young people's subjectivities play a critical role in informing definitions and identifying dimensions that can be translated into measurement instruments (e.g. surveys) and applied on a larger scale.

In this context, qualitative methodologies emerge as critical contributions to address the gap in the self-reported well-being literature. Influential examples of qualitative studies aiming to define young people's well-being from their perspective include the work of Fattore et al. (2007) in Australia, González-Carrasco et al. (2019) in Spain and Tonon et al. (2017) in Argentina.

However, qualitative approaches also present significant challenges and limitations. These may include the lack of credibility from policymakers and practical issues that affect their development, such as language barriers, translation processes, and a lack of expertise (Camfield et al., 2009). Fattore et al. (2021) also delve into the challenges of qualitative well-being studies, emphasising the difficulties of measuring and comparing across different cultures and countries. This discussion will be further expanded in Chapters 3 and 4.

Young people's self-reported well-being in Chile

The study of young people's well-being from a subjective perspective in Chile is relatively new, and its origins can be traced back to the implementation of the Children's World's ISCWeb in the country (Alfaro et al., 2016b). This project represented a significant advancement as it collected substantial data regarding the subjective dimensions of young Chileans' well-being, which enabled scholars from various fields to explore children's quality of life and their satisfaction with their lives in the country.

From this point on, numerous Chilean studies can be found in the literature. As Oyarzún (2019) points out, these are predominantly quantitative and fall into three categories: *psychometric scales*, assessments of the *level of subjective well-being*, and investigations into the *relationship between SWB and psychosocial indicators.* These studies have contributed valuable insights into understanding young people's well-being in the Chilean context.

Within the *psychometric scales,* the application of the Personal Well-Being Index (PWI)[18] by Alfaro Inzunza et al. (2013), and the application of the Personal Well-Being School Children (PWI-SC)[19] by Alfaro et al. (2016a) and Bilbao Ramírez et al. (2016) provided crucial data on the significance of material conditions, security, leisure activities, social relationships, and future prospects as essential indicators for young people's well-being. The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)[20] applied by Alfaro et al. (2015) reinforced previous findings, emphasising that satisfaction with neighbourhood, school, oneself, and life in general are significant for overall life satisfaction. Lastly, the Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS)[21] applied by Alfaro et al. (2016c) suggests that stability may also be an important factor that explains students' life satisfaction, although more research is needed to explore its significance.

Chilean students' *level of SWB* is primarily based on the ISCWeb study (see Casas et al., 2014; Dinisman and Rees, 2014; Oyanedel et al., 2015; OECD, 2017). Several studies derived from this survey have explored different dimensions of young people's well-being and allowed for comparisons between countries. Notable examples include the study by Oyanedel et al. (2014), revealing that the highest satisfaction levels of students correspond to family, friends, material possessions, and health, while the lowest satisfaction relates to the neighbourhood and self-perception. Other Chilean studies based on ISCWeb have found similar findings, highlighting the relevance of neighbourhood, family, and friends in young Chileans' life satisfaction (Oyarzún Gómez et al., 2017; Oyarzún Gómez et al., 2019; Oyarzún Gómez et al., 2022). Furthermore, Alfaro et al.

[18] See Cummins et al. (2003)
[19] See Cummins and Lau (2005)
[20] See Seligson et al. (2003)
[21] See Huebner (1991)

(2017) explored the crucial role of the community among students, emphasising how the sense of community is relevant to students' life satisfaction.

Lastly, in studies exploring the *Relationship Between SWB and Psychosocial Variables,* the Brief Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)[22] applied by San Martín and Barra (2013) demonstrated the importance of self-esteem and social support in influencing young people's life satisfaction. Consequently, the scales used in quantitative studies have provided a diverse range of relevant information that contributes to identifying critical factors explaining Chilean students' life satisfaction. These findings highlight the value of young people's social relationships and emphasise the significance of specific settings, such as the school and neighbourhood. Additionally, they provide valuable insights into young people's psychological well-being, underlining the relevance of self-perception and self-esteem.

Within qualitative studies, there is a scarcity of research adopting a qualitative approach to explore the meanings and perceptions of well-being in Chile. However, scholars have shown an increasing interest in investigating young people's well-being from their perspectives. Notable and recent examples include the study by Oyarzún Gómez and Reyes Espejo (2021), which explores children's well-being concerning leisure and the use of geographical space. Furthermore, Alfaro-Inzunza et al. (2019) described the notions of life satisfaction and dissatisfaction from a qualitative perspective with young people, identifying close relationships, feeling cared for, loved, and supported by significant adults emerged as critical for the participants.

Additionally, some studies explore the relationship between young people's well-being and specific settings. Alfaro et al. (2023) explored groups of students' understanding of well-being in the school setting, finding that the relationship between peers, teachers, schoolwork, discipline and control, support and interpersonal communication, peer relationships, the availability of affective support, conflict resolution and bullying are fundamental to students. Furthermore, Aspillaga et al. (2022) examined the perceptions of Chileans regarding their well-being concerning their school and neighbourhood. This study identified that a sense of belonging, closeness, support, and safety play critical roles within their neighbourhoods, influencing their overall well-being.

While current studies provide fundamental information regarding young Chileans' well-being and highlight the importance of friendships, family, school, and neighbourhood concerning their life satisfaction, this remains an underexplored topic in the country. Moreover, these studies present certain limitations that need to be addressed in future research.

[22] See Seligson et al. (2003)

Firstly, there is still a lack of exploration in the literature regarding the meanings of critical concepts contributing to young people's well-being, such as understanding why social relationships are relevant to their quality of life. Therefore, more qualitative studies are needed, as they can provide different kinds of data that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the significant indicators identified by the scales applied. Secondly, the reviewed studies have primarily focused on participants from large urban locations, particularly students from medium and low socioeconomic backgrounds. As a result, the perspectives of the entire rural population of young people and those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are excluded from the analysis.

Furthermore, the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and young Chileans' well-being has been scarcely addressed in the assessment of young people's well-being, representing a significant gap in the literature, especially considering the high levels of inequality in the country (see Chapter 1). Although Oyanedel et al. (2015) included socioeconomic inequality as a variable in students' life satisfaction analysis, the results remain inconclusive.

Therefore, it is still unclear how students' socioeconomic backgrounds may influence their possibilities to live well, as also if the definition of well-being and the identification of its comprising dimensions vary depending on socioeconomic variables. Addressing these limitations and incorporating the perspectives of diverse populations, including rural and higher socioeconomic backgrounds, will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of young Chilean's well-being and its relationship with socioeconomic inequality.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a critical review of existing theoretical approaches to children and young people's well-being, emphasising the close relationship this concept has with the literature concerning child poverty. The review has highlighted the inadequate participation of young people in shaping the definition of well-being, which predominantly reflects an adult-dominated perspective in both its theoretical conceptualisation and measurement methods among younger populations.

By defining well-being as the quality of life, incorporating objective and subjective measures, this chapter divided current approaches into four main categories: objective or standard of living, capabilities, rights-based, and self-reported approaches. Furthermore, these approaches were analysed within the Chilean context, arguing that the theorisation of young people's well-being is unclear and narrow. While a rights-based approach forms the core of the policy-level definition of well-being, it is heavily inclined towards

protection and provision rights, overlooking participation as a fundamental right which powerfully shapes young people's agency and civic involvement in society.

Additionally, another part of the literature concentrates on self-reported or subjective approaches, relying on quantitative methods to assess young people's quality of life in the country. Furthermore, capability approaches have not been identified in Chile to date. Consequently, this chapter identifies several theoretical and methodological gaps concerning the Chilean conceptualisations of well-being, which are relevant to address to improve current understandings of young people's well-being in this country.

Among the theoretical gaps, the Chilean literature has hardly addressed the theoretical links between child poverty, well-being, and socioeconomic inequality. The lack of clarity regarding the influence of socioeconomic inequality on young people's well-being in Chile emerges as a critical gap due to the country's high levels of socioeconomic inequality and the lack of understanding of the effects of this social problem on the younger population.

Throughout the chapter, it was argued that the Chilean definition and measurement of objective or standard of living approaches are rooted in a child poverty framework, identifying two central limitations. First, it is based on the CASEN survey, which defines poverty using monetary and multidimensional approaches, where both use household income and parents' access to resources as units of measure. According to the literature, this is problematic since household income does not reflect young people's deprivation experience. Moreover, since there is a mismatch between the two measures of child poverty, the living conditions of young people remain unclear. The second limitation is that the child poverty measurement within CASEN derives from young people's parents' responses towards their living conditions. Therefore, young people's perceptions and assessment of their living conditions are subordinated to their parents' opinions.

This theoretical gap is problematic because young people living in vulnerable conditions are not yet accurately identified, and their living conditions are not well represented in the literature, which can directly influence policy design and social aid allocation. Furthermore, current understandings of child poverty fail to recognise young people as social agents and rights holders. Therefore, their citizenship status and possibilities to influence their living conditions are shaped and limited by adults. Addressing this gap in the literature from a child's perspective may shed light and reveal new information to better understand the effects of inequality in young people's lives while also recognising young individuals' agency and participation rights.

Regarding self-reported or subjective approaches, the chapter has shown that current theorisations and measures of young people's life satisfaction are based on adult constructions. The significance of young people's lived experiences in shaping well-being conceptualizations emerged as a central theme throughout the chapter. A context-

specific understanding of well-being could be achieved by recognising young people's agency and addressing the dominance of the Global North in the theoretical and instrumental approaches to assess their quality of life in Chile. This holistic perspective is crucial for informing effective interventions, fostering inclusive societies, and empowering young individuals as active social actors in their own lives.

Concerning methodological gaps, this chapter identified that young people's participation is not theoretically or epistemologically problematised in the available studies. Most studies are based on consultation processes, where participation is often tokenistic and limited by adults. Moreover, regarding research designs, there is a dominant quantitative approach to assessing well-being in Chile. This issue is problematic since, as Carrillo et al. (2021) suggested, generating more systematic qualitative studies with young Chileans about their well-being emerges as a critical gap due to the different types of data qualitative approaches can bring into the debate.

Another limitation identified within the Chilean literature pertains to the study samples. Existing studies predominantly focus on urban populations of students, with most research conducted in the capital or other large urban cities. Consequently, the entire young rural population remains excluded from these analyses, emphasizing the importance of exploring the rural-urban dichotomy within young people's well-being to gain valuable insights for constructing an inclusive approach to conceptualise well-being in Chile.

Consequently, based on the identified gaps in the literature, Chapter 3 introduces the capability-participatory approach as a novel theoretical framework for conceptualising young people's well-being in Chile. This approach acknowledges the critical role of young people's agency and participation in defining well-being and its dimensions. Moreover, it challenges adult-centric approaches by focusing on the opportunities that arise from resources rather than solely concentrating on access to resources. As a result, this approach allows for an exploration of the relationship between young people's resources and valued outcomes, with particular attention to the process of transforming resources into outcomes when examining the constraints on well-being opportunities for young Chileans.

The emphasis on the transformation process is paramount, as it enables a comprehensive examination of how socioeconomic inequality and societal perceptions of childhood are pivotal factors that can hinder young people from realizing fulfilling lives. Addressing this significant theoretical gap within the Chilean literature enriches the understanding of young people's well-being by acknowledging and respecting their agency and participation rights as fundamental attributes of their status in society. The next chapter introduces a capabilities-participatory framework as a novel theoretical and methodological approach to conceptualising young Chileans' well-being.

Chapter 3
Introducing the capabilities-participatory framework to conceptualise young people's well-being

Introduction

This chapter introduces the capabilities-participatory approach as a novel theoretical framework for conceptualising young people's well-being in Chile, which is theoretically rooted in the social studies of childhood paradigm, also known as childhood studies, and the capabilities approach. This framework addresses the two main gaps concerning young people's quality of life identified in the literature (see Chapter 2). The first pertains to the limited participation of young people in the conceptualisation of well-being, which has historically been defined by adults, primarily from the Global North. The second gap involves the lack of exploration of the role of socioeconomic inequality when discussing young people's quality of life in the country.

In this context, adopting a childhood studies approach provides the theoretical framework to acknowledge children and young people as social agents, where participation is not only a right but a fundamental exercise inherent to their status as social actors in the present (e.g., James and Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998; Tisdall, 2015a). Furthermore, this theoretical standpoint to theorising about well-being is a critical contribution to the literature as it acknowledges childhood as a social structure interacting with other structures (e.g., Qvortrup, 2009; Wyness, 2019), allowing an exploration of the structural factors that shape young Chileans' well-being opportunities, such as those related to socioeconomic inequality and the institutional definitions of a child's well-being.

Moreover, this framework is rooted in the capabilities approach, where embracing the concept of *capability* to explore young people's well-being, conceptualised as an individual's freedom of choice among different valued opportunities is a key contribution to this discussion (Sen, 1992; 1999). Within this framework, well-being disparities are acknowledged as relational issues, providing a theoretical foundation for analysing the process of transforming inputs into outcomes rather than focusing solely on the outcomes through the notion of conversion factors (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2005a). Such a standpoint allows for exploring the relationship between life experiences and opportunities arising from the inputs available to young people and how they influence their well-being (Ziegler, 2010).

Hence, the capabilities-participatory approach highlights the critical role of young people's agency and participation in shaping the understanding of well-being and its various dimensions. Moreover, when adopting the combined approach of capabilities and

the childhood studies theoretical standpoint, it allows for the examination of constraints on young people's well-being at a structural level, exploring the influence of those related to socioeconomic inequality and those derived from social constructions of childhood. Within this framework, well-being inequalities are recognised as a relational problem, underscoring the significance of conversion factors as critical mediators in transforming resources into functionings (Robeyns, 2005a).

Therefore, this chapter proposes that socioeconomic status (SES) and social constructions of childhood (SCC) can be relevant conversion factors that enable a comprehensive examination of how socioeconomic inequality and societal perceptions of childhood are pivotal factors that can hinder young people from achieving and living well. It argues that such an approach can provide valuable insights to better understand the adult-institutional power dominance, agency constraints, and limited spaces of participation young Chileans experience concerning their well-being opportunities.

This chapter is structured into three main sections. Section 3.1 provides the theoretical foundations of the capabilities-participatory approach. In this context, Subsection 3.1.1 provides critical definitions of the capabilities framework, distinguishing the concepts of capabilities, functionings, conversion factors and inputs. Subsection 3.1.2 delves into conceptualising socioeconomic inequality within this project, problematising the lack of research concerning the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and young people's quality of life in Chile. Lastly, Subsection 3.1.3 conceptualises participation and agency within the capabilities-participatory framework. To these purposes, it delves into the theoretical foundations of the sociological studies of childhood, framing the concepts of agency and participation adopted in this project.

Section 3.2 introduces SES and SCC as central conversion factors to analyse the structural-relational constraints that influence young people's well-being opportunities in Chile. Subsection 3.2.1 discusses young Chileans' decision-making power possibilities derived from socioeconomic factors. It characterises socioeconomic inequality in Chile and emphasises segregation as a central concept to explore the relationship between SES and young people's quality of life. For these purposes, residential and educational segregation are critical for the analysis.

Furthermore, Subsection 3.2.2 delves into the constraints young people face regarding their well-being opportunities derived from the socially constructed concept of the child in Chile. In this context, it discusses how the SCC within Chilean society shapes young Chilean's decision-making power concerning their well-being. For these purposes, the analysis draws into the concept of agency and participation to understand this dynamic and shed some light on this discussion.

Finally, the last section concludes and summarises the key points discussed throughout the chapter.

3.1 Defining the capabilities-participatory framework

Chapter 2 argues that the capability approach (CA) primarily focuses on analysing people's capabilities, defined as the freedoms people have to choose and achieve a life they have reason to value among different valuable options (Sen, 1992). Consequently, the CA emphasises the opportunities that stem from available resources rather than the resources themselves. Hence, it offers a unique perspective to understand the relationship between resources and outcomes. In this context, the emphasis on outcomes and the transformation of resources, rather than the exclusive focus on resources, holds particular significance for this thesis.

This specific lens to explore the relationship between resources and outcomes underpins the adoption of the CA as a novel conceptual framework for investigating the well-being of young people in Chile. As argued further in this chapter, this perspective facilitates a departure from the constraints associated with monetary-based definitions of well-being (see Chapter 2). This shift is especially critical when exploring the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and the quality of life of young people, all while recognising them as active social actors.

Moreover, the capabilities-participatory framework allows for an exploration of the obstacles young people encounter when translating their resources into valued opportunities, an issue that remains unexplored in the literature concerning young people's well-being in Chile. Consequently, adopting a capabilities approach to studying well-being enables concentrating on the opportunities accessible to young people and their freedom to pursue them.

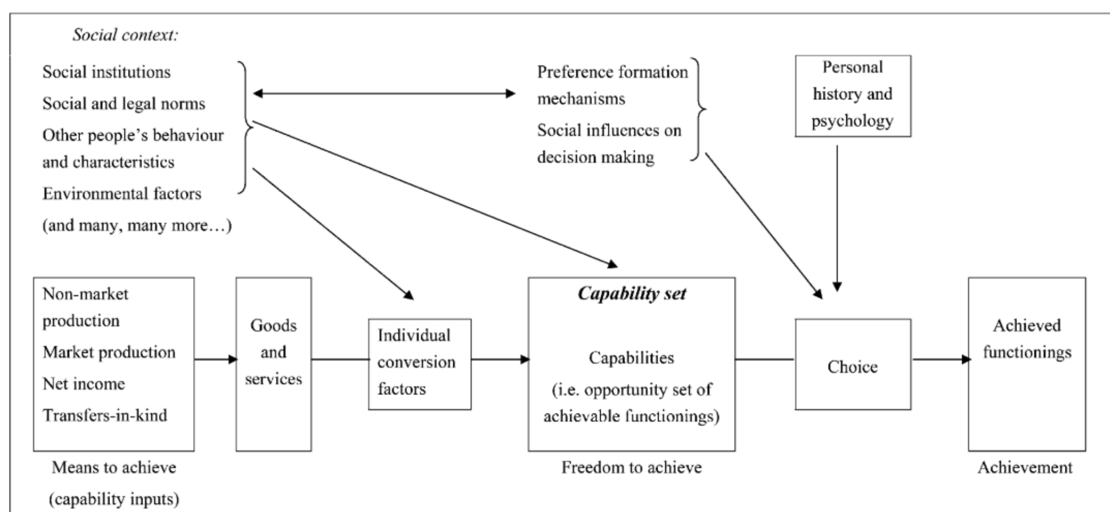
Drawing from Robeyn's (2017) modular interpretation of the CA, the capabilities-participatory framework theorises young Chileans' well-being by identifying a list of central capabilities and dimensions reflecting young participants' lives and which they have reason to value. As further elaborated in Chapter 4, due to the methodological underpinnings of this project, young people's role is determinant in selecting these capabilities to be analysed. Furthermore, such an approach provides a theoretical background for analysing the relationship between young Chileans' well-being and structural forces, such as those related to socioeconomic inequality and social constructions of childhood. Within this discussion, further clarifying some key concepts within the capabilities approaches introduced in Chapter 2 and how they are understood in this framework is imperative.

3.1.1 Technical definitions and clarifications when adopting a capabilities approach

One of scholars' primary criticisms towards the CA pertains to its terminology, which can sometimes lead to confusion and hinder a straightforward interpretation of the core concepts. For example, within this literature, a crucial distinction lies in separating means or resources, which encompass goods and services, and capabilities from functionings, which refer to people's freedoms of choice and their actual choices, respectively (Robeyns, 2005a). Therefore, clarifying these concepts and establishing their relevance within the specific context of this study becomes paramount.

The following discussion is centred around differentiating the terms of capabilities and functionings, conversion factors, and inputs. As Robeyns (2017) emphasised, any framework that adopts a CA to define well-being should elucidate and incorporate these key concepts, all of which constitute a person's capability set. As Biggeri et al. (2006, p. 63) put it, a capability set "is the opportunity set of achievable functionings." In other words, a capability set reflects people's freedoms and opportunity choices available to lead a life they have reason to value. Figure 3-1 illustrates Robeyn's (2005a, p. 98) interpretation of an individual's capability set, providing a visual representation of the interrelationships among the key concepts within the CA.

Figure 3-1: A Stylised Non-Dynamic Representation of a Person's Capability Set and Her Social and Personal Context



Author: Robeyns (2005a, p. 98)

Capabilities and functionings

As introduced in Chapter 2, from a capabilities perspective, well-being is defined as people's freedom to choose among different valuable options and live a life they have reason to value (Sen, 1985; 1999). Nevertheless, as Sen (1992) pointed out, it is not solely about having access to opportunities but also about using those opportunities to lead a fulfilling life effectively. This point reflects the normative foundation of the CA, highlighting that capabilities are not neutral, and carry a value judgment about what constitutes a good life for individuals, which may differ from one another.

This aspect of the CA is also highlighted by Alkire (2005), who argues that it is critical to acknowledge that the person must value the opportunities achieved or realised (functionings) and must be linked to their own well-being. Hence, the normative stance implies a commitment to ensuring that individuals have the resources and opportunities necessary to pursue a life that aligns with their own values and aspirations, rather than just focusing on maximising certain measurable outcomes or indicators.

Consequently, this dissertation defines the concept of *capability* as a person's freedom to choose from different valuable options. In the words of Sen, capabilities are "the choices that the person in fact have" based on their resources available (Sen, 1992, p. 38).[1] Accordingly, *functionings* refer to people's actual choices or achievements. It represents the various things a person succeeds in being or doing (Sen, 1999). As Robeyns (2017) summarised, while capabilities are people's opportunities, functionings are the actual achievements of those opportunities. Therefore, the notion of capabilities becomes critical within the capabilities-participatory framework to conceptualise and theorise young people's well-being.

Resources as inputs

Within this discussion, the role of resources assumes critical importance as they represent the inputs individuals need to transform into functionings. As argued in Chapter 2, within the CA literature, resources can be understood as the "means to achievement" (Sen, 1992, p. 33), which may include but is not limited to monetary resources. Therefore, this approach recognises the crucial role of resources (including income) not as ends in themselves but because of the outcomes derived from them (Sen, 1999). As Robeyns

[1] According to Robeyns (2017), the term capability has different interpretations and definitions which have evolved over time. Sen's early work adopted an understanding of a capability as a single opportunity. Nevertheless, this notion has evolved to an understanding of capabilities (plural) as an opportunity set which may between individuals. Furthermore, Nussbaum's terminology which considers capabilities as rights, derived into a debate among scholars that adopt the concept of basic capabilities which are applicable to all human beings (e.g., Nussbaum, 2011), and scholars who adopted a more generic approach that may vary across different socio-cultural contexts (e.g., Alkire, 2005).

(2005a) pointed out, from this theoretical standpoint, resources are significant because they possess instrumental value but are not ends in themselves.

This distinction holds particular relevance when conceptualising young people's well-being since income alone does not entirely account for this (see Chapter 2). Therefore, there arises a need to explore other types of inputs when exploring young people's quality of life. As explained throughout this chapter, this study acknowledges factors such as education and places of residence as key inputs that young people need to transform to pursue a valued life.

Furthermore, following Ziegler's (2010) argument, it is essential to note that this study is not interested in examining inputs in isolation but rather in understanding the relationship between the life experiences and opportunities arising from the inputs available to young people and how they influence their well-being opportunities. Therefore, this study proposes that analysing the role of institutional frameworks as inputs, including policies, legal regulations, and social programmes linked to children and young people's quality of life in Chile (e.g. educational law, childhood policies, and welfare policies in general), become critical since they define, provide and shape young people's well-being opportunities.

Additionally, this study acknowledges the significance of institutional and policy frameworks in shaping the discussion surrounding the impact of socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood —considered critical conversion factors—, influencing young people's possibilities to transform those inputs into well-being opportunities and pursue a life they have reason to value. Section 3.2 discusses in greater detail the specific institutional and policy frameworks considered in this study.

Therefore, the capabilities-participatory framework proposed in this dissertation claims that adopting such an approach allows the exploration of well-being opportunities of young Chileans from a structural standpoint rather than focusing on each individual's possibilities, which may vary among students. Consequently, adopting a capabilities framework offers a novel perspective to analyse the extent to which young people in Chile with the same inputs have different well-being opportunities. As further elaborated in the following subsection, conversion factors have a critical role in shaping these well-being outcomes.

Furthermore, as Sen (1992) suggested, the discussion should not be exclusively centred on assessing people's access to specific resources and functionings. It should also discuss decision-making power and agency's relevance to converting those resources and opportunities into a life that aligns with their values and aspirations. Section 3.1.3 discusses in further detail the critical relationship between young people's agency and decision-making power within the capabilities-participatory framework.

The relationship between conversion factors and inputs

The transformation process from inputs to functionings becomes fundamental in this discussion. As elaborated further in Section 3.2, conversion factors mediate between inputs and functionings (Robeyns, 2005a). In other words, these allow or limit the transformation of a resource into an actual achievement. In this context, Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 claim that the limitations on achieving functionings can be explored by analysing certain socioeconomic factors and the social constructions around childhood as critical structural conversion factors that shape the process of transforming inputs into achieved functionings.

Consequently, this study proposes that exploring the role of these conversion factors can shed some light on the decision-making barriers that young Chileans face to achieve the opportunities they value in life, which impact their possibilities to live well. Furthermore, Section 3.1.3 discusses the crucial role of agency and participation as paramount concepts when exploring this transformation process within young people.

The need for a clear epistemological and methodological framework

Chapter 2 highlights the importance of epistemological clarity when choosing a capabilities framework to study well-being (see Robeyns, 2005b). As argued in further detail in Chapter 4, this study is grounded in a participatory epistemology by recognising that knowledge is produced through an experiential and participatory process among individuals' interactions (Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 1997). Accordingly, this position aligns with a core aspect of participatory inquiry with children and young people, where the aim is not to identify a single truth but to construct knowledge collaboratively with participants based on their subjective life experiences (Clark and Moss, 2011).

Consequently, Section 3.1.3 addresses young people's participation within the capabilities-participatory framework. Based on this epistemological position, Chapter 4 further argues the critical importance of defining well-being in collaboration with different groups of young Chileans based on identifying key capabilities that ultimately shape a life they have reason to value. As previously mentioned, this does not imply that all participants will pursue the same opportunities, but it aims to construct an inclusive list of valued capabilities with students' voices at the forefront of the conversations.

3.1.2 Conceptualising socioeconomic inequality

As argued in Chapter 2, this thesis conceptualises inequality as a structural and systemic social problem encompassing the unfair allocation of resources and services,

disproportionately benefiting a privileged minority and resulting in disparities in living standards among the population (Ravallion, 2003; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). Understanding inequality as a disparity in living standards is particularly pertinent to this thesis. This perspective goes beyond monetary-based metrics and encompasses access to political and economic power, primarily concentrated among society's elite or privileged segment (Bielschowsky et al., 2018).

Furthermore, acknowledging inequality as an unfair power distribution assumes pivotal importance for this research. As outlined in Chapter 2, the investigation of socioeconomic inequality's repercussions on the well-being experiences of young individuals remains limited, primarily dominated by adult-centric approaches that heavily rely on monetary metrics to assess people's living standards. Therefore, there is a compelling need to broaden the scope of inequality indicators beyond traditional, objective, and monetary paradigms to gain a more nuanced understanding of young people's multifaceted well-being experiences.

Therefore, taking inspiration from Stiglitz et al. (2009), exploring young people's capabilities or freedoms of choice assumes significance in this project. It provides a broader lens through which inequality can be assessed, complementing conventional, objective-monetary metrics. Accordingly, Casas and Frønes (2020, p. 190) argue that the objective well-being approaches should not solely be defined by opportunity structures and economic resources of young people but also account for "the interplay between their opportunity structures, their *freedom* to *access* opportunities and their ability to *utilise* those opportunities."

This understanding of the objective dimension of well-being offers a valuable perspective for examining how young people with similar inputs have different well-being opportunities due to the influence of conversion factors that shape the transformation process. Consequently, building on Atkinson's (2015, p. 10) assertion that "equality of opportunity is achieved when the former variables – circumstances – do not play any role in the resulting outcome," this thesis argues that adopting a capabilities perspective can shed light on this discussion by exploring how socioeconomic inequalities influence young people's well-being opportunities.

Addressing the individualistic nature of the CA

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the CA has faced criticism for its individualistic orientation, raising questions about its efficacy in addressing systemic issues like socioeconomic inequality. By centring predominantly on individual freedoms, some scholars argue that the CA may not fully encapsulate the broader structural challenges that limit the population's freedom due to inequalities at structural levels (e.g.,

Stewart and Deneulin, 2002). Consequently, addressing systemic inequalities and larger societal concerns within the CA framework could present challenges that are critical to acknowledge.

This study highlights two main theoretical clarifications to overcome the individualistic criticism of the CA. First, it draws on the "group capabilities" notion raised by Stewart (2005) to elaborate the capability list. As claimed by the author, this concept underscores that group belonging and community influence well-being by shaping choices, values, and capabilities. Accordingly, Crocker and Robeyns (2010) emphasise the significance of recognising a group's agency, which is particularly relevant in the capabilities' selection and weighing process. Therefore, recognising the group's influence and facilitating a collective process of identifying a list of valued capabilities becomes critical to addressing the individualistic criticism.

The second strategy to overcome the individualistic limitation of the CA involves focusing on the conversion process of resources. As further expanded in Section 3.2., after identifying the groups' valued capabilities, analysing the effects of socioeconomic inequality on well-being opportunities as a social conversion factor[2] provides a framework to explore the structural barriers that young people face within their socioeconomic contexts, which shape the transformation process and may generate discrepancies in achieving well-being opportunities.

Consequently, the socioeconomic inequality analysis delves into examining how young individuals utilise the inputs available and assesses the extent to which socioeconomic factors constrain their decision-making power concerning their well-being opportunities. As further discussed in Section 3.1.3, such analysis can illuminate the underexplored relationship between socioeconomic inequality and young people's quality of life in Chile. Furthermore, it allows for a critical examination of the adult-institutional power dominance over young Chileans' well-being opportunities, which problematises the agency constraints they face and the limited spaces for participation and influence on their quality of life.

3.1.3 Conceptualising participation and agency

As previously stated, recognising young people as active social agents is a fundamental feature of this project. Therefore, this section aims to provide a theoretical context for understanding young people's agency and participation within this study while emphasising their connection to children's rights and citizenship. The discussion on

[2] As argued in further details in section 3.2, the CA literature refer to personal, social and environmental conversion factors (see Robeyns, 2000). This thesis is interested particularly in the social ones.

participation will be further elaborated in Chapter 4, elucidating it from epistemological and methodological perspectives.

Exploring the sociological roots of childhood

The capabilities-participatory framework finds its theoretical foundation in sociological approaches to childhood. This paradigm emerged in the early 1990s and fundamentally acknowledges childhood as an independent structure within the social fabric to which children actually contribute (James and Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998). This perspective marks a significant departure from earlier conceptualisations of childhood prevalent in the 1970s, which were mainly rooted in traditional adult-centred sociological paradigms (Mayall, 2013). In those earlier models, children were often regarded as extensions of the family rather than as vital and distinct members of society (Prout, 2011).

Children as agents and social actors

This transition had a profound impact on the societal positioning of children, acknowledging them as active social actors rather than incomplete versions of adults (Hammersley, 2017) and as beings in the present rather than solely individuals in the process of becoming adults (Lee, 2001). This sociological perspective on childhood significantly changed how society perceives children, recognising their roles as active participants in social interactions and acknowledging their agency and rights (Mayall, 2002).

Recognising children as agents within society is a fundamental pillar of the capabilities-participatory approach. Drawing inspiration from Corsaro's work (2018), this framework acknowledges that children actively contribute to shaping childhood through their dynamic social participation, challenging the traditionally passive roles ascribed to children in prior sociological constructs and positioning them as independent agents.

Childhood as a social structure

A major influence on the sociological approach to childhood is the work of Ariès (1965), who argued that childhood is intricately woven into distinct historical and cultural contexts, thereby giving rise to multiple childhoods that vary across diverse sociocultural settings. Building upon Ariès' insights, subsequent scholars in this field expanded on this premise, asserting that childhood is a socially constructed concept deeply rooted in geographical, historical, and social specificities (e.g., Lee, 2001; Prout, 2005). Consequently, this new conceptualisation challenges the universality of childhood

claimed by earlier constructs, presenting it as a fluid and dynamic social construct that varies across different contexts (James and James, 2012).

Subsequently, the capabilities-participatory framework recognises childhood as a structural form within society. As Qvortrup (2009) pointed out, like adulthood, childhood remains a permanent structure within societies, even as its definition evolves and children become part of adulthood. As further elaborated by James and James (2012), while the social structural space of childhood persists across generations, its definition varies as social practices shape it through legal and policy discourses within specific societies.

This perspective is highly relevant to this project, as viewing childhood as a structural entity facilitates exploring its interactions with other societal frameworks (Wyness, 2019). Therefore, as detailed in Section 3.2.2, recognising childhood as a structural form provides opportunities to examine its interactions with various social structures that impact young individuals' well-being opportunities, including governmental institutions, legal frameworks, and policies.

Furthermore, this recognition of childhood as a structural form interacting with other structures raises a fundamental discussion concerning young people's agency that requires further discussion. As introduced in Chapter 2, this project embraces a relational definition of agency, claiming that agency is intricately woven into the fabric of intergenerational dynamics and overarching social structures that shape young people's life experiences and interactions (Wyness, 2018a). Therefore, discussing the complex interaction between agency and the broader social context becomes essential to this chapter's purposes.

Conceptualising young people's agency

The discussion surrounding young people's agency is a recurring theme in sociological studies of childhood. Scholars in this field have been influenced by the long-standing agency-structure debate, which represents the struggle of social theorists to balance the influence of structural forces (e.g. institutions, rules, social norms) on individuals' ability to act freely (agency) (James and James, 2012).

In this context, Giddens' structuration theory emerges as a notably influential framework within the sociological debate since it aims to reconcile both concepts, arguing that they are mutually influential and cannot be studied in isolation (Giddens, 1979a; 1987).[3] As

[3] In this context, structuration can be broadly understood as the ongoing process of reproduction in which social structures are created, maintained and transformed by individuals' actions. See also Cohen (1989) for an in-depth discussion of this theory and its implications for social research.

highlighted by James et al. (1998), recognising that structure and agency are intertwined and interdependent concepts is a fundamental cornerstone of the sociology of childhood.

Within this paradigm, the new status of children and young people as social actors aligns closely with a discussion of their agency (James, 2009). As James and Prout (1997, p. 8) pointed out, from the sociology of childhood perspective, young individuals assume an active role in the social world by constructing and shaping "their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live." Therefore, they are no longer considered incomplete adults but active agents of the social fabric.

In this context, the literature reveals that scholars examine children's agency through different lenses. As noted by James and James (2012), some scholars view agency as an inherent attribute of being a social actor, investigating how the subjectivities of young people have the potential to shape and transform specific social, political, and economic narratives through their agency (e.g., Connolly, 1998). In contrast, others examine agency by focusing on the structural forces that influence the collective position of children as a minority group within society (e.g., Mayall, 2002).

The capabilities-participatory framework discussed in this chapter predominantly aligns with the latter approach. It explores how social constructions of childhood, primarily adult-constructed structures, shape and constrain young people's decision-making power within their well-being opportunities. Furthermore, as introduced in Chapter 2, this thesis examines the concept of young individuals' agency from a relational perspective. This viewpoint envisions agency as a process in which young individuals can "endorse, change and challenge their social worlds through their active engagement with others in the world" (Wyness, 2018a, p. 133). Within this framework, agency finds its foundation within relationships, often relying on and existing solely within them (Raithelhuber, 2016).

Therefore, the significance of a young individual's agency in the capabilities-participatory framework becomes evident when examined within the context of complex social structures and relationships. These factors can both empower and limit young people, as well as influence and intersect with the choices made by others. Consequently, as further elaborated in Section 3.2.2, a relational notion of agency offers a unique perspective for exploring how specific structural relations influence young people's decision-making power regarding their well-being opportunities.

Agency, participation, and capabilities

Oswell (2013) highlights that when children exercise their agency by making choices, taking actions, and influencing their surroundings, their participation naturally emerges. Therefore, young people's decision-making freedom can be observed by their

participation and interactions within their social worlds (Sinclair, 2004). As introduced in Chapter 2, the UNCRC serves as a prevailing framework that shapes young people's participation and decision-making power in ratified countries. However, the conceptualisation of young people as social actors with the right to participate is in tension with the early stages of the capabilities approach, primarily due to the inherent conceptualisation of children and childhood within this approach.

According to Sen (1999), participation involves individuals being able to decide their own lives freely. Nevertheless, Sen primarily focused on adults' freedom to choose in the present, relegating young people's freedom of choice to the future when they become adults (Saito, 2003). This conceptualisation poses two main problems. First, it fails to recognise young people as agents in the present, portraying them as future adults, a common issue within adult-centred approaches. Second, it raises the question of whether children and young people are entitled to capabilities.

Scholars have thoroughly addressed this debate, with Bonvin and Stoecklin (2016) outlining two main perspectives. One viewpoint argues that due to children's incomplete rationality and self-determinism, their functionings should be prescribed rather than endowed with the freedom of choice, as they require education before being entitled to capabilities. Conversely, an alternative faction contends that children possess a latent form of self-determinism deserving of cultivation. While the first approach neglects young people's agency as individuals in the present, the latter aligns closely with the UNCRC and the sociology of childhood.

From this debate emerges the theoretical distance which demarcates the capabilities-participatory framework from the earlier stages of the CA by recognising young people's agency and their inherent self-determinism, which is closely tied to acknowledging their participatory rights. Therefore, acknowledging participation from a rights perspective becomes crucial to arguing further that participation goes beyond the freedom of choice, which is often an exclusive attribute of adults within a capabilities perspective. Moreover, it allows for an exploration of the extent to which participation and decision-making are shaped by adult-centred discourses and institutions, highlighting the degree to which adults delimit young people's agency participation spaces.

Within this discussion, Baraldi and Iervese (2014) assert that young individuals embody their agency and decision-making power by actively exercising their participation rights, enabling them to shape their social environments. These authors contend that communication is a pivotal factor in determining how children can exercise their rights and have a say in decisions that affect them. However, the prevailing generational-hierarchical framework and societal constructions of childhood often constrain children's agency within predefined communication paradigms, limiting their influence in decision-making relative to that of adults.

Therefore, a better understanding of the communication systems between adult-based institutional constructions and childhood becomes crucial for fostering children's participatory engagement. Consequently, the relational approach to agency becomes fundamental to exploring this generational and institutional hierarchical relationship. Hence, as further elaborated in Section 3.2.2, social constructions of childhood emerge as a critical conversion factor to explore the limitations on the well-being opportunities of young Chileans by drawing on the concepts of agency and participation for the analysis.

Reconciling children's agency and participation rights in the capabilities-participatory framework

As discussed in this dissertation, the UNCRC wields significant influence over various aspects of children's lives. However, it bears certain limitations that are pertinent to address, particularly concerning their participation rights. First, as highlighted by Hinton (2008), although the UNCRC emphasises the importance of taking young people's voices seriously, they have had minimal influence on decisions regarding the allocation of resources that directly impact their quality of life worldwide. Moreover, as reflected in policies and social programs, countries' interpretations predominantly emphasise children's protection over a participatory perspective, hindering their active citizenship (James, 2011). Consequently, a clear conceptualisation of participation remains absent from the UNCRC's perspective.

Secondly, an essential point relevant to this thesis was raised by Ben-Arieh et al. (2014, p. 4), who argue that the UNCRC does not delve into the complex and nuanced relationship between rights, freedom, and development, where "the development of capacities to transform resources into valuable activities is an essential part of well-being." This point problematises the unfair distribution of opportunities within a nation, predominately rooted in the hierarchical relationship between childhood and adulthood in societies.

This subordinated position of childhood is particularly relevant when discussing young people's capabilities and their relationship to rights. As Liebel (2014) pointed out, Article 5 of the Convention refers to the child's evolving capacities and the role of adults in guiding children's rights recognised in the Convention (see UNICEF, 1989)[4]. Liebel argues that this article is directly linked to Article 12 and raises questions about how the rights to be heard and participate in decisions that affect them can be exercised only by certain children, those deemed competent by adults and thus capable of participating.

[4] See also Lansdown (2005) for a detailed discussion concerning the concept of "evolving capacities of the child"

Beneath this discourse emerges the idea that the Convention rights are not universal for all children but only to those competent under adults' approval. Furthermore, Bonvin and Stoecklin (2016) highlight that within the Convention's discourse, there is a portrait of children as vulnerable beings in need of protection by adults, directly impacting their participation and power of decision over their lives. Therefore, there is an inherent need to problematise how adult constructs shape children's agency and participation within their well-being opportunities, where the CA emerges as a potential framework to do so.

In this context, Biggeri et al. (2011) address the misrecognition of young people as capable beings in the present and propose a shift towards the idea of young people having "evolving capabilities", emerging as an influential concept within this field. These authors argue that children's opportunities, capacities, and agency evolve, thereby theoretically acknowledging young individuals as distinct from adults, with different capabilities. This perspective expands the exclusive protection focus on children to recognise their agency and power to influence their social worlds.

Within this discussion, it becomes apparent that the capabilities and rights-based approaches, in isolation, have limitations in conceptualising young people's participation concerning their well-being. For this reason, various scholars suggest that children's rights, including participation, should be examined in conjunction with other disciplines, such as the sociology of childhood (Hinton, 2008; Stoecklin and Bonvin, 2014).

As noted by Ben-Arieh and Tarshish (2017), the concepts of children's rights and well-being have undergone significant historical shifts, closely linked to societal attitudes toward children and their quality of life. These authors argue that the convergence of children's rights and well-being lies in valuing children's subjectivities, leading to their active participation in decisions. Hence, they highlight the need to move towards recognising children not only as emerging citizens but also as experts in childhood matters.

Furthermore, as Wyness (2013) suggests, there is a need for broader definitions of young people's participation, acknowledging that participation can manifest in varying degrees of intensity and forms across different contexts. In this regard, the author advocates for a conceptualisation of participation that encompasses not only involvement in discussions and decision-making (discursive participation) but also engagement in social, political, and economic activities (material participation). Adopting this broader understanding of participation emphasises children's subjectivities and active involvement in decisions, underscoring the importance of considering diverse forms of participation in defining children's well-being.[5]

[5] Within this discussion, Wyness argues that policymakers worldwide often prioritise discursive forms of children's participation over material ones. According to the author, this preference stems from the fact that material participation, which involves a more direct engagement of

Consequently, the capabilities-participatory framework aims to bridge the gaps inherent to the capabilities and rights approaches to conceptualise young people's well-being. It argues that recognising young people's agency, participation, and decision-making power is fundamental to defining how participation takes place within the research process. Furthermore, this framework can potentially influence broader spaces beyond academia, such as policymaking and the institutional debate concerning young people's well-being in Chile.

3.2 Defining the role of conversion factors as an analytical tool

As previously mentioned, a fundamental aspect of the capabilities-participatory framework for exploring young people's well-being in Chile focuses on converting inputs into outcomes. In this context, a conversion factors analysis provides a unique tool to identify the gap between a group's functionings and the real opportunity to achieve them (Biggeri and Ferrannini, 2014). Therefore, this section suggests that conducting a conversion factors analysis can shed light on young Chileans' constraints in their well-being by exploring the role of socioeconomic variables and social constructions of childhood as critical conversion factors.[6]

Robeyns (2000) categorises conversion factors into three types: *personal*, which pertain to individual characteristics that influence the transformation process; *social*, which relate to policies or societal structures mediating the transformation; and *environmental*, which are associated with geographical or climate variables that individuals cannot control but can influence the transformation This research is particularly interested in exploring *social* conversion factors, understood as specific social structures that influence young people's agency and affect their opportunities to develop and achieve a life they have reason to value (Yousefzadeh et al., 2019).

Within this context, this section introduces socioeconomic status (SES) and social constructions of childhood (SCC) as critical *social* conversion factors to explore young people's limitations of well-being opportunities and their power of choice over them.[7] These conversion factors emerge from the gaps identified in the literature review concerning the lack of studies incorporating the role of socioeconomic inequality in the

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young people in society, challenges the prevailing construction of childhood that portrays children as dependent on adults. This discussion is further elaborated in Chapter 4, when arguing the key contribution of adopting an intergenerational approach to participation from a methodological perspective.

[6] It is important to note that the conversion factors analysis performed in this dissertation derives from the capability list elaborated in collaboration with young people (presented in Chapter 5). Chapter 4 delves deeper into the methodology of this project and the different stages of it.

[7] Personal and environmental conversion factors are not included in this discussion. Nevertheless, they could provide valuable insights to inform this field of study in future research.

study of young people's well-being in Chile and the adult-centred approach to define and develop instruments to assess it (see Chapter 2).

As introduced in Section 3.1.1, in the conversion factors analysis proposed, the role of institutions and public policy is critical as they represent and provide the key inputs that young people need to transform to achieve their valued opportunities. Therefore, further discussion of the links between these structural inputs and the conversion process becomes fundamental.

The role of institutions and policies in the conversion factors analysis

This thesis emphasises the vital role of institutions and policies in understanding the quality of life for young individuals. As outlined in Chapter 1, these institutional frameworks define and manifest through social policies and programmes the dimensions that shape the lives of young Chileans, focusing on education and the overarching concept of "well-being". However, the capabilities-participatory framework postulates that institutional definitions and policies are more than mere abstract constructs—they are foundational inputs necessary for young individuals to convert into their valued opportunities. Therefore, these interdependent concepts require further explanation for theoretical clarity within the capabilities-participatory framework.

In broad terms, institutions can be defined as "the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction" (North, 1990, p. 3). Accordingly, institutions represent the societal structures that facilitate or hinder individuals' scope of actions (Hodgson, 2006). From a capabilities perspective, Nambiar (2013) asserts that institutions have a fundamental role in developing people's social and economic functionings and capabilities. As Hvinden and Halvorsen (2018, p. 866) put it, while personal characteristics are essential to transform resources into valued outcomes, "multi-layered structures" such as economic, political and social ones significantly influence people's agency and opportunities to transform resources.

In this context, analysing the role of institutions is critical when assessing societal inequities in resource allocation and power dynamics of participation within a society. Furthermore, the interplay between institutions and minority groups is profoundly influenced by sociocultural constructs which fail to recognise these minorities, inhibiting their equitable participation in society (Fraser and Honneth, 2003). Therefore, when recognising young Chileans as a minority group, acknowledging the complex relationship between childhood and related institutions becomes paramount when assessing their role as inputs shaping young individuals' opportunities to pursue valued lives. The construction of young Chileans as a minority group is further elaborated in Section 3.2.2.

Hence, institutions play a crucial role in shaping policies. In this context, social policies can be broadly understood as a country's concrete political actions to address societal issues and meet the population's needs (Knill and Tosun, 2020). As Bessell (2017a, p. 201) put it, "policy is focused on the identification of actual or anticipated problems and responses to those problems." However, challenges arise in identifying these problems within society, leading to certain groups being favoured by policies while others are neglected (Bacchi, 2009). Moreover, Bacchi further argues that policies not only address specific problems but also contribute to their construction and reproduction. Hence, it becomes critical to analyse how policy constructions shape young people's well-being opportunities.

As presented in Chapter 1, the core policy involving children's well-being in Chile is rooted in a rights approach (see the PNNA in Chapter 1). Nevertheless, this framework is inclined towards provision and protection rights without clearly conceptualising participation rights. Furthermore, as Díaz-Bórquez et al. (2018) pointed out, there is no evidence of young people engaging systematically in policymaking decisions in Chile. Therefore, inspired by Bacchi's (2009, p. 213) policy-analysis framework,[8] this thesis proposes that well-being policies in Chile must be problematised in order to understand the "deep conceptual" foundations on which these policies are constructed.

In this context, this thesis argues that a misinterpretation of the problem and an unclear conceptualisation of what young people's well-being theoretically means in Chile constrain their opportunities to live well. To these purposes, embracing Byrne and Lundy's (2015) argument concerning the barriers of policymaking debate concerning children, this dissertation claims that the root of the problem can be partially linked to adult dominance and a lack of rights-based approaches to conceptualise well-being, particularly concerning participation.

The following subsections describe in further detail how socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood can provide valuable insights as conversion factors when analysing young Chileans' well-being opportunities and their possibilities to participate in the decisions that affect them.

[8] "What is the problem represented to be?" (WPR) is a method to critically analyse and question public policies from a conceptual perspective. In this context, it is not interested in the gaps between what a policy states and what it delivers, but in examining the conceptual representation of the problem in question. See Bacchi (2009) for more details about this approach.

3.2.1 Socioeconomic status (SES)

Socioeconomic status (SES) is this project's first key conversion factor, which allows for exploring how structural socioeconomic variables shape young Chileans' well-being opportunities and their power of choice over them. As previously argued in Chapter 2, the evidence shows that inequality and well-being are related concepts, but it is unclear how inequality affects young people's subjective experiences. Therefore, such analysis emerges as a novel lens to illuminate the relationships between inequality and young people's quality of life in Chile.

Contextualising socioeconomic inequality in Chile

As outlined in Chapter 1, socioeconomic inequality is a phenomenon that has been present since Spanish colonisation. Experts agree that the market-driven reforms implemented during the 1980s represent a landmark in the structure of inequality in the country due to the privatisation of the national companies, the consolidation of private property, and a transformation of social security through the reduction of the state's role (Larrañaga, 2016). Heavily influenced by these reforms, Chile is among the most unequal OECD countries (OECD, 2020). Moreover, while poverty rates have decreased significantly over the past 30 years in Chile (Agostini et al., 2008; Larrañaga and Rodríguez, 2014), the wealthiest 20% controls 70% of the country's wealth (Martínez and Uribe, 2017).

These wealth and power distribution disparities can be observed predominantly within Chilean places of residence and the educational and health systems. According to the literature available, there is a direct correlation between place of residence and access to public services (Agostini et al., 2008; MDS, 2017; MDSF, 2023c), with educational outcomes and opportunities (CIES, 2012) and with health outcomes (Arteaga et al., 2002). Nevertheless, as previously stated, the available literature predominantly focuses on the adult population and adopts adult-centred approaches to explore the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and young people's quality of life.

Therefore, it is still unclear how the unequal distribution of resources and power affects young people's well-being when recognising young people as social agents and childhood as a social structure on their own rather than an extension of the family. Consequently, this dissertation proposes to analyse the extent to which students' socioeconomic background, characterised by the type of education they access (public-private) and place of living (rural-urban/low-high income neighbourhood), shapes their well-being opportunities.

It is essential to mention that socioeconomic status is closely linked with the notion of class within Latin American studies, particularly when discussing middle classes in the region and their relationship to capitalist economies (e.g., Sémbler, 2006; Espinoza and

Barozet, 2009). While this thesis acknowledges the different theoretical underpinnings behind the use of class or socioeconomic status for analytical purposes[9], both concepts are occasionally used interchangeably during the analysis of Chapters 6 and 7. Within this discussion, it is pertinent to mention that the term socioeconomic status is used as the name of the conversion factor over class to facilitate the analysis, and not due to theoretical reasons since socioeconomic status is the official characterisation provided by the Chilean State concerning socioeconomic qualification.

Characterising young people's socioeconomic inequality in Chile

As further elaborated in Chapter 4, this study draws on two main instruments to characterise young students' SES. The state's official instrument to characterise and divide the Chilean population based on socioeconomic variables and vulnerability is the Calificación Socioeconómica (Socioeconomic Qualification). This socioeconomic qualification derives from the Registro Nacional de Hogares (The Social Registry of Households) (RNH), which places each household within a range of income levels. This income-based identification is determinant for families and young people to access the state's social aid (MDSF, 2022a).

This instrument segments households depending on income, ranging from segment 40[10] to segment 100[11], eventually identifying a household SES. According to this qualification, households between segments 40 and 70 have greater vulnerability and lower income, while 80 to 100 represent higher income and lower vulnerability (MDS, 2019). Table 1 illustrates the distribution of Chilean society across the different socioeconomic segments in its latest report (MDSF, 2023a). The data presented in the figure indicates that a significant proportion of the population is classified under segment 40, while a smaller proportion falls inside segment 100. Hence, the prevailing demographic in Chile is predominantly described by those with medium to low socioeconomic status, while a minority is identified among the higher SES category.

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[9] See, for instance, Grusky (2019) for a discussion of Marx and Webber's work relevance in relation to exploring inequality in capitalist economies.

[10] These households are classified in the 40% lowest income or most socioeconomically vulnerable with a mean monthly income of $208,890 Chilean pesos (£190 approx.) (MDS, 2017)

[11] These households are classified in the 10% of higher income or less socioeconomically vulnerable with a mean monthly income of $1,911,243 Chilean pesos (£1,760 approx.) (MDS, 2017)

Table 1: Distribution of Chileans' Household Socioeconomic Qualification

Section	Segment	N. of Households	% Registered
40	0% - 40%	4,297,087	47.90%
50	41% - 50%	675,451	7.50%
60	51% - 60%	681,638	7.60%
70	61% - 70%	664,010	7.40%
80	71% - 80%	790,208	8.80%
90	81% - 90%	1,251,969	14.00%
100	91% - 100%	606,527	6.80%

Source: author's elaboration

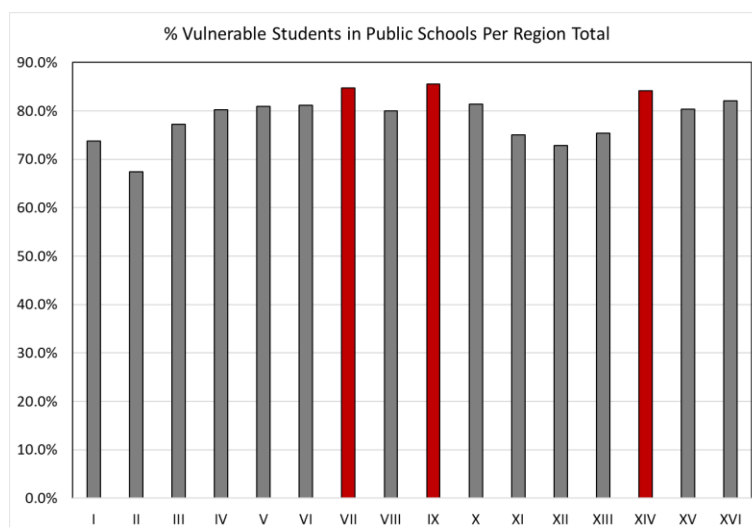
Another significant tool is the Indice de Vulnerabilidad Escolar (Educational Vulnerability Index) (IVE-SINAE) (see JUNAEB, 2022), created to identify school students' socioeconomic vulnerability (based on the household's Socioeconomic Qualification). It is calculated annually by the Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas (National Board of School Aid and Scholarships) (JUNAEB)[12], ranging from 0 to 100%, where a greater percentage indicates a more profound vulnerability. The index indicates the level of poverty risk status connected with each school's students who attend public and subsidised private schools.[13] As indicated by Cornejo (2005), its fundamental aim is to pursue social justice within the educational system by identifying the vulnerable population and providing social aid, such as scholarships and school meals.

Figure 3-2 shows the percentage of vulnerable students attending public schools across the country's regions based on the latest IVE-SINAE results (JUNAEB, 2023). The graph highlights a significant majority of public school students falling within the vulnerable category according to the index. Notably, regions VII, IX, and XIV stand out with the highest percentages of vulnerable students, where more than 80% of the public school students are classified as vulnerable.

[12] Agency that provides financial aid to students in Chile.

[13] Private schools are excluded from this index, with the assumption that those students are not considered vulnerable.

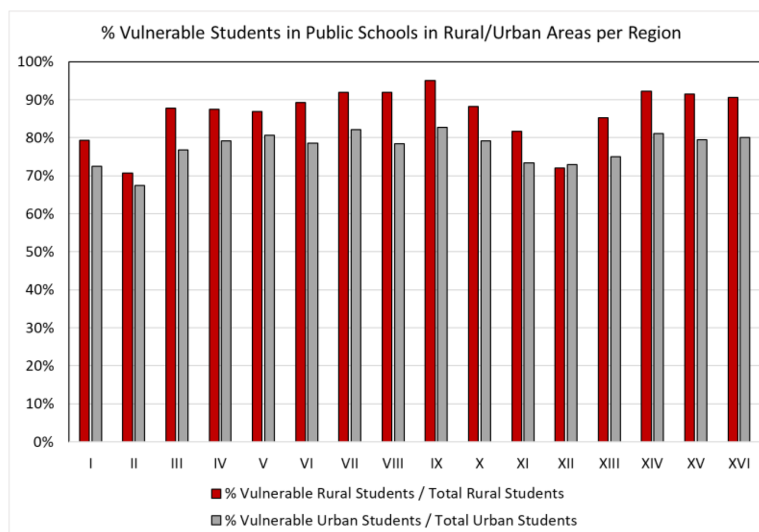
Figure 3-2: Percentage of Vulnerable Students in Public Schools Per Region Based on the IVE-SINAE 2023



Source: author's elaboration

Furthermore, Figure 3-3 reveals a striking trend of higher vulnerability prevalence in rural student groups compared to their urban counterparts in nearly every region of Chile. Notably, the IX Region displays the highest percentage of vulnerable students in rural areas.

Figure 3-3: Percentage of Vulnerable Students in Rural/Urban Areas Per Region



Source: author's elaboration

The data available reflects an unequal society, where the percentage of low-income households and vulnerable students within the educational system in Chile is worrying. Recognising this pronounced disparity in vulnerability among public school students

holds significant importance when exploring Chilean students' well-being opportunities. Therefore, exploring how students' socioeconomic backgrounds influence their opportunities for well-being becomes critical to identifying the barriers that most Chilean students face when pursuing a life they have reason to value. Nevertheless, as argued in Chapter 2, the relationship between socioeconomic status and well-being opportunities in Chile remains unclear and heavily rooted in adult-centred instruments. Therefore, new approaches are needed to better understand the impact of socioeconomic inequality in young Chileans' quality of life.

Introducing segregation as an analytical tool to explore the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and young Chileans' well-being

As previously discussed, the unequal distribution of resources and power within society has varying effects on those with limited access to them. Chapter 2 argues that these effects have traditionally been examined in terms of macro-level wealth distribution within countries, such as GDP, and measures of household income distribution, like the CASEN survey in Chile. However, these adult-centric indicators inadequately capture the life experiences of young people, as they primarily reflect their parents' access to goods and services, overlooking the status of young individuals as social agents within society.

Therefore, to address this gap in the literature, the capabilities-participatory framework draws on the concept of *segregation*, a multifaceted phenomenon manifesting in different aspects of a given society (Valenzuela et al., 2010). According to Rodríguez Vignoli (2001), segregation exhibits two fundamental dimensions: a social dimension, concerning the lack of interaction between social groups, and a geographical dimension, linked to the unequal distribution of these groups within a specific area. Various types of segregation are explored in the literature, including those tied to race, gender, religion, and ethnicity (see Orfield and Lee, 2005). This thesis investigates segregation derived from socioeconomic status, acknowledged by experts as one of Chile's most relevant segregation types (Valenzuela et al., 2010).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that segregation influences the participation of disadvantaged communities in various aspects of society, including access to the Chilean labour market (e.g., Sabatini et al., 2001; Garretón, 2017), disparities within education (Bellei et al., 2019) and within the healthcare system (Goyenechea, 2019). While these studies have explored the impact of inequality by focusing on segregation within the adult population, less evidence exists concerning its effects on young people's well-being opportunities.

Consequently, the capabilities-participatory framework explores the influence of young Chileans' SES on their well-being opportunities by examining the impact of residential

(also known as socio-spatial) and educational segregation. As previously stated, these two critical dimensions of young Chileans' lives are considered in this study as the key conversion factors that influence young Chilean's well-being opportunities.

Residential segregation and socio-spatial inequalities

In their seminal study, Massey and Denton (1988, p. 282) define residential segregation as a multidimensional phenomenon involving "the degree to which two or more groups live separately from one another, in different parts of the urban environment." Sabatini et al. (2001, p. 27) further expand this definition, arguing that it refers to "the spatial proximity or territorial concentration observed among families belonging to the same social group." According to these authors, a social group's definition includes but is not limited to shared characteristics related to ethnicity, age, religion, and socioeconomic status. This dissertation explores residential segregation from a socioeconomic perspective, consistent with Larrañaga and Sanhueza (2007), who emphasise this dimension's critical influence within the Chilean structure of inequality.

The literature reveals that residing in segregated cities has a wide range of effects on their communities. Garreton et al. (2020) highlight the hardship and limitations of opportunities for disadvantaged groups within a society to access social, economic, and political spheres. Other studies have shown that living in a segregated location reproduces intergenerational poverty, constrains social participation, and limits access to education (e.g., Arriagada, 2000; Ruiz-Tagle, 2013). Therefore, it becomes relevant to examine closely the extent to which living in a segregated society can impact young people's well-being opportunities.

Furthermore, residential segregation is not limited to large cities; it also extends between cities across the country, significantly impacting rural areas. As noted by Mieres Brevis (2020), the massive migration to the capital and other large urban cities that has happened in recent decades can be explained, at least partly, by the lack of opportunities and limited economic development of rural locations. According to the author, this migration has led to enduring regional inequalities that constrain opportunities for rural residents.

This "rural segregation" becomes apparent when comparing access and quality of services in urban cities and in rural locations, where centralisation has negatively affected rural economic development, resulting in the lower quality of public services and limited job opportunities (Agostini et al., 2008; MDS, 2017). In this context, as Azócar et al. (2008) pointed out, the combination of these factors reflects a policy centralisation problem, which ultimately constrains rural residents' opportunities and power of choice.

Concerning young people specifically, as noted by Larrañaga and Sanhueza (2007), those living in segregated neighbourhoods face educational and health disadvantages compared

to children growing up in non-segregated locations. However, the relationship between residential segregation and young Chileans' well-being remains under-researched in the literature. Additionally, the literature exploring the relationship between capabilities and residential segregation in Latin America is scarce and non-existent in Chile, representing a critical gap in the literature. Addressing these theoretical and empirical gaps becomes relevant since, as Bucheli (2016) suggested, the CA has the potential to improve scholars' comprehension of how spatial injustices perpetuate inequalities and simultaneously assess the specific valuable capabilities that communities lack.

Consequently, adopting a capabilities perspective to analyse the influence of residential segregation linked to SES in young peoples' well-being provides a unique lens to understand better the relationship between young Chileans' places of residence and its influence on their power of choice over their well-being opportunities. As discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, this thesis explores the effects of residential segregation by analysing young people's places of residence, including the region and neighbourhood where they reside, being these critical factors that define their SES.

Educational inequalities and segregation

Among Chile's educational reforms initiated during the 1980s and 1990s, the voucher policy, also referred to as school selection, has been identified by experts as a pivotal factor contributing to educational segregation. The school selection policy operates through the voucher system, which was adopted from the US experience and implemented during the 1980s in Chile, with the purpose of promoting descentralisation, competence and choice within the school system (see Chubb and Moe, 1990). While there are tensions within the literature concerning what specifically the voucher system theoretically and pragmatically means in Chile, it is ultimately a funding model that grants a subsidy to public and private-subsidised schools based on the number of students enrolled (Elacqua and Santos, 2013).

Studies reveal that deprived families are most affected by this system due to the lack of power of choice linked with limited financial resources and schools' disproportionate power in selecting their students (Canals et al., 2019; Carrasco and Honey, 2019). According to Canals et al. (2019) the problem behind this system lies in the lack of power that parents have of choosing a school, since it is ultimately the school who chooses the family. Therefore, it becomes critical for this thesis to explore the effects of educational inequalities on young Chileans' opportunities for well-being.

The Chilean education system consist primarily of three types of schooling education, which mainly differs on its administration: state-subsidised public schools, state-subsidised private schools, or non-subsidised private schools. Public schools are tuition

free and are entirely subsidised by the state. Subsidised-private schools are in part subsidised by the state, and the remaining part is financed by monthly fees charged to parents (families). In contrast, private schools entirely rely on tuition fees (see, for instance, Valenzuela et al., 2008).

According to recent statistics by the Ministry of Education (see MINEDUC, 2019) 54% of Chilean students attend subsidised-private schools, followed by 34% public schools and, lastly, private ones with the 9% representing the minority. Furthermore, there are two other types of administration called Corporación de Administración Delegada and Servicio Local de Educación, in which less than 1% of the student population in Chile attends these types of schools respectively. These are predominantly special cases of public institutions aligned with private entities, predominantly private corporations that offer education to their children's employees.

The main differentiating characteristic among these categories of institutions pertains to the variation in educational quality. Recent studies highlight this disparity, with public-state institutions typically offering a lower education quality than their private counterparts (Elacqua, 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2014; Murillo et al., 2018). According to Cavieres Fernández (2014), this imbalance derives from historical socioeconomic inequalities within the system, whereby students from lower-income backgrounds are disproportionately enrolled in low-quality institutions.

Due to the prohibitive costs associated with accessing higher-quality, often private, schools, low-SES families have notable limitations in their options compared to those from middle and high socioeconomic backgrounds (Corvalán and Román, 2012; Corvalán et al., 2016). As a result, the private sector predominantly serves high-income families, while the public system primarily serves low-income families. Hence, financial limitations hinder low-income families from seeking high-performing schools. This point underscores the critical importance of the quality of education within this discussion.

Quality, performance, and opportunity: the triangle of educational inequality

As previously suggested, exploring the root causes of educational inequality in Chile uncovers the pivotal role that the quality of education received and students' academic performance play in shaping educational opportunities. However, the definition and measurement of quality remain subjects of ongoing debate within the literature. A potential explanation for this persistent debate, as proposed by Valdebenito (2011), suggests that quality in education is not a fixed or objective concept. Instead, it exists as a contested terrain, reflecting broader political and social struggles concerning the role of education in society.

For this thesis, quality is understood as the educational outcomes students achieve, including cognitive and non-cognitive development, as well as future employment and life opportunities (Cavieres Fernández, 2014). As will be explored in greater detail in subsequent sections of this thesis, educational outcomes hold profound significance in the Chilean context. Various studies demonstrate that these outcomes play a vital role in expanding educational opportunities and increasing access to higher education, ultimately enhancing employment prospects and improving their quality of life by facilitating social mobility (e.g., Bellei and García-Huidobro, 2003; Rodríguez Garcés and Padilla Fuentes, 2016; Aguirre and Matta, 2022).

Furthermore, disparities in academic performance are critical within the educational system. Studies reveal a strong correlation between SES, the quality of the education received, and academic achievement, with students from wealthier families generally outperforming their peers from low-income backgrounds due to the higher-quality education they access (Drago and Paredes, 2011). Bellei (2013) has referred to this phenomenon as "academic segregation," where students are sorted within the educational system according to their academic ability or achievement, often leading to unequal access and distribution of educational opportunities.

Consequently, as Rodríguez Garcés et al. (2020) emphasise, the superior academic performance provided by private institutions is a major factor driving Chilean families' preference for private education. However, the tuition fees of private institutions and the limited availability of places in high-performing public schools generate intense competition, resulting in the inability of some families to enrol their children in their preferred schools. Hence, as pointed out by a faction of the literature, the school selection policy exacerbates educational disparities between private and public administrations concerning the quality of education provided, thus engendering a stratified education system that further disadvantages low-income students who cannot afford private education (Elacqua and Santos, 2013; Canals et al., 2019).

As a result, Chile's selective education approach perpetuates the privileged status of the upper class, sustaining segregation and constraining the educational opportunities of the lower classes. This point is addressed by Huerta Wong (2012), who argues that educational exclusion[14] directly diminishes opportunities for social mobility, exacerbates poverty, perpetuates inequality, and weakens individuals' economic competitiveness. Consequently, the prevalence of educational segregation in Chilean schools emerges as a

[14] It is crucial to acknowledge that as pointed out by Bonomelli et al. (2020), exclusion in education extends beyond access or enrolment rates; it is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses various indicators, including attendance, academic achievement, and the social and emotional well-being of marginalised populations, such as low-income students, indigenous students, and students with disabilities.

significant barrier to young people's well-being opportunities by limiting their ability to choose among different valuable options.

Academic performance and social mobility

Several scholars have addressed education's importance in improving Chilean's quality of life through allowing social mobility (e.g., Aguirre and Matta, 2022). As Rodríguez Garcés and Padilla Fuentes (2016) emphasise, a student's secondary school academic performance significantly influences their admission to higher education, determining their educational opportunities. Therefore, the highly segregated educational system limits educational opportunities, constraining students from low socioeconomic backgrounds from choosing among different options and reducing their well-being opportunities. In this discussion, the role of standardised tests in Chile becomes critical since these are the main instruments to assess academic performance, ultimately shaping students' educational opportunities.

SIMCE

The Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de Educación (National System of Educational Quality) (SIMCE) stands as Chile's primary instrument for assessing students' performance in alignment with the National Curriculum (ACE, 2023). Its core objective is to enhance educational quality and equity within the system, and its results are categorised by students' SES, facilitating comparisons of academic achievements based on students' and schools' SES (ACE, 2017).

The implications of SIMCE extend well beyond mere academic assessments. They profoundly influence school funding, teacher employment, and the overall reputation of educational institutions (Meckes and Carrasco, 2010). Furthermore, these results significantly influence families' decisions when enrolling their children in high-performing institutions (Ortiz Cáceres, 2012). Therefore, SIMCE results hold considerable weight for schools, serving as the official benchmark for evaluating the quality of education they provide and positioning them based on their performance. Improved SIMCE results lead to an increased demand for enrolment in high-performing schools, translating into higher financial resources received from the state.

However, this test's purpose and effectiveness have been controversial in the literature. A recurring debate among scholars revolves around the accuracy of its results. An issue known as "teaching to the test" has been observed in many schools, where test preparation is prioritised over broader learning objectives (Ruminot Vergara, 2017). Moreover, instances have arisen where, on the day of the test, there is a higher rate of non-attendance, and reports of discriminatory practices against low-performing students have surfaced,

where some students have been discouraged from attending the test to boost the school's overall performance (Román, 1999; Falabella and Zincke, 2019). Consequently, the test has been criticised for stigmatising low-performing students and schools, exacerbating educational exclusion.

As Botella and Ortiz (2018) highlighted, SIMCE results adversely affect educational inequality in Chile. Rather than narrow segregation, they widen it by concentrating resources and high-performing students in a few select schools. Furthermore, due to the superior performance of private institutions in this test, the privatisation of the educational system limits academic opportunities for students from low-income backgrounds (Cavieres, 2011).

Consequently, SIMCE promotes market-driven reforms centred on schools' competition for the best students rather than enhancing educational quality and equity (Inzunza and Campos-Martínez, 2016). As a result, low-income students attending low-performing schools are structurally constrained in their educational prospects, directly impacting their well-being opportunities and limiting access to higher education.

PAES

The second key instrument in Chile's education system is the Prueba de Acceso a la Educación Superior (Higher Education Access Examen) (PAES)[15]. Chilean students are required to take this test to gain admission to higher education, with higher scores increasing their chances of being accepted into their preferred university degree programs and institutions (see DEMRE, 2023).[16] However, the literature highlights a strong association between students' and schools' SES with their PAES results.

A recent report analysing PAES performance and school dependency reveals that students in private schools achieve substantially higher test scores than public school students (Espinoza, 2023). According to Alessandri and Peñafiel (2022), this can be explained

[15] PAES is the latest nomination of this test since 2023, which has been previously called Prueba de Selección Universitaria (University Selection Test) (PSU) and Prueba de Aptitud Académica (Academic Aptitude Test) (PAA).

[16] According to the literature, admission processes for higher education admission often rely on absolute raking systems, such as standardised test scores, which can exacerbate access inequalities for disadvantaged students due to the lack of the necessary resources and support to navigate the complex application process and meet admission requirements (Gallegos Mardones and Campos-Requena, 2021). These authors argue that implementing relative ranking systems, considering students' performance within their social, economic, and cultural contexts, can be a more equitable approach to promoting diversity and inclusion in higher education. Rodríguez Garcés et al. (2021) further support this argument, stating that traditional admission processes that rely solely on standardised tests and academic performance pose barriers for disadvantaged students. These authors demonstrate the success of relative ranking systems in enhancing access to higher education for students from low SES backgrounds, especially those coming from rural and low-income families.

given that private education provides superior academic performance and preparation for accessing higher education. As a result, those with access to high-quality education are more likely to access university and obtain higher-paying jobs, whereas those without such possibility encounter economic hardships and limited career opportunities (Nuñez and Gutiérrez, 2004; Undurraga, 2019). Zimmerman (2019) highlights this disparity, revealing that specific degrees are more likely to lead to well-paid jobs and leadership roles for male students from private schools, while students from public schools, particularly female students[17], face greater challenges.

Therefore, Chilean students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face various constraints concerning their educational opportunities. Notably, socioeconomic factors significantly affect their access to quality education, hinder their academic performance, and subsequently affect their prospects for pursuing higher education. Consequently, disparities within the educational system assume critical importance when examining the extent to which socioeconomic status, as a conversion factor, influences young Chileans' well-being opportunities.

The following section explores the importance of incorporating social constructions of childhood as the second conversion factor within this thesis. This factor is of paramount significance in comprehending the obstacles that young Chileans encounter regarding their well-being opportunities, extending beyond the socioeconomic disparities prevalent in the country.

3.2.2 Social constructions of childhood (SCC)

The preceding section discussed how SES serves as a crucial conversion factor influencing the well-being opportunities of young Chileans. Variables such as place of residence and the type of education they receive play essential roles in shaping their ability to make choices among various valuable options. This section introduces Social Constructions of Childhood (SCC) as the second conversion factor in this study. It argues that understanding the extent to which the dominant social constructions of childhood in the Chilean context constrain young people's power of choice is crucial for comprehending the structural limitations they encounter in their well-being opportunities.

As highlighted in Section 3.1.3, a fundamental aspect of the capabilities-participatory approach is grounded in the Social Studies of Childhood paradigm. This perspective recognises young people as active social agents and childhood and youth as distinct social structures. Furthermore, it offers a framework to explore how various structural factors,

[17] Due to time and resources limitations, this study is not able to analyse the relationship between gender and well-being opportunities in Chile. However, it is raised as a critical topic to address in future research.

including childhood, socioeconomic inequality, and constructions of well-being, affect young people's ability to make choices among valued capabilities and convert inputs into real opportunities. It also acknowledges the role of young people's relational agency and their capacity to influence the world around them through active participation.

This study theoretically recognises young individuals' participation as a fundamental aspect of their social actor status. As previously discussed, participation encompasses various dimensions of young people's lives, and it is strictly aligned with Article 12 of the UNCRC, which recognises their right to express their views and be heard. However, this section argues that challenges emerge due to participation spaces predominantly controlled by adults.

Moreover, the capabilities-participatory framework acknowledges that young people's agency is dynamic and context-specific, shaped by social factors, and constrained by the authority of adult caregivers. Consequently, the analysis proposed builds upon the constraints on agency, mainly through the lens of participation rights, to explore how young people's agency in pursuing their valued life is restricted due to their "childhood position" in Chile. To these purposes, an in-depth examination of childhood's social constructions, focusing on how their agency and participation are delimited within the Chilean context, becomes imperative.

Defining and conceptualising childhood in Chile

As outlined in Chapter 1, Chilean childhood is structurally defined within the UNCRC framework, establishing it as a period of individual ageing from birth until 18 (UNICEF, 1989). According to the current Chilean Constitution, individuals become citizens of the country when they reach the age of 18 (CPRC, 1980). Behind these definitions of childhood and citizenship, two predominant tensions emerge, which are relevant to explore further since they shape SCC in the country and impact young Chileans' power of decision over their well-being.

The first tension aligns with Wyness (2018b), arguing that the UNCRC, as a legal and adult-institutional framework, significantly influences and delimits the narratives around childhood and the role of young people in society. As examined in Chapter 1, Chilean childhood well-being policies and programs are rooted in the UNCRC, where protection rights are the most prevalent and strongly influence childhood policies in the country. Consequently, an adult-based and institutional construction of childhood is highly influential to the SCC prevalent in Chilean society, shaping their status, role, agency, and spaces of participation.

The second tension arises from the fact that children are not considered citizens or rights holders until they reach the age of 18, which is particularly problematic since Chile

ratified the UNCRC articles, but its Constitution does not recognise young people as rights holders (Cortés-Morales and Morales, 2021). This situation directly impacts young people's recognition as social actors' within Chilean society, limiting their agency and spaces for participation. Consequently, these two points are crucial in shaping SCC in Chile, which, in turn, influences young people's power to make choices across various dimensions of their lives, ultimately constraining their well-being opportunities.

Exploring the social constructions of childhood in Chile

As previously stated, the Chilean definitions of childhood are profoundly influenced by the UNCRC. However, the literature reveals that adult-based conceptualisations of childhood have been a constant in Chile's history, even before the ratification of the UNCRC, leading to a situation where children were largely invisible in public discourse until the 19th century (Rojas Flores, 2010).

Salazar and Pinto (2002) argue that childhood has rarely been considered a distinct social category throughout Chilean history. Instead, it has been closely associated with other concepts, such as childhood-family, childhood-education, and childhood-protection. These authors contend that childhood has primarily been defined from an adult perspective, using their representations of children to project child development as the future, often for political purposes. This perspective is problematic as it denies children the possibility of being in the present and systematically neglects their role as active contributors to constructing their history in Chile.

In this context, Alvarez Chuart and Fuentealba Araya (2019) add that the concept of childhood has evolved, resulting in a coexistence of diverse childhoods linked to specific conditions and contexts in which children live, remarkably shaped by class, urbanisation, gender, ethnicity, and education.[18] Therefore, when exploring the influence of SCC on young people's quality of life, it becomes critical to acknowledge and frame the analysis considering the specificity of the surrounding context.

Contreras and Pérez (2011) note that adults' discourses about children commonly acknowledge them as passive, incapable, and immature. Gómez Urrutia and Jiménez Figueroa (2015) add that young people are often conceptualised in the public discourse as individuals who need constant care and supervision and lack an active role within their families. Nonetheless, scholars agree that exploring Chilean childhood as an independent social category is relatively recent in the literature. Voltarelli (2018) suggests that the

[18] For instance, the authors contend that in rural settings, a prevalent pattern emerges where both young boys and girls engage in labour activities, which is not as present in urban locations. While boys typically become involved in agricultural tasks, girls tend to be allocated domestic responsibilities.

emergence of the social studies of childhood has been instrumental in shifting the perspective of Chilean scholars and public discourse in acknowledging childhood as a social structure and young people as social actors.

In this context, dominant discourses and representations of children and young people may be closely intertwined with the invisibility and lack of recognition of childhood as a social structure with its complexities and nuances rather than merely a previous stage before adulthood. Therefore, it becomes critical to explore how these constructions of incapability, passivity, and immaturity influence young Chilean's power of decision over their well-being.

Furthermore, in policy discourses, young people are often portrayed as vulnerable subjects needing protection and control by adults (Herrera-Seda and Aravena-Reyes, 2015; Olivares Espinoza, 2022). As further analysed in Chapter 7, these conceptualisations of childhood strongly influence public policy in Chile, which can explain the disproportionate attention and resources allocated to protection over participation rights.

As a result, the existing institutional constructions create an image of young Chileans as becoming adults who will only become full social actors once they reach 18 years old, the age when they can be treated as citizens within society. However, this adult-institutional construction is problematic theoretically and in practice. Mayall (2015b) claims that these adult-institutional-based constructions of childhood position young people as a minority group subordinate to adults, particularly concerning their well-being, limiting their agency and participation within the social fabric. Fattore et al. (2009) further argue that this failure to recognise young people's status as social actors directly impacts policy construction, implementation, and effectiveness.

Hence, it becomes critical for this study to examine how these dominant conceptualisations of childhood shape young Chileans' agency and spaces of participation concerning their well-being opportunities and explore the constraints they face in their decision-making power and the possibilities to contribute to the debate actively.

Exploring the constraints of agency and participation to frame the discussion

As previously discussed, agency and participation are inherently interconnected concepts and exist within the context of interactions. These concepts serve as foundational principles underpinning the conversion factors analysis and provide the theoretical framework to investigate how these societal constructs limit the decision-making power of young people across various dimensions of their lives. Since agency and participation exist within a relational dynamic, including peers, adults and institutions, it becomes

critical to identify the constraints on agency and participation students face due to the dominant SCC that ultimately shapes their decision-making power over their well-being.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, the concept of participation, when viewed from a rights-based perspective, inherently clashes with the decision-making power of young individuals, as this space is ultimately controlled and determined by adults (Tisdall, 2015b). Hence, agency and participation concerning children's well-being are confined to the extent those responsible adults allow. Therefore, it becomes critical to analyse how young people's agency and power of decision are limited by the authority of the adults responsible for their care, potentially leading to a subordinate social status compared to their adult caregivers regarding their well-being.

Consequently, the capabilities-participatory framework proposes to examine the constraints on agency and participation at two primary levels: the family level, considering intra-household decision-making power that affects young people's well-being in their day-to-day lives, and the institutional level, encompassing the power of young people to participate and influence policy debates that pertain to their quality of life.

Intra-household decision-making power

The analysis of intrahousehold decision-making power has been extensively addressed in the literature, particularly concerning the prominent role of gender disparities. Traditionally, gender roles have often assigned caregiving responsibilities to women and financial decision-making to men (e.g., Schneebaum and Mader, 2013; Bernard et al., 2019). Within this discussion, Seymour and Peterman (2018) argue that agency is vital for understanding the link between decision-making power and household autonomy. While these authors have predominantly emphasised women's autonomy, this thesis posits that the same principle can be applied when examining the autonomy of young people in household decisions.

While some studies in Chile have explored intrahousehold gender discrimination and its economic implications (e.g., Cuesta, 2006), young people's agency within the dynamics of intrahousehold decision-making power remains largely understudied. Consequently, drawing upon SCC as a conversion factor, along with the concepts of agency and participation, becomes fundamental for analysing the extent to which young people are limited in their ability to influence family dynamics and organisation that affect their well-being opportunities.

Power of influence at an institutional level

The second level of influence can be analysed within the institutional practices, particularly in the context of policy construction and opportunities for influencing policy debates. As Díaz-Bórquez et al. (2018) highlight, there is a lack of systematic engagement of young people in policy-making decisions in Chile. Therefore, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, shedding light on the nature of young people's participation within the Chilean context is a fundamental aspect of this study.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the National Youth Policy (PNNA) is the central policy concerning the well-being of young people in Chile, rooted in a rights-based approach heavily influenced by UNCRC. However, it is noteworthy that the PNNA leans toward provision and protection rights without a full theoretical acknowledgement of participation rights. As discussed earlier, the PNNA adopts a participatory methodology in which young people are given the space to voice their opinions. Nevertheless, the specifics of the methodological processes and the extent of participation granted to young Chileans within this framework remain unclear. Consequently, critically assessing young people's participation within policy discourses, which primarily constitute adult constructs, becomes essential to this study.

In this context, drawing on Mayall (2015a), analysing the intergenerational relationship between children and adults and how these interactions occur within the Chilean context becomes pivotal for this study. According to the literature, adults often do not listen to children in Chile, and they inform them about their decisions but do not let them participate in the decision-making process (Vergara et al., 2015). Therefore, as Contreras and Pérez (2011) suggested, a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between adulthood and childhood becomes essential to promote positive and healthy interactions, identified as a fundamental setting for enhancing active participation among young people.

As a result, this study argues that exploring the extent to which SCC shape participation opportunities of young Chileans becomes critical to understanding the limitations they encounter in their prospects for social interaction and community-building, not only at a micro level but also at a macro level concerning their sense of belonging within the broader social context, including policy discourses and political participation.

For these purposes, Chapter 7 draws on Lundy's (2007) framework to examine young people's constraints concerning participation and exercising their right to be heard. Lundy introduces *space*, *voice*, *audience*, and *influence* as interconnected and mutually influential dimensions of participation, shaping young people's active engagement and providing the analytical tool to identify the barriers to participation young individuals encounter.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the capabilities-participatory framework to study young people's well-being in Chile. The analysis proposed is rooted in a childhood studies and a capabilities approach to examine how socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood shape students' well-being opportunities in this country. The first section of this chapter provided a theoretical discussion of the fundamental concept involved in this dissertation. Within the CA literature, capabilities, functionings, conversion factors, and inputs were differentiated for theoretical clarity. Furthermore, agency and participation were discussed in depth within the sociological studies of childhood.

These critical concepts were highlighted as critical for the theoretical roots of the capabilities-participatory framework. In this context, recognising the dual nature of childhood as an enduring structural entity with meanings dynamically shaped by socio-cultural and historical contexts is paramount to this thesis. This acknowledgement lays the groundwork for investigating how childhood societal constructions shape young people's roles and participation in specific contexts concerning their well-being opportunities.

This chapter argued that the capabilities-participatory framework, as developed in this thesis, recognises children and young people as social actors, where participation is not only right but a fundamental exercise inherent to their condition of being social agents in the present. Moreover, such an approach allows an exploration of young people's well-being by focusing on their freedom of choice among different valued opportunities rather than exclusively adopting a monetary-based construct. Lastly, it proposed that by adopting the notion of conversion factors, it is possible to explore the constraints young people face concerning their power of decision when transforming their inputs available into valued opportunities.

In this context, this chapter introduced socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood as fundamental conversion factors to guide the analysis and explore young people's barriers concerning decision-making power over their opportunities for well-being. In the case of SES, the chapter discussed the notion of segregation to frame the analysis, emphasising residential and educational segregation.

On the other hand, within SCC, the chapter argued the importance of the socially constructed concept of the child, heavily influenced by the UNCRC. In this context, the interpretation of young Chileans' well-being by the PNNA, emphasising protection over participation, emerged as a fundamental barrier limiting young people's agency and participation concerning their quality of life.

The following chapter discusses the methodological approach adopted in this project.

Chapter 4
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter delineates the methodological framework employed in this study, which is centred around a participatory and qualitative research approach to exploring the concept of well-being among young people in Chile. It delves into the foundational ontological, epistemological, and ethical considerations that underpin this methodological choice. Furthermore, the chapter provides an overview of the research design, the methods utilised for data construction, and the analytical strategy employed throughout the study.

The adoption of qualitative and participatory research approaches contributes to the objectives of this thesis for two primary reasons. First, the participatory approach aligns with a relational understanding of knowledge production, emphasising the co-construction of meaning among individuals through collaborative processes (Heron and Reason, 1997). The collaborative nature of knowledge production within this paradigm is especially pertinent in research involving young people, as it challenges the imbalanced power dynamics in knowledge production between adults and children (Gallagher, 2008).

The second motive for embracing a participatory inquiry is because it offers a methodological framework to recognise and empower young people's agency within the research process, positioning them as experts in their own lives (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Clark et al., 2005b). By promoting young people's agency and voices as active social actors, this approach challenges the existing subordinated status of children's knowledge concerning their well-being compared to that of adults, thereby addressing the power imbalances discussed in Chapter 2 within the research on young Chileans' well-being. Therefore, it aligns with rights-based research, where young people's participation rights are emphasised by situating their voices at the forefront of discussions on their quality of life (Bessell, 2017b).

Within the participatory inquiry, this project adopts a qualitative methodology since it allows exploration of the subjective interpretations and the significance individuals attribute to their lived experiences and circumstances, emphasising the context in which these experiences occur (Fattore et al., 2012; Tonon, 2015). Furthermore, as Tonon et al. (2017) emphasised, qualitative methods facilitate space for children to be the main protagonists of the research process. However, rigid methodological designs and the inherent power imbalance between child participants and adult researchers in traditional approaches present significant challenges when conducting projects from the perspective of childhood studies (Vergara et al., 2015).

In this context, Holland et al. (2010) advocate for qualitative methods that encourage participants to reflect as broadly as possible regarding their lives, proposing flexible activities where the participants can take the lead on deciding which aspects of their lives are the most relevant to explore. For these purposes, this study draws in focus groups as the main method to construct data, combined with an innovative combination of creative and visual techniques to enhance participants' reflections concerning their quality of life. These methods draw upon the mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2011) and include mapping, creation of board games and Lego model constructions.

Lastly, this chapter discusses the adoption of framework analysis as the data analysis strategy for this project. As Ritchie and Spencer (1994) highlighted, framework analysis is a guiding instrument for identifying and detecting patterns among themes. Furthermore, its straightforward application using a matrix-based approach enhances the rigour and transparency of data management through its various stages (Ritchie et al., 2003b). Consequently, it emerged as a valuable tool for conceptualising the dimensions of well-being co-constructed in this study and elaborating a list of capabilities.

This chapter is structured into three main sections. Section 4.1 addresses this study's ontological, epistemological, and ethical foundations and details the research design. It also highlights the central role of young participants in data construction, collective analysis, and the development of a preliminary results report. Additionally, this section outlines the chosen data construction methods and the project's sampling strategy.

Section 4.2 provides an overview of the research process in this thesis, detailing the various steps and activities involved in data construction. It also outlines the participant recruitment process. Additionally, this section discusses the framework analysis employed to analyse the data, ultimately developing a list of capabilities that mirror the dimensions of well-being the co-researchers value.

Finally, the third section concludes, summarising the central points discussed in the chapter.

4.1 Adopting a participatory research framework to conceptualise Young People's Well-Being

As discussed in Chapter 2, recognising young people as active social agents within the research process becomes a novel methodological framework within the studies of well-being and inequality in Chile. Existing studies often exhibit an adult-centric perspective, where the voices of young people are frequently reduced to mere survey respondents or subordinated to their parents' opinions. Consequently, a crucial starting point involves an in-depth discussion of the ontological and epistemological positions embraced in this

study, as these foundational considerations shape the overarching methodology of the project.

4.1.1 Ontological position

Following the work of Heron and Reason (1997), this project argues that adopting a participatory inquiry is intricately linked to adopting a participatory ontological position, wherein knowledge is generated through a relational and experiential process between individuals and the world. The authors posit that what can be known is a subjective experience, and its objectivity relies on the interpretation by the knower, resulting in reality being both objective and subjective simultaneously.

Similarly, Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) highlight that from a participatory perspective, there may not be just one reality to study; instead, there are several realities in constant emergence and transformation through social action and participation. Hence, the relational and experiential understanding of knowledge and reality becomes a methodological cornerstone of this project. By embracing a participatory ontology, this study argues that exploring young people's subjectivities is fundamental for research purposes since knowledge about well-being is inherently tied to their life experiences and interactions.

Promoting children's subjectivities —conceptualised as their voices and perspectives— is not novel within the literature on childhood studies. Nevertheless, robust ontological discussions remain scarce, limiting scholars from delving deeper into understanding young people's experiences and constructing knowledge from them (Alanen, 2017). Holmberg (2018) argues that this could be explained, in part, by the dichotomic discourses adopted by researchers within this field concerning reality, including the structure-agency debate when conceptualising childhood elaborated in previous chapters, and the "being-becoming" conceptualisation of the child.[1] For this study, embracing a

[1] Within the childhood studies literature, an ongoing debate revolves around how to conceptualise children, whether as "becomings", that is, future adults or as "beings" in the present. The notion of children as future adults is closely tied to developmental psychology, with Piaget's work on children's cognitive immaturity (see, for instance, Piaget and Inhelder, 2008) and Erikson's stages of development and identity theory (Erickson, 1994) exerting considerable influence on this perspective. According to this view, children are perceived as not yet capable of reasoned thinking, and childhood is considered a preparatory stage preceding adulthood, characterising children as immature and incomplete. These ideas have led some scholars to conceptualise children as individuals in a state of preparation, emphasising their future agency as adults. Nevertheless, these approaches often neglect to consider how children can offer unique insights into their life experiences, shaped by their distinct abilities and cognitive capacities. In this context, James (1998) proposes that the biological aspect should contextualise the experience of childhood, rather than determine it. Other authors, such as Lee (2001), advocate for a more comprehensive perspective, where children are

relational position becomes critical to ontologically conceptualising children's subjectivities and overcoming childhood studies' dichotomic nature, where framing agency as a relational construct is pivotal.

Chapters 2 and 3 argue that young people's agency exists within intergenerational relations with adults and broader social structures that shape their life experiences and interactions (Wyness, 2018a). Hence, building on Wyness's (2012) argument, this project acknowledges that the interdependent and intergenerational relationship between children and adults is fundamental for ontological purposes, providing a framework to understand young people's subjectivities as outcomes of the dynamic interplay between them, recognising both children's and adults' agency as fundamental in the construction of knowledge. As further elaborated later in this chapter, this intergenerational understanding of reality and knowledge construction becomes fundamental when designing participatory research between adults and young people.

Furthermore, this relational position is also relevant within the capabilities discussion. When addressing the criticism of individualism levelled in this approach (see Chapter 3), Smith and Seward (2009) have highlighted the relational aspect of capabilities. These authors suggest that "a particular capability is the outcome of the interaction of an individual's capacities and the individual's position relative to others in society" (p. 214). Thus, for this study, capabilities exist within a relational process among individuals and their social world. This point is particularly relevant when analysing the role of structural conversion factors in framing young Chilean's well-being opportunities.

Consequently, by adopting a participatory ontology, this study embraces a relational and experiential understanding of reality. Such a position allows, in the first place, the recognition of young people as agents within the social world. Subsequently, it positions young people's voices in a unique position when theorising about their well-being. Lastly, it emphasises the interactional dynamic process between children and adults within the social world.

4.1.2 Epistemological position

As informed in Chapter 2, a critical gap identified among the studies of children's well-being lies in children's lack of meaningful participation when theorising about this concept. Therefore, as previously introduced, within this study's aims, young people's subjective experiences are critical when constructing knowledge about their well-being. Hence, as Fegter (2021) suggested, conceptualising children's voices and their perspectives is fundamental when defining the epistemological underpinning of a study

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regarded as both beings and becomings simultaneously, transcending the dichotomy of past and future adulthood.

concerning their well-being. To these purposes, this project is grounded in three central epistemological positions.

The first is rooted in *interpretivism,* which suggests that studying the social world requires different methodologies from natural sciences, and the researcher's role lies in interpreting "others' interpretations" (Bryman, 2016, p. 28). As Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) claim, interpretivism is primarily concerned with understanding individual meanings and contributions, rejecting universal laws in favour of recognising the subjectivity of reality. By adopting an interpretivist epistemological stance, this project seeks to delve deeply into young Chileans' experiences and subjectivities to explore the meanings of well-being, treating each unique context as significant while avoiding the inclination toward over-generalisation commonly found in the positivist paradigm (Ryan, 2018).

In addition, this project embraces a *participatory* epistemology guided by the belief that meanings and interpretations of reality are co-constructed through collaborative, relational, and experiential processes involving individuals and their surroundings (Heron, 1996). The decision to adopt this epistemological stance is rooted in the core principles of participatory inquiry, which prioritise the co-construction of knowledge with participants based on their subjective life experiences rather than seeking a universal truth (Clark and Moss, 2011). Heron and Reason (1997) refer to this collaborative process as *experiential* knowing[2], stating that knowledge emerges through interactions and experiences.

Consequently, adopting a participatory epistemology involves recognising children's knowledge as fundamental for adults seeking to understand their life experiences (Gallagher, 2013). While discussing the hierarchical power relationships in knowledge production processes within the participatory inquiry and its distributive purposes is not novel in the literature (e.g., Kirby et al., 2003; Christensen, 2004; Kindon et al., 2007), it is noteworthy that the adoption of a participatory standpoint to theorise children's well-being remains absent from the Chilean debate. Therefore, embracing this epistemological stance becomes essential to this thesis's aims. It challenges the prevailing subordinated

[2] These authors categorise knowing into four different types, emphasising *experiential* knowing that refers to a form of knowledge gained through direct, empathic, and participative engagement with a subject, involving a deep sense of connection and presence. *Presentational* knowing, rooted in experiential knowing, is expressed through an intuitive understanding of the importance of our connection with the world and our representation of it. It is expressed through various forms of art like graphics, music, and writing. *Propositional* is the conceptual understanding of something through language and descriptions, expressed in statements and theories, which are conveyed through spoken or written words, all rooted in our experiential engagement with the world. Lastly, *practical* knowing, which builds upon the previous forms of knowing, refers to the ability to perform a skill. It translates these forms of knowledge into purposeful actions and successful accomplishments.

position of children's knowledge regarding their well-being compared to that of adults, addressing the power imbalances within research on young Chileans' well-being discussed in Chapter 2.

The third epistemological position adopted in this study is rooted in the *Child Standpoint Methodology* (Fattore et al., 2007; 2016), which recognises children's pivotal role as research participants, allowing for an exploration of their perceptions regarding the factors contributing to their well-being using qualitative research methods. This framework is grounded in the premise that meaning and knowledge are constructed within an intergenerational experience, where young people's voices are subordinated to adults' (Fegter, 2021). Hence, addressing the imbalanced power dynamics within the research process is at its core.

To these purposes, this epistemological standpoint positions children at the centre of the research as co-constructors of meaning towards well-being (Fattore et al., 2007). As Fattore et al. (2016) claim, such an approach enables the consideration of children not just as passive subjects but as active participants who contribute to understanding their well-being. Consequently, aligned with authors such as Mason and Watson (2014), it is proposed that research with young people should not just be about them but should consider their viewpoints as critical for knowledge production, in this case, about their well-being.

4.1.3 Ethical research design and planning

Ethical considerations are paramount in research involving young people. While plenty of debate concerning the philosophical roots of ethics can be found in the literature, Alderson (2005, p. 29) summarises that "ethics is about helping the researcher to become aware of hidden problems and questions in research". Hence, reflecting on these ethical dilemmas is crucial, as they directly influence methodological choices, impacting the study's outcomes (Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Graham et al., 2013). However, resolving ethical challenges is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour; it necessitates continuous critical and reflexive engagement throughout the project (Water, 2018).

Drawing from the epistemological foundations of this project and echoing the insights of Cullen and Walsh (2020) and Montreuil et al. (2021), reflecting upon the power dynamics within the research process is a central ethical discussion in this study, particularly concerning young people's participation on it. Three primary themes emerge in this ethical reflection that are further elaborated in this section. First, to examine the hierarchical power relationship between the adult researcher and the young co-researchers, tied to methodological choices and participation definitions. Second, to ensure voluntary participation and consent without external pressures. Lastly, to balance

participation and protection, addressing potential risks while safeguarding participants' well-being.

It is vital to note that this research has successfully undergone an ethical review process conducted by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Leeds (Ethics Reference Number: AREA 20-067. See also Appendix F). While these processes have not been exempt from debate within the literature (Small, 2001), particularly concerning consent (e.g., Wiles et al., 2007; Gallagher et al., 2010), a robust ethical framework is fundamental to balance participants' protection and their involvement in the project. As pointed out by Alderson and Morrow (2004), striking this balance is critical to promote children's participation rights while prioritising their well-being. Additionally, obtaining approval from a research committee becomes essential to safeguard both the participants from potential harm and the researcher from potential criticism (Alderson, 2005).

Recognising the power dynamics in the interaction between the adult lead researcher and young participants

As previously mentioned, addressing power imbalances inherent to the research process is fundamental to participatory inquiry. Within this discussion, Holland et al. (2010) emphasise the need for a critical and reflexive ethical framework within participatory research, highlighting the importance of understanding how participation is enacted within the process rather than solely quantifying the extent of participation achieved. Authors such as Eckhoff (2019) and Cullen and Walsh (2020) further argue that ethical practices in participatory research and collaboration with young people require a clear distinction of roles and responsibilities for both child participants and adult researchers, as well as a definition of their level of participation.

Within this context, discussing the roles expected of the adult lead researcher and the young participants becomes imperative. This point is particularly relevant because participatory research with children fundamentally rests on fostering reciprocal adult-child relationships (Fleet and Harcourt, 2018). For this study, it is ethically essential to recognise that the relationship between the adult lead researcher and the young participants is not entirely reciprocal, driven by the fact that the project is framed within a doctoral thesis led by an adult researcher.

This uneven power distribution becomes apparent when considering that I previously made specific methodological decisions, primarily concerned with the study's objectives and chosen methods to achieve its goals. However, this study methodologically conceptualises adult-child relationships as intergenerational and interdependent rather than solely hierarchical. As further elaborated in the following section, adopting this position is pivotal for understanding the co-researching relationship between adults and

young people as collaborative, where each has distinct but equally relevant roles in the knowledge production process.

Embracing an intergenerational and interdependent approach to co-researching with young people

Prout (2005) argues that two overarching imperatives guide contemporary childhood research. Firstly, it emphasises the intrinsic significance of studying children independently, separate from their role in explaining the adult world or addressing adult concerns. Secondly, researchers are urged to be acutely aware of the specificities and nuances characterising individual childhoods, considering the geographical, historical, and social contexts in which children are situated.

As outlined in Chapter 3, this study is shaped on these theoretical premises, prioritising the distinctiveness of children's experiences from those of adults and acknowledging the contextual factors contributing to their varied realities and life experiences. Furthermore, it recognises young people as active agents, rights holders, and experts in their lives as a fundamental theoretical step in a research design under this paradigm (e.g., Clark et al., 2005b; Mason and Danby, 2011; Montreuil et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it is essential to recall that in this thesis, young people's agency is conceptualised within a relational and dynamic space with adults.

In this context, Mannion (2007) argues that the emphasis on children as individual rights-bearing agents may inadvertently marginalise the role of adults in facilitating children's participation. Wyness (2012) extends this discussion, highlighting the importance of adopting an interdependent and intergenerational perspective to comprehend the positions of young people and adults in the research process. The author argues for a shift in focus towards studying spaces where adults and children interact, engage in intergenerational dialogue, and play diverse roles as partners and collaborators in participatory settings to fully understand and enhance young people's participation.

Comprehending this relationship's intergenerational and interdependent dimension becomes pivotal when co-researching with young people. This approach actively acknowledges power imbalances within the research process by embracing the differences between adults and children, recognising the unique contributions and richness that each group brings to the process. As a result, while the project is initiated and designed by an adult researcher, young people have a critical role by providing the necessary input to produce knowledge about well-being. This point is further elaborated in Section 4.1.4 when discussing young people's participation in this study.

Voluntary participation and informed consent

The second decision concerning addressing power imbalances within the research process was to explicitly discuss with the potential participants and gatekeepers that the participation in this project is voluntary, which includes not only acceptance to participate but also the student's right of withdrawal is critical at any point during the project (Skelton, 2008). As further detailed in Section 4.2.1, this point was particularly challenging to achieve since school authorities often suggested that only certain students—already identified by them—should be invited to participate to guarantee successful attendance and contribution.

According to Fleet and Harcourt (2018), how young participants are invited to participate in a research process becomes critical to differentiate a genuine invitation to participate in a discussion from one in which they believe their participation involves giving specific answers expected by adults. Therefore, this point and the aims of this project were explained to the gatekeepers in the first contact, who ultimately accepted these terms and agreed on an open call to all potential participants that fit the sample criteria (see Section 4.1.6 for more details about the sampling process).

In addition to advocating for voluntary participation, it was decided that the participants were the ones who needed to provide informed consent to participate, which is a longstanding debate within the literature on childhood studies. In this context, consent can be broadly understood as "the invisible act of evaluating information and making a decision, and the visible act of signifying the decision" (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, p. 101). As emphasised by these authors, there is a strong relationship between consent and the rights contained in the UNCRC, where young people's right to be heard and influence the decisions that affect them and are in direct tension with the child's best interest article.[3]

This discussion commonly arises in the context of medical consent for treatment, where the issue revolves around children's capacity to provide consent for medical treatment without the involvement of their parents or legal guardians (e.g., Kilkelly, 2015). Within this debate, Alderson (2007) highlights the complex nature of consent, particularly when children are involved in healthcare and research, encompassing factors such as competence, respect, dignity, informed choice, and understanding. The author underscores the demanding task adults face in comprehending children's distinct embodied knowledge and capacities, emphasising the importance of this understanding for informed decision-making and voluntary participation.

[3] Archard (2015) extends this discussion by arguing that the rhetoric surrounding the best interest of the child (Article 3) can be misleading when applied to domestic policy. For example, the author contends that the best interest is presented in text as a consideration rather than a right. Additionally, Archard asserts that it remains unclear who determines a child's best interest and what role children themselves play in this decision-making process.

Hence, as Alderson (2005) suggested, when designing ethical research with young people, it is critical to conceptualise their status as competent beings and as rights holders. Following the work of authors such as Mishna et al. (2004), it becomes pivotal for this project to recognise young people's agency by respecting their right to participate or refuse. This key ethical consideration aligns with enhancing young people's rights of participation (Powell and Smith, 2009). Consequently, in line with prior studies (see, for instance, Ben-Arieh, 2005; Gross-Manos et al., 2021), this project recognises young participants as autonomous agents with the power to make decisions freely regarding their involvement in the construction of knowledge about well-being.

Nonetheless, this project encountered a particular challenge in the context of the informed consent discussion. The research is rooted in a UK institution, adhering to its ethical guidelines (UREC, 2009) and closely aligned with the ethical principles advocated by the British Sociological Association (BSA) (BSA, 2017). However, the fieldwork was conducted in Chile. Consequently, the challenge was to harmonise the ethical frameworks of both nations when conducting research with young people, all while preserving their autonomy and granting them the freedom to decide whether to participate in the project.

In this context, Chilean law mandates that all individuals under 18 require consent from their parents or legal guardians due to their lack of legal autonomy (LyD, 2012; MINSAL, 2012a).[4] Therefore, as elaborated further in Section 4.2.1, the consent plan incorporated the initial authorisation from the schools, serving as the gatekeepers in this process. After the interested candidates were thoroughly briefed on the project's scope and implications, they were invited to sign an informed consent form.[5] Subsequently, active parental consent was sought from the parents or guardians of the participants. This specific form of parental consent was negotiated with the schools to obtain their agreement for participation, which is a common practice in school-based research (e.g., Esbensen et al., 2008; Wolfenden et al., 2009). This process entails providing parents or legal guardians with a letter explaining the project and requesting their formal permission (Pokorny et al., 2001).[6]

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[4] The Chilean debate regarding informed consent of young people is heavily rooted within the healthcare context. See León (2012) and Parra and Ravetllat (2019) for a detailed discussion about this.

[5] As Gallagher et al., (2010) pointed out, granting consent power to participants within a school setting entails explaining, as clearly as possible, what consent means and what they are being asked to do. This became critical for this project. As raised by these authors, this point becomes fundamental to respecting participants' agency and to whether or not they have real power to decide whether to or not to take part in a study. See Appendix A and B for more details about how the project was explained to the participants, which involves a written explanation in non-academic language, as well as an oral presentation of it, providing the space to answer questions and clarify what their participation entails.

[6] Refer also to Appendix F, Sections A.10 and C.11 for more details about the informed consent obtained by the study participants.

This approach successfully upheld the agency and the right of young people to decide whether to be a part of this project while ensuring compliance with Chilean legislation and the school's internal regulations. However, as Alderson (2007) emphasised, consent serves a dual purpose: it involves participants willingly agreeing to participate and protects the lead researcher from potential criticism and litigation. Moreover, it assures participants, safeguarding them from the risks and burdens associated with the study's development. This critical aspect is further detailed in the subsequent subsection.

Balancing participation and protection rights: identifying potential risks

As previously mentioned, when conducting research with young people, a significant challenge lies in ensuring their protection rights without limiting their participation rights (Powell et al., 2016). Beazley et al. (2009) refer to this as the children's right to be researched, which encompasses involving children as active participants, employing methods that facilitate the expression of their opinions, and ensuring their safeguarding from potential harm. In this context, Kennan and Dolan (2017) underscore the challenge of striking a balance in promoting young people's involvement in research. They debate the consequences of encouraging their participation without adequately considering potential risks, which could result in harm and exploitation. Conversely, excessive protection measures might silence their voices, depriving the research community of valuable insights from their unique perspectives and experiences.

Therefore, a fundamental component of ethical research design entails the dual objectives of fostering authentic participation while ensuring protection from potential harm (Truscott et al., 2019). However, it is crucial to acknowledge that social research can sometimes evoke discomfort among participants throughout the process (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). In this context, Graham et al. (2013) raise the dilemma of questioning the extent to which it is necessary to involve young people in constructing knowledge and working with existing data.

Within this discussion, it is crucial to recognise that a project with these characteristics and objectives inherently carries a certain level of risk. This risk arises because sensitive issues and negative emotions may surface when participants are asked to reflect on their life experiences related to well-being. However, researchers must exercise caution not to overprotect participants by presuming what might be stressful for them, as this could result in their exclusion (Powell and Smith, 2009; Nairn and Clarke, 2012). Therefore, it is essential to transparently communicate to participants both the potential risks associated with their participation and the benefits it may bring.

Additionally, it is imperative to be adequately prepared and ready to respond to unforeseen circumstances to safeguard the participants and minimise potential risks.

Hence, maintaining continuous communication with the participants and the gatekeepers becomes pivotal to ensuring all parties' safety. In this context, it is pertinent to underscore my background as a trained child and adolescent therapist and school counsellor. Through experience in educational settings and addressing children's rights infringements in Chile, I have the training and expertise to collaborate with groups of school students, proficiently managing diverse situations and emotional distress within the school environment.[7]

Within this discussion, it is of paramount importance to refer to the confidentiality and anonymity processes carried out in this research. As detailed in Appendix F (Sections A.10 and C.4), this study guarantees the confidentiality of participants' personal information, and their combined responses were anonymised in all research outcomes. Regarding data protection, anonymity to protect participant identities was assured. To avoid any identification of participants, their names, school names, and the names of the locations were changed, and their genders were not included. Additionally, as the aim of the research was to find a collective voice, the anonymity of their identities and answers was assured by using hybrid cases (where multiple participants' data were combined). Any direct quotes used during the analysis of the data or in the communication of the results were anonymised.

However, it was made clear to the participants that there would be a breach of confidentiality under specific circumstances, as mandated by Chilean law, which can be found in the project's information sheet and the informed consent forms (refer to Appendices A and B respectively). In this context, the confidentiality of participants' personal answers and comments was guaranteed, unless there was a suspicion that a participant might have been experiencing any infringement of their rights (such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, or other types of infringement). In the event that a situation of this nature arose during the discussions, the appropriate protocols would have been activated in accordance with Chilean law. This process involves first informing the school authorities, who must adhere to legal regulations, including notifying the participant's parents or legal guardians and initiating a protective action with Family Courts (MDJ, 2004).

Consequently, while acknowledging the associated risks, it is paramount to proceed with this research, as failing to do so would be ethically unacceptable. Depriving young people of the opportunity to express their perspectives on the concept of well-being, neglecting their voices and agency in constructing knowledge about this concept, and limiting their participation in defining what constitutes a valued life and collaboratively identifying the barriers to realising those expectations would perpetuate their subordinated position to

[7] Given this training and professional background, I am in an advantageous position to identify instances where participants may be at risk of having their rights infringed. However, it is important to acknowledge from experience that there are situations that may not be clearly identifiable as violations without a proper diagnosis.

that of adults and undermine young people's possibilities be agents of change in their lives.

Within this discussion, it is critical to acknowledge my positionality as both a youth counsellor and a researcher. As Etherington (1996) reflects, this dual role entails another layer of ethical dilemmas that lead to taking certain precautions. In the development of this PhD thesis, the most significant dilemma associated with simultaneously being a counsellor and a researcher, which resonated before, during, and after the study, is linked to the boundaries I needed to establish to keep both roles as separate as possible.

Inspired by Etherington's insightful discussion, I visualise two main issues concerning the establishment of boundaries when conducting research with young people about their life experiences and the meanings of well-being. First, it is crucial to have clarity about when to stop asking further questions, particularly when sensitive issues emerge, such as the deaths of important members of young people's communities or other events associated with negative emotions. This type of boundary becomes critical to safeguard the participants' emotional integrity, even if it means leaving 'valuable data' unexplored. In this context, while this is a research project aiming to construct data about young Chileans' quality of life, there must be a boundary between promoting young people's voices and advocating for their emotional protection during the process.

Second, it is essential to clearly demarcate that the group discussions are framed within a research project. This point is particularly relevant because, from experience, when young people are given the space to talk and reflect about their lives, sensitive issues, emotions, and personal problems often emerge. Consequently, young people may naturally reach out asking for help. In these situations, it is crucial to clearly establish this boundary with the participants, as it would be ethically incorrect to assume a counsellor role and transgress the agreed-upon relationship of adult researcher and young co-researcher. Without respecting this boundary, even with the intention of providing assistance, the adult researcher would be placed in a position of power that was not previously agreed upon, resulting in a delicate breach of the ethical foundations of a participatory research project.

However, this does not mean that one should overlook a young participant's emotional response or neglect their request for help. In these situations, which occurred on certain occasions during the development of this project and are not categorised as infringements of rights requiring legal action, I listened carefully and, with the participant's approval, informed the responsible school authority (usually the gatekeeper) who is best positioned to assist and support them in their particular needs. I demarcated this boundary by defining my dual role as counsellor and researcher as a 'bridge,' who can transmit young participants' needs to the adults responsible for their care and protection.

4.1.4 Research design

In alignment with the ontological and epistemological positions outlined previously, this project adopts a qualitative design to address its research questions and objectives. The reason for choosing this methodology over a quantitative one is driven by the qualitative approach's potential to explore subjective interpretations and the significance individuals attribute to their lived experiences, emphasising the context in which these experiences occur (Tonon, 2015). Traditional quantitative methodologies often face limitations when attempting to capture the richness of young people's experiences, lived events, and nuanced understandings of their perspectives (Crivello et al., 2009). Consequently, while recognising the distinct nature of the data generated by these two research approaches, adopting a qualitative methodology aligns more effectively with the research's objectives and philosophical foundations.

Defining qualitative research can be a complex endeavour, as it encompasses various strategies and methods tailored to collect data and investigate phenomena not easily examined through other research paradigms (Hammersley, 2012). However, scholars agree that at its core, qualitative research is about interpretation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) and identifying relationships among categories derived from the analysis of these interpretations (Aspers and Corte, 2019). It examines everyday nuances, explores participants' viewpoints, and elucidates how social processes, institutions, and relationships function (Mason, 2002). Consequently, this research design is chosen because it excels at providing deep insights into the complexities of social life.

Within the qualitative inquiry, this project inherently adopts an exploratory approach, seeking to investigate what young Chileans value in life. This research design is commonly adopted when the objective is to uncover new insights or address topics that have not been extensively explored in a specific field of study (Swedberg, 2020). Furthermore, the exploratory nature of this project gains significance as it aligns with adopting a capabilities perspective, providing a research framework to delve into young people's well-being within their distinct socio-cultural contexts (Fegter, 2021).

Embracing a qualitative-participatory design

As previously discussed, conventional methods used to study young Chileans' well-being often highlight their limited agency and lack of authentic participation in the research process. As Mason and Watson (2014) noted, traditional research methodologies have historically marginalised children, relegating them to the periphery of the knowledge production hierarchy and thereby limiting their ability to have their voices recognised by their communities. In response to this gap, this project adopts a participatory research

framework that involves collaborative research with individuals as co-researchers, placing their voices at the forefront of the research process (Freire et al., 2022).

One significant advantage of opting for a participatory approach over conventional methods is its "emancipatory and democratic" nature (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008, p. 499). As Sinclair and Franklin (2000) highlight, this approach upholds children's rights and empowers them by strengthening democratic processes and impacting decision-making (Sinclair and Franklin, 2000). Consequently, it aligns closely with this thesis's objectives and philosophical foundations, emphasising a commitment to the community through collaborative analysis of social issues (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). Moreover, by amplifying young people's voices and experiences regarding their well-being, participatory approaches play a pivotal role in shaping policy development processes (Fattore et al., 2009). These attributes are crucial in promoting young people's perspectives as influential forces within their social world.

As introduced earlier, the participatory inquiry acknowledges participants' roles as knowledge producers (Veale, 2005), ultimately rebalancing the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Gallagher, 2008). Within this approach, the researcher facilitates the space for reflection, departing from traditional approaches to studying well-being, where the adult researcher is considered an expert, and participants are treated as research objects (Camfield et al., 2009). In this research design, knowledge is co-created by participants through a collaborative, non-hierarchical process (Pain, 2004), fostering an essential sense of collaboration. Consequently, this approach is chosen since it promotes young people's agency by recognising them as "experts in their own lives" (Clark et al., 2005a, p. 5).

While the advantages of a participatory approach have been elucidated, providing a clear definition of participation is essential for methodological clarity and ethical considerations. According to Thomas (2007), participation can encompass various meanings, with a fundamental distinction in whether participation is perceived as a process or an outcome, whether collective or individual, and whether it involves active engagement or consultation. This project advocates for a collective participatory process, recognising the participants as co-researchers actively engaging in the construction of knowledge. The following section delves deeper into explaining what participation entails for young people as co-researchers in this study.

Defining young people's participation

In Chapter 3, participation is fundamentally recognised as a right, conceptualised through Article 12 of the UNCRC. This perspective aligns with the work of Tisdall and Punch (2012), who argue that children and young people should be recognised as research

participants in their own right. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the theoretical aspects of young people's participation, emphasising its close connection with their agency, manifested through their decision-making power and potentially influencing the debate concerning their well-being.

In this context, this project aims to provide a formal space for young people to participate actively in the conceptualisation and theorisation concerning their well-being. To these purposes, the study is rooted in Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992; 1997), that illustrates different levels of children's involvement in decision-making processes. The ladder consists of eight steps, each representing a different degree of participation, from non-participation to genuine participation. According to Hart, the first three steps involve no real participation, while the remaining five illustrate different forms of genuine participation.

Step 1, *manipulation*. In these situations, children have no real involvement, and their voices are used to adults' benefit. Step 2, *decoration*. This entails adults using children in an indirect way to support their cause. Step 3, *tokenism*. Also known as symbolic participation, this refers to cases when children apparently have a voice, but in reality, have no choice in the matter. Step 4, *assigned but informed* (also called social mobilization), occurs when children are assigned specific roles or tasks within a project or decision-making process, but their involvement is limited to these predetermined roles.

Step 5, *consulted and informed*. Involves projects designed and led by adults, where children's opinions are considered in decision-making, although the final decision may still be made by adults. Step 6*, adult-initiated, shared decisions with children*. This step involves adults initiating projects or discussions, but they actively involve children in the decision-making process, and decisions are made jointly with input from both adults and children. Step 7, *child-initiated and directed*. These are the cases where young people take the lead in initiating debates, with adults supporting their efforts and providing guidance as needed. Step 8, *child-initiated, shared decisions with adults*. This is the highest level of participation, in which young people independently initiate and lead debates or projects, and adults collaborate with them as equal partners in the decision-making process, with children having substantial influence over the final outcomes.

Therefore, rooted in Hart's work, this study aims to shift the research community and policy rhetoric concerning young people's well-being in Chile, moving from a consulted and informed participation, which is the one that predominates exists according to the literature (see Chapter 2), to a one where even if an adult initiates projects and debates, young people can be protagonists in the debate about their well-being and share the decision-making with adults.

Moreover, this project draws on Fielding's (2001) model of student participation, aiming to position school students as co-researchers. At this level of participation, students are

recognised as partners within the research process, where decision-making is shared at specific points of the process (Eckhoff, 2019). Hence, clarifying young people's and adults' roles as co-researchers is critical for the research process (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Clavering and McLaughlin, 2010; Mason and Watson, 2014).

As informed in Section 4.1.3, given the nature of this project, decisions concerning the project's aims, design and methods were previously made by myself. Nevertheless, the young co-researcher's role during the research process stands at three levels. The first level is connected to the data construction phase, where students play a fundamental role in generating knowledge about the concept of well-being in Chile. In the final session of this data construction stage, a second layer of participation emerges as students collectively engage in data analysis. Lastly, the participants in this study actively contribute to the confection of a preliminary report encompassing the main themes derived from the data. This report informs the school's authorities about the study's initial findings. Each of these stages is detailed in Section 4.2.1.

4.1.5 Research methods

Within the qualitative inquiry, different methods are available to construct data. As Mason (2002) pointed out, the most common method is interviewing, which can include one-to-one interactions and group interviews, commonly known as focus groups. Given its aims and methodological underpinnings, this project employs group discussions as its primary data collection method. Morgan (1996, p. 130) defines focus groups as a "research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher". Therefore, its emphasis on participant interaction becomes pivotal for data generation in this study.

Given this project's exploratory and participatory nature, it employs a topic guide strategy. According to Krueger (1997), in such an approach, there is no specific script concerning pre-defined questions that participants need to respond to, but the lead researcher draws on a list of topics that should be covered during the discussions. The rationale for this decision is rooted in empowering participants to determine which specific issues they wish to discuss within the broader topics proposed.

This project also adopts the notion of visually oriented focus groups, where the discussions are guided by visual materials rather than relying on specific questions to be answered by the participants (Navarro et al., 2019). As Literat (2013) suggested, integrating the analysis of drawn images with group discussions is a powerful method for gaining a nuanced understanding of various aspects of participants' lives. The author underscores this approach's expressive, empowering, and personally relevant nature over traditional ones.

Consequently, the methodological core of the capabilities-participatory framework posits that the combination of focus groups and these visual tools can effectively generate valuable data. In this context, the chosen visual tools draw inspiration from the mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2011). As further elaborated in Section 4.2.1, they encompass life maps, neighbourhood mapping, the creation of board games (see Kesby, 2000; James, 2005; Veale, 2005; Crivello et al., 2009; Clark, 2011) and the Lego Serious Play Method (Bada, 2015; McCusker, 2020). A comprehensive justification for this decision is addressed later in this subsection.

Focus groups as a participatory method

As previously argued, this project is centred on creating knowledge about well-being by recognising young people as experts in the field. It adopts an epistemological position that views knowledge as constructed through relational and interactional processes among individuals. Hence, focus groups emerge as a suitable method to achieve this study's purposes, given their interactional nature by enabling the collective creation of meaning and exchange of reflections among the participants (Akkan et al., 2019). Additionally, this method empowers voices from marginalised groups, enabling them to discuss topics and share experiences that contribute to developing a collective voice (Bagnoli and Clark, 2010). This point is particularly relevant since, in Chapter 3, childhood and youth are conceptualised as a minority group within Chilean society that has been historically silenced.

Additionally, focus groups are preferred over individual interviews because they facilitate discussions of sensitive topics (Guest et al., 2017b). As Kitzinger (1994) emphasised, given the interactional component of group discussions, these can enhance the articulation of ideas and experiences that might remain underexplored in a typical interview setting. Consequently, the relational dimension of focus groups is indispensable for collaboratively constructing knowledge about the aspects of life valued by young Chileans, which may not be effectively addressed through alternative research methods.

Lastly, focus groups are chosen since these allow the collective creation of meaning by combining different techniques (Hennessy and Heary, 2005). As Darbyshire et al. (2005) suggested, multi-method approaches provide young participants with different options to express themselves and reflect upon their life experiences, which a single interviewing technique can limit. Hence, drawing inspiration from the work of Holland et al. (2010), combining visual and conversational tools offers participants the means to engage in comprehensive reflections about their lives, providing flexible activities that empower them to decide which aspects of their lives are most relevant to explore concerning their well-being.

Guiding group discussion through creative and visual methods

According to Hill (2006), when guiding discussions with young people, choosing methods that engage and represent them effectively is crucial. Punch (2002b) suggests that a fundamental aspect lies in combining various visual and creative research techniques. According to the author, this facilitates the construction of valuable data and maintains participants' motivation and interest throughout the process. Therefore, this study's use of creative methods is rooted in their "inventive and imaginative" nature, encompassing a broad range of techniques that can be flexibly combined based on the research's objectives (Veale, 2005, p. 254). Such a combination of different techniques allows participants to express their opinions and construct knowledge in a non-traditional way (Worth, 2011).

The use of visual and creative methods in young people's research is well-documented in the literature. According to Truscott et al. (2019), they are critical to enhancing their participation and expanding researchers' awareness of the diverse approaches needed to listen to their voices effectively and respectfully. As Eldén (2013) noted, visual methods challenge oversimplified views of children and enable a more comprehensive representation of them as competent, agentic, vulnerable, and interdependent social actors. Thus, these methods are considered more inclusive than traditional ones since they do not rely on participants' reading/written literacy skills (Clark and Moss, 2011), enabling marginalised groups, including children, to share their perspectives within the research process (Tolia-Kelly, 2007).

Furthermore, the rationale for using visual methods over traditional ones also stems from their dynamic and enjoyable attributes, which diverge from the perception of research as a school assignment (Crivello et al., 2009). As Horgan (2017) claims, these methods enable participants to reflect on complex ideas through an engaging process. However, their significance extends beyond their entertainment value. Punch (2002a) argues that these methods can alleviate the pressure on participants to provide "correct" responses. These attributes hold significant ethical importance as they enhance young people's engagement while safeguarding them from potential harm associated with their participation in the discussions.

The techniques chosen for this research project draw inspiration from the mosaic approach (Clark, 2001; 2005b; Clark and Moss, 2011), a framework where young people and adults collaboratively construct knowledge using a broad range of visual and verbal methods. Clark (2005b) identifies six key elements of the mosaic approach that justify its suitability for this project. These elements include its multi-method flexibility to accommodate diverse voices, its participatory nature that recognises young people as experts in their own lives, its emphasis on reflexivity to encourage reflection and

interpretation, its adaptability to different contexts, its focus on exploring children's lived experiences rather than only measurement, and its potential to be integrated into educational practice, going beyond from its evaluation nature.

Consequently, this approach is crucial for this study, as it strongly emphasises participation and adaptability, emerging as a robust framework for co-creating knowledge about young people's well-being during group discussions. Through the activities outlined in Section 4.2.1, the project aims to provide a dynamic and inclusive exploration of young people's experiences and perspectives on well-being.

4.1.6 Sampling strategy

Motivated by the aims of this project, its methodological underpinnings discussed in previous sections, and the gaps reported in Chapters 2 and 3, the sampling strategy adopted is *purposive*. Within this strategy, the selection of groups is based on their relevance to the research questions and the theoretical and analytical frameworks (Mason, 2002). Furthermore, as pointed out by Ritchie et al. (2003a), in purposive sampling, the groups are chosen based on specific characteristics that allow the exploration of a particular issue.

As discussed in Chapter 2, young Chileans have been absent from theorising about their well-being. Additionally, that chapter argued that it is still unclear in the literature how socioeconomic status influences young Chileans' well-being opportunities and if their status as children affects their possibilities to live well. Therefore, through purposive sampling, it is possible to focus on inviting participants considering their age and socioeconomic background to address the sampling gaps identified in the literature.[8]

As outlined in Chapter 3, the socioeconomic characterisation of the participants in this study is grounded on their school's Educational Vulnerability Index as the primary tool. This index is supplemented by considering the type of school young people attend and the region in which they reside. Consequently, students' place of residence, the type of school they attend, and their school year emerge as fundamental factors guiding the sample selection process that require further explanation.

The final sample includes 34 Chilean students between 10 and 14 years old living in two different regions of the country, distributed in four groups. Each group comprises students from the same school (different school years), where two schools were private (paid

[8] It is imperative to note that, for ethical considerations and to prevent stigmatisation, the current study refrained from inquiring about students' household income or other sociodemographic variables beyond age, type of school, and place of residence. Hence, providing an exact socioeconomic characterisation of the groups is not feasible.

tuition) and two public-statal (free tuition). The rationale for this sampling strategy is discussed in the following subsections.

Place of residence

This study includes students' region and place of residence as sample criteria for two overarching reasons. In the first place, as discussed in Chapter 3, residential segregation is directly linked to opportunities for well-being. While there is plenty of literature about the effects of residential segregation on adults concerning employment opportunities and social participation, less clarity exists concerning the effects of segregation on young individuals. Furthermore, most studies about residential segregation are concentrated in Santiago, the country's capital. Therefore, incorporating a regional analysis of the effects of residential segregation can provide valuable information and contribute to the discussion on the effects of residential segregation on young Chileans' well-being opportunities.

The second reason lies in an ethical stance. As discussed in Chapter 2, well-being studies concerning young people are predominantly based in Santiago and other larger urban cities of the country. Therefore, students living in rural areas have been marginalised from the studies about well-being in the country. Hence, this study aims to contribute to this ethical and methodological gap by recognising and including these missing voices within well-being studies in the country.

This project focused its sample in the Metropolitan and Araucanía regions. The rationale behind this decision lies in two main factors. First, I have contacts in educational establishments in both regions built during his experience working in schools, facilitating the feasibility of the project and its fruitful development. In second place, these two regions are in opposite positions concerning economic development and poverty indicators.

While the Metropolitan Region is the country's financial development centre and concentrates most of the country's public expenditure, the Araucanía Region is one of the country's regions with higher poverty rates, with a high rural population and lower access to essential services (Berdegué et al., 2009; Mieres Brevis, 2020; MDSF, 2023c). Furthermore, as reported in Chapter 3, the Araucanía Region displays the highest percentage of vulnerable students in rural areas.

Hence, by listening to students' voices from these varied living contexts and constructing knowledge from their unique life experiences, this study can offer a meaningful contribution to the discussion on young people's well-being in Chile. This sampling strategy aims to contribute to a better understanding of the effects of spatial inequalities outlined in Chapter 3. It provides a unique combination of students' voices living in the

centre of the country's economic activity, a region that concentrates power and resources, with those living in a peripherical region, with higher poverty levels and less operating budget for its population.[9] Hence, this sample strategy provides an opportunity to gain insights into how inequalities affect young Chileans' well-being opportunities in two socioeconomically contrasting regions.

Type of school

As outlined in Chapter 3, there are three primary types of schools within the Chilean education system: state-subsidised public schools, state-subsidised private schools, and non-subsidised private schools. Public schools, entirely subsidised by the state, are tuition-free. Subsidised-private schools receive partial state subsidies, with the remainder covered by monthly fees from parents. In contrast, private schools rely solely on tuition fees (Valenzuela et al., 2008; MINEDUC, 2019)

That underscores the significant impact of the type of school attended by Chilean students on their educational experience, influencing quality, academic performance, and subsequent opportunities, particularly in higher education and employment. It highlights the educational system's segregation, where low SES students typically attend lower-performing public-statal institutions, while high SES counterparts opt for higher-performing private schools. Within this context, educational segregation becomes a compelling analytical tool for understanding the influence of socioeconomic factors on students' well-being opportunities. Thus, considering the type of school attended is crucial for sampling purposes.

This study strategically includes two groups of students from public schools (one from each region) and two groups of private school students (one from each region) in its final sample. The decision rests on three primary reasons. Firstly, my prior work experience in these types of institutions facilitates the project's development within the existing network. Secondly, analysing students' viewpoints from opposite ends of the education system—completely public-free and completely private-paid—can illuminate the discussion regarding the discrepancies in well-being opportunities and decision-making power that those groups have, portraying the extremes of the Chilean educational system's disparity. Thirdly, contacting subsidised-private schools willing to participate proved challenging early in the project, leading to a methodological decision to leave out this type of school due to time and resource constraints associated with the urgency to initiate fieldwork within the PhD timeline. Not including students from subsidised-private schools represents a notable limitation of this study. Unfortunately, reaching out to

[9] See Hernández (2019) for a detailed analysis of the regional distribution of resources and budgets inequalities in Chile.

schools with these characteristics in the selected regions in the available timeframe proved unfeasible within the scope of this study.

As Chapter 3 informs, students from public state schools exhibit the highest percentages of vulnerability within the educational system and private school students the lowest (JUNAEB, 2023). Therefore, this sample strategy aims at visualising the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and well-being by analysing the life experiences and voices of students living in contexts of higher socioeconomic vulnerability (low SES) compared to those who do not experience this vulnerability (high SES). This approach is followed in this study to construct valuable knowledge to illuminate how socioeconomic inequality impacts young Chileans' opportunities for well-being and identify the underlying factors involved.

School year

Participants' age and school year constitute the final factors shaping the sampling strategy for this study, a critical consideration given its framework within the childhood studies paradigm. As detailed in Chapter 1, the legal definition of children and youth population in Chile encompasses individuals under 18. However, this study narrows its sample to students aged 10 to 14, corresponding to 5th to 8th grade within the country's educational system. This age group is explicitly chosen because it aligns with my predominant professional experience. Working with the same age group increased this project's feasibility, anticipating a fruitful connection with young co-researchers based on positive past experiences.

Moreover, this experience served as a strategic argument with gatekeepers, facilitating permission and agreement to conduct the study with their students. It provided assurances to the co-researchers that the risks associated with their participation, particularly potential emotional distress, would be handled by myself, a certified therapist, with the expertise to open the channels of communication with the gatekeepers and refer to external professional help in the case of need.

The decision to work with this specific age group was also based on the fact that, within the Chilean educational system, 8th grade is the last year in which students' academic performance does not impact their university admission scores.[10] The following year marks the beginning of high school in Chile, where academic performance becomes crucial for university admission. Based on my previous experience as a school counsellor,

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[10] The university entrance score in Chile is calculated based on the results of three specific tests (reading comprehension, mathematics, and either sciences or social sciences) and the grades obtained during high school years. For more details about this process, refer to MINEDUC (2022).

working with high school students can be challenging, as they tend to prioritise school-related assignments, making their attendance to non-school related events unpredictable.

Not including younger students as well as older ones is a clear limitation of this study. Nevertheless, given the timeframe of the PhD, it was not possible to invite more groups, including different ages. Hence, incorporating voices of a broader age range should definitely be considered in further studies to increase young people's participation in well-being studies.

Final sample

This study includes four focus groups, a number deemed sufficient in the literature to achieve data saturation, where new information no longer introduces new codes (Guest et al., 2017a; Hennink and Kaiser, 2022). While an optimal number of participants is not universally defined, between six and eight participants for each group are recommended in the literature (Bloor et al., 2001). Hence, the total sample comprises thirty-four (34) participants (two panels with eight and two with nine). This group size facilitates interactive dialogue and ensures manageable data construction.

Following the previously outlined sampling strategy, each panel comprises students between 10 and 14 years old. Two groups live in the Metropolitan Region: one group of eight students attend a public school, and one group of eight students attend a private school. The two remaining groups of students reside in the Araucanía Region; one group of eight students attend a public school, and the other group of eight students attend a private school.[11]

The group's composition aligns with the principle of constructing heterogeneous samples to facilitate the exploration of themes from diverse perspectives (Sagoe, 2012; Guest et al., 2017a). It is crucial to note that while each group is internally homogenous (same school, different years), heterogeneity emerges across the groups based on school administration type and the students' region of residence. It was decided that each group would be homogenous since they promote participants' confidence in expressing their opinions (Sagoe, 2012).

[11] According to the latest IVE-SINAE report (JUNAEB, 2023), the public-urban school invited to participate in this study has a 92% vulnerability, and the public-rural school has an 87%. As reported in Chapter 3, private schools are not considered in this index, with the assumption that such students do not face monetary or material vulnerability.

4.2 The research process

4.2.1 Constructing the data

The primary aim of the data construction phase of this study is to create a list of valued capabilities that represent young Chileans' vision of well-being. As introduced in Chapter 3, this process involves the identification of the key capabilities and their dimensions that comprise the young participant's life they have reason to value. In this context, it becomes essential to continue a discussion introduced in previous chapters, where it was noted that within the capability literature, there are two main approaches in the selection process of capabilities to be analysed: working with a pre-defined list of capabilities or choose them specifically considering a study's context.[12]

Robeyns (2005b) emphasises that using a predetermined list of capabilities or creating a context-specific list is deeply rooted in a project's epistemological and methodological foundations. In this context, the decision to work with a predefined list raises concerns about how well it represents the diverse voices and perspectives of the participants and may inadvertently perpetuate an unequal power dynamic between the researcher and the participants (Robeyns, 2003). Therefore, this discussion becomes particularly relevant in research involving young people within a participatory research framework.

The pre-selection of capabilities raises important concerns regarding the extent to which young individuals actively contribute to knowledge creation or are relegated to passive roles as mere respondents within the research process. In this context, using a predefined list of capabilities neglects the nuanced perspectives of students, thereby perpetuating a prevailing adult-centric paradigm. Subsequently, well-being concepts remain fixed, lacking consideration for contextual nuances and the authentic voices of children.

Therefore, aligning with the epistemological underpinnings of this research project, which underscore its participatory nature, it becomes imperative to engender a collaborative process for selecting capabilities and their associated dimensions. This collaborative approach ensures that the research not only captures the multifaceted insights of young co-researchers but also upholds the project's commitment to participatory research principles.

[12] As discussed in Chapter 3, the literature aligned with Sen's version of the CA suggests that each study should develop a list of capabilities tailored to its specific context (e.g., Robeyns, 2003; Alkire and Foster, 2011). In contrast, the literature influenced by Nussbaum (2011) advocates using a predetermined list of capabilities, as this version of the CA is closely tied to a theory of human dignity and social justice. Consequently, scholars working within this framework commonly propose a set of fundamental capabilities to which all human beings are entitled by virtue of their humanity (see, for instance, Nussbaum, 2003).

Co-constructing young Chileans' list of valued capabilities

Four activities with each group were held in the first stage of the data construction process, aiming to explore and discuss what aspects of their lives the participants perceive as critical to living well, which ultimately derives into the definitive capability list. Each activity is further discussed later in this section. The fifth meeting—Activity 5—involved a collective analysis alongside the co-researchers based on the previous sessions and aimed at identifying the main themes discussed during that initial stage. This session was particularly relevant for the data construction stage since the participants proposed a summary of the central topics discussed in the previous meetings.

I performed a thematic framework analysis between the fifth and sixth sessions to identify all the emergent themes discussed with each group. Next, in the sixth and final meeting, this list of themes and topics was discussed with each panel. From this collective elaboration of themes with each group, I elaborated a capability list and its dimensions presented in Chapter 5, unifying all groups' discussions. Section 4.2.2 delves into more details about the thematic analysis and the elaboration of the capability list.

Structure of the sessions

As previously introduced, the following activities correspond to the core of this project's knowledge construction process, where students had a protagonist role. It is important to note that while the specific methods are helpful to prompt the participant's reflection and discussion, as highlighted by Gallagher (2008), the essence of participatory research lies in the way people engage with one another, share experiences, and collectively contribute to the creation of knowledge. Therefore, a fundamental aspect of this study lies in the discussions and interactions that emerge from the visual methods used. As a result, the data constructed is predominantly textual since it comprises the focus groups' transcriptions and is supported by the visual-creative constructions.

Rooted in this relational process of knowledge construction where all the participants' subjectivities contribute to constructing a collective voice, all the activities discussed below followed the same structure. It is important to mention that the activities corresponding to the data construction stage were carried out in two alternative time frames. Option A involved a 1-hour session for each activity distributed on different days. Option B entailed the participants attending a three- to four-hour long session and carrying out all the activities (except activity 6 which took place virtually with all the groups). Each option was discussed and negotiated with each group independently.[13]

[13] Refer to the Ethical Review Form (Appendix F Section C.3) for more details about the two focus groups' alternative time frames.

Subsequently, work with students from public institutions was conducted through option A at their schools, while option B was chosen for private school students. As discussed in Section 4.1.6, due to the restrictions presented by private institutions, work with these groups of students was carried out in youth-sport clubs associated with their schools. Consequently, all focus groups took place in different locations, which presented specific challenges.

In the case of working with students from public schools, time and space were critical factors that, to some extent, influenced the development of the sessions. In both instances, I was permitted to use a room regularly occupied by other professionals of the school. Therefore, preparing the room for the sessions was challenging, as it involved asking people to vacate the premises and then quickly setting up the chairs and materials needed for each session.

In contrast, working with the groups of private school students was more straightforward, as their youth-sport clubs were not used by anyone else. This facilitated the preparation of the room and materials. Additionally, since the activities with these groups were conducted in a continuous, long session, it was easier to maintain the flow of discussion without losing momentum. However, it was crucial to frequently check in with them about how they were feeling and to incorporate multiple breaks throughout the session.

As previously indicated, all the activities followed the same structure. Each session began with a brief summary of the previous activity, followed by the introduction of a new prompt. Once the aim of the activity was explained to the students, the corresponding materials were provided for them to undertake the visual-creative task associated with each activity. At this point, the co-researchers asked questions and occasionally commented out loud on what they were doing.

Next, when everyone had finished, they were asked to provide an oral explanation of their creation, informing the group discussion. This final part of the sessions was critical as it provided a unique opportunity to learn from each other and collaboratively build each group's perceptions of what living well entails. Notably, the discussion stage of the activities proved challenging with the public school students due to time limitations. Therefore, on certain occasions, the discussion needed to start before all participants had completed their constructions.

Furthermore, as elaborated further in Chapter 8, the discussion stage of each activity aimed to enhance group interaction, with the expectation that the co-researchers would engage with each other, ask questions about their visual products, and collectively reflect on the main theme of each activity. However, this multi-directional discussion proved challenging, and the co-researchers across all groups relied on my intervention and follow-up questions to stimulate their reflections. This issue is exemplified by the silence

that often followed when each student presented their work, and their tendency to address their points to me rather than to the group.

Activity 0: Presentation of the project and inviting the participants

This project's first stage was to contact potential schools that could be interested—and willing—to work with a group of their students. At this stage, personal connections built during my professional experience were critical for approaching the institutions (see Section 4.1.6). Nevertheless, this initial contact was particularly challenging since it occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Chilean schools adopted an online education setting for almost two years. Therefore, there was a permanent uncertainty as to whether schools would continue their participation due to problems associated with their internal organisation.

As detailed in this project's Ethical Review Form (Appendix F Section C.7), during the recruitment process, a primary challenge emerged related to obtaining schools' authorisation to work with their students during school hours. While public schools immediately agreed and offered their facilities to conduct the sessions, private institutions showed reluctance to allow sessions during school hours and within the school's physical space. Nevertheless, they offered the possibility to use a youth sports club associated with the school to conduct the sessions. Consequently, two different recruitment processes were carried out. Alternative A involved recruitment directly through the school, with the vice-principal acting as the gatekeeper and facilitating contact with potential candidates. Alternative B involved recruitment through the youth sports club leader, who acted as the gatekeeper and facilitated contact with potential candidates. Limitations of this process are further elaborated in Chapter 8.

Once this initial contact was made and four schools agreed to participate, the next stage involved presenting the project and inviting students to participate. This point was also problematic since none of the schools allowed me to talk directly to potential candidates. Therefore, in each school, a person was allocated to discuss the project with all the students from the school years defined in the sample and share the project's information sheet (see Appendix A).[14] Subsequently, the interested students were invited to the first session, in which the information and consent sheets were thoroughly explained.

In this first meeting, most students stayed and agreed to participate. However, in all the groups, some students declined to participate and left. This situation was particularly insightful to reinforce the voluntary nature of the project. Hence, it was meaningful to the co-researchers since it demonstrated to them that the contribution to this project was

[14] One of the schools requested a letter for parents of the potential participants explaining the project. Refer to Appendix C.

completely voluntary and the decision was theirs, without any repercussions, if they decided to withdraw at any point.

Activity 1: The Lego tower

After discussing the background of the research and the group agreement concerning some basic rules of respect and legitimacy of everyone's viewpoints throughout the project, the participants were asked to build a Lego tower and introduce themselves.[15] The primary objective of this activity was to initiate the research journey through a ludic and interactive activity, enabling the participants to introduce themselves to the group. Additionally, it assists in familiarising the participants with the structure of each session, which includes the introduction of an activity, a designated time for its execution, and a collective presentation and discussion of each participant's creation within the group.

Lego model construction as a research technique is rooted in the Lego Serious Play method (LSP), which posits that knowledge is constructed by giving meaning to the experience (Bada, 2015). Central to this method are metaphors, as they enable participants to represent and explain their perceptions of the environment using Lego bricks (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006). Therefore, the method facilitates the generation of novel insights through the individual and collective creation of Lego models, fostering connections among participants (Kristiansen and Rasmussen, 2014).

Furthermore, Lego is a valuable research tool because of its low entry-level skill requirement (Gauntlett et al., 2009; Gauntlett, 2014). This attribute makes it an inclusive and accessible option for individuals with diverse backgrounds and abilities, facilitating diverse participation in research activities. Consequently, Lego model construction is used in this study since it can stimulate the creation of new knowledge and meaning, encouraging personal and collective reflection among groups through an engaging and enjoyable activity. Activity 5 delves deeper into using Lego as a research instrument in this project.

Activity 2: Drawing our Life Map

The second activity entailed participants creating personal life maps, inviting them on a reflective journey identifying the significant events and experiences they have encountered throughout their lives. In a subsequent phase of this activity, participants

[15] Building a Lego tower is considered a classic ice-breaking and introductory exercise within the Lego Serious Play method, which involves building a tower and creating a narrative explaining it (Kristiansen and Rasmussen, 2014).

were prompted to extend their life maps into the future, encouraging them to envision the possible events that could shape their future.

Grounded in the research technique of mapping, using maps has played a significant role in community-based research, particularly within children's geographies literature (Veale, 2005). According to Amsden and VanWynsberghe (2005, p. 361), mapping is helpful since it encourages young people's "capacity to represent themselves and their understandings of the world around them". Furthermore, life mapping becomes a valuable tool for aiding young participants in identifying significant events and people during their life trajectories (Worth, 2011).

Consequently, this tool is chosen in this study because it recognises young people as experts by acknowledging the value of their perceptions and subjectivities concerning their life experiences as critical for data construction. Moreover, this activity was particularly relevant as it offered valuable insights into the participants' aspirations and perceptions for the future. Hence, the technique was critical to explore the significant events in young people's life journeys, contributing to the preliminary identification of dimensions that could influence a student's quality of life.[16]

Activity 3: Building our Neighbourhood Map

During the third activity, participants were asked to create maps of their neighbourhoods, which required them to identify areas or circumstances in their local communities that positively or negatively affect their quality of life. Similarly to the preceding activity, participants were prompted to reflect on their neighbourhoods and identify significant events around them that have consequences for their overall welfare. While the previous activity aimed at the participants reflecting on their life journeys in general, at this point, they are being invited to think about their life experiences, contextualising their reflection specifically within their neighbourhoods.

By recognising young people as experts in their environments, neighbourhood mapping has proven to be a valuable tool for exploring their interpretations and relationships within their living surroundings (Wilson et al., 2019). As raised by Spilsbury et al. (2009), researching young people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods through mapping has been highly relevant for studying their well-being, primarily due to the different interpretations they offer in contrast to their parents.

Hence, this tool was essential for this study as it positioned young people's perspectives on their living environments as fundamental to better understanding their effect on their

[16] It is essential to note that participants were provided with the option to either reflect upon their own life experiences or, in cases where they were uncomfortable doing so, to engage in hypothetical consideration of critical events that a student of their age group might encounter.

quality of life on a day-to-day basis. Additionally, it revealed significant information concerning the places, circumstances, and the community's behaviour that positively or negatively affect their opportunities for well-being.

Activity 4: Creating a Snakes and Ladders Board

Participants collaborated in small groups in this session to create a Snakes and Ladders board game. Building upon the insights gained from the previous activities, which prompted them to reflect on significant life events and aspects of their neighbourhoods that influence their well-being, the objective was to collectively identify factors that either aid or obstruct their ability to live well. Consequently, through constructing the board game, participants aimed to pinpoint the key barriers, symbolised as snakes, and facilitators, symbolised as ladders, that they considered critical for their well-being.

Board games have been used as a research technique in various contexts. They have been used in educational settings involving young children (e.g., Van der Stege et al., 2016) and as aids in conducting interviews with children (e.g., Neag, 2019). However, it is essential to highlight that these approaches and uses of board games do not necessarily recognise young people as active participants in the research process. Instead, they often operate at a consultative level or instruct the participants on a determined topic.

In this context, drawing inspiration from the work of Main (2019b),[17] constructing a snakes and ladders board game was used in this project as a research instrument to explore the participants' perceptions regarding the key factors contributing to a student's well-being and to identify the barriers and facilitators that influence their opportunity to live well. This activity was crucial in enriching group discussions and understanding the co-researchers' justifications when choosing the elements to represent as snakes and ladders on the board.

Activity 5: What is the life we value?

The final session of the data construction stage served as a concluding activity involving a collective analysis of the work undertaken in the preceding sessions. For this activity, the participants were provided with Lego bricks and were asked to represent the three main attributes or dimensions of well-being that most resonated with them, considering all the discussions and activities developed throughout the project. Therefore, Lego model

[17] Grounded their work in a participatory research framework, Main and colleagues collaborated with young participants to create a Snakes and Ladders board game aimed at identifying the barriers and facilitators they perceived as crucial to their quality of life in a low-income environment (see also Howard et al., 2020).

construction was employed in this session to facilitate knowledge construction by actively engaging co-researchers in an analytical process.

The literature reveals that Lego has proved to be a practical instrument for children to describe aspects of their daily routines and engage in creative reflection on their activities while making the research process a more familiar and commonplace experience for the participants (Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). As a result, it has been used in research with children for different purposes, particularly within educational settings (e.g., Altakhayneh, 2020), in promoting social skills and creativity (e.g., Akbari and Rajab Boloukat, 2017) and in enhancing youth participation within their communities (Le Dé et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the use of Lego within the participatory research paradigm has not been documented yet, representing a gap in the literature concerning the potential of this instrument. Consequently, aligned with recognising participants as co-researchers, using the instrument to produce knowledge through an analytical exercise represented an innovative use of the technique in research. It allowed participants to translate abstract perceptions of well-being, collectively constructed during the sessions, into tangible representations using Lego bricks. Moreover, this exercise was pivotal in shaping the framework-thematic analysis and elaborating the capability list discussed in Section 4.2.2 concerning the analytical stage of this study.

The use of Lego as a participatory-analytical tool

As previously introduced, the use of Lego became crucial for including the young co-researchers in a preliminary analysis of the data. In this activity, I began by showing the students the different visual data they had constructed in previous sessions, asking them to reflect not only on their own work but also on their peers' work. This exercise was essential for helping them remember some of the key attributes of a good life discussed earlier, particularly for groups where sessions took place on different days.

Once they had all had the chance to review the constructed data, they were asked to build a Lego model representing the three most relevant dimensions of well-being they identified based on the previous activities and group discussions. Next, they were asked to write the three dimensions on a post-it note and present their Lego model to the rest of the group. This part of the process was critically valuable, as it naturally brought out key themes such as the importance of family, pets, and having life project aspirations, which guided the framework analysis described later in this chapter.

It is important to note that one of the most significant attributes of the LSP method when working with groups is its democratic balance of conversational power, where all group members have the opportunity to ask for more details or explanations of each other's constructions (Kristiansen and Rasmussen, 2014). This point is crucial as it distributes

power among group members, challenging the type of meeting where only one person talks and the rest listen, empowering all individuals to have an active role in the discussions.

However, this type of multi-directional discussion was only partially achieved in this study. With a few exceptions, this part of the analysis was predominantly moderated by myself, and the young co-researchers found it challenging to ask and comment on their peers' creations. As further elaborated in Chapter 8 concerning the limitations of this project, the main reason behind this phenomenon can be attributed to the rigid timeframe for each session, which limited the possibility of extending the discussions.

Activity 6: Discussion and dissemination of the emerging themes

The final activity entailed presenting to the students the interpretation and organisation of the themes that emerged from the data analysis (see Section 4.2.2), ensuring that their perspectives were accurately reflected. In line with the principles of participatory inquiry, the objective was to actively involve the participants in elaborating a preliminary report to inform each school.[18] These meetings led to several discussions and suggestions by the students, including the desire to further elaborate on certain points and rearrange the order of themes in some cases.

This stage received particular attention in this study, in line with the concerns raised by Montreuil et al. (2021), who highlight that the analysis and interpretation of data are frequently overlooked and susceptible to falling into tokenistic practices when embracing a participatory research approach with young people. Additionally, as discussed earlier in this chapter, this study advocated for selecting capabilities tailored to the participant's life experiences and contextual subjectivities. Therefore, their contributions in this session played a crucial role in identifying the study's final list of valued capabilities.

4.2.2 Analysing the data

Adopting a framework analysis to identify young Chileans' valued capabilities

This project uses framework analysis to analyse the data and identify young people's valued capabilities. This analytical tool has been highly influential within the qualitative inquiry owing to the seminal work of Ritchie and Spencer (1994), who highlight its usefulness in identifying emergent concepts, assigning meaning, and establishing connections between them. In this regard, it shares common ground with thematic

[18] As previously agreed with the gatekeepers and with the participants, these preliminary findings were then reported to each school.

analysis, as both approaches involve identifying and analysing patterns and themes (see, for instance, Clarke and Braun, 2017).

However, as Ritchie et al. (2003b) pointed out, framework analysis diverges from traditional thematic approaches by employing a matrix-based method for systematically organising and categorising data. According to these authors, this matrix-based approach enhances the rigour and transparency of data management throughout various analysis stages, enabling researchers to navigate between different levels of abstraction while maintaining a clear connection to the original raw data. Kiernan and Hill (2018) further underscore that this level of transparency makes it a valuable analytical tool within qualitative research. Therefore, framework analysis is a versatile tool suitable for various analytical tasks, including thematic description and developing multi-dimensional typologies or theories related to the studied phenomenon (Goldsmith, 2021).

Consequently, framework analysis emerges as a compelling analytical tool for organising and interpreting the data generated in this study. Furthermore, authors such as Greco et al. (2015) have demonstrated its effectiveness when combined with a capabilities perspective in transforming themes and their interrelationships into a list of valued capabilities.

Unpacking young Chileans' voices

Spencer et al. (2013) claim that analysing qualitative data is an iterative process, primarily involving organising and interpreting the data. To facilitate this task, Ritchie and Spencer (1994) outline a five-stage approach for conducting this analysis: *familiarisation*, *identifying a thematic framework*, *indexing*, *charting*, *mapping and interpretation*.[19] Each of these steps is explained within the context of this study in the following subsection.

Familiarisation marks the initial stage of this process, entailing total immersion in the data. According to Ritchie and Spencer (1994), this phase involves a comprehensive review of all the constructed data and the notation of key ideas and recurring themes. In the context of this project, this step encompassed activities such as listening to recordings, reading transcripts, and cross-referencing them with visual materials. Additionally, it involved thoroughly examining the data through the lens of the themes that emerged during the collective analysis conducted within the data construction stage (see Activity 5).

[19] According to Goldsmith (2021), the last three stages are fundamental within this process, which include a thorough indexing of all the data, the arrangement of the indexed data into a matrix, and a comparative analysis conducted within the matrix to identify patterns.

The next step involved *Identifying a Thematic Framework*, where all the data was categorised under the preliminary themes or categories visualised in the prior stage.[20] As Parkinson et al. (2016) highlighted, this process can pose challenges, particularly if numerous categories exist. Therefore, it is advisable to organise these categories hierarchically, resulting in a division of main themes, each encompassing subthemes (Spencer et al., 2013). Following the approach of these authors, specific themes identified during this stage of the analysis were grouped into broader themes. For instance, themes related to interactions with various social groups like friends, school peers, siblings, and neighbours were consolidated into the overarching "social relationships" category.

In the subsequent step, *Indexing*, the thematic framework is applied to the data, involving the organisation of transcripts into the categories defined in the previous stage (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). As Spencer et al. (2013) emphasise, indexing entails a detailed reading of the transcriptions to determine the subject matter of each sentence or phrase and assign it to one of the previously labelled themes or subthemes. Based on the experiences of previous studies (e.g., Parkinson et al., 2016; Bonello and Meehan, 2019), using NVivo played a critical role in data management. This software allowed for the transformation of each category into a code, [21] facilitating the process of dragging and dropping each text segment into the relevant category.

After indexing the data, the next step is known as *Charting*. According to Ritchie and Spencer (1994), this stage involves organising and summarising data into categories and cases within a chart. Therefore, for each case, a summary of each theme must be included in the thematic matrix (Spencer et al., 2003). In this stage, NVivo and Excel played pivotal roles in developing the charts and visualising the data. Furthermore, the charting process was particularly useful for organising the results to be presented to the co-researchers during the final meeting. [22] Refer to Appendix D and E for an illustration of the Indexing and Charting stages carried out in this analysis.

After charting all the data and sharing and discussing the preliminary themes with the participants, the final stage, known as *Mapping and interpretation*, begins. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) claim this is the most challenging stage of the process, where the researcher looks for patterns and possible explanations within the data, leading to knowledge production. As Parkinson et al. (2016) noted, during this stage, researchers

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[20] According to Ritchie and Spencer (1994), this initial thematic framework will be revised and refined several times during the process.

[21] Within the framework analysis literature, it is commonly used the notion of index rather than code (see Spencer et al., 2013). However, NVivo is predetermined with the nomenclature of codes. Therefore, coding and indexing are used interchangeably in this context.

[22] After this Charting stage is where the last meeting with the participants took place. The rationale behind this decision was rooted in the need to check if the themes and categories were accurately captured in the analysis before interpreting the data from a capabilities perspective.

articulate their own understanding and interpretation of the data in relation to the research questions they have posed. According to these authors, the research aims and theoretical frameworks adopted in the study will be critical for this stage.

Therefore, since this project is grounded on the capability approach, at this stage, each category and theme identified through the framework analysis provided the input to construct a list of capabilities and their dimensions described in detail in Chapter 5. The subsequent subsection provides a more detailed exploration of this process.

Constructing a list of valued capabilities

Selecting the list of valued capabilities for this study was informed by the work of Robeyns (2005b; 2017), who emphasises the importance of identifying a capability list within the capability approach to theorise about a specific phenomenon, such as well-being. While Robeyns recognises the value of not prescribing a fixed list of capabilities (as within Nussbaum's approach), the author advocates for the selection of pertinent capabilities guided by specific criteria defined by a project's lead researcher. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that the author does not embrace a participatory approach to formulate a list of valued capabilities. As previously indicated, following this study's epistemological underpinnings, such a list was created explicitly for the group in question, considering their specific contexts and subjectivities.

Byskov (2018) highlights three main methods to select capabilities: *ad hoc* methods, where the capabilities selection is based on the researcher's interests and the study's aims; *foundational methods*, which are mainly based on deductive reasoning according to fundamental values and technical knowledge; *procedural methods*, which based their selection on bottom-up processes by selecting the capabilities based on people's subjective preferences; and *mixed methods*, which base the selection by combining foundational and procedural methods. Therefore, to select its list of capabilities, this study adopted a procedural method, also known as a bottom-up method, where the selection is based on a qualitative-participatory analysis concerning the subjective preferences of a particular group

Several studies have used this approach to validate pre-defined lists of relevant capabilities with young people (e.g., Biggeri et al., 2006; Domínguez-Serrano et al., 2019). However, aligning with the methodological principles of this study, it was imperative to place young people's voices at the forefront when constructing and informing the capabilities selection process rather than just validating a construction based on adult perspectives.

As a result, following the analytical steps described earlier, four dimensions of well-being, conceptualised as capabilities, derived from the framework analysis. These

capabilities are elaborated upon in Chapter 5 and include: *security*, *life project*, *community*, and *recognition*. This list of valued capabilities represents the conceptualisation of well-being for the Chilean students involved in this study. The clarity of this capability list played a crucial role in the subsequent conversion factors analysis.

Discussing young Chileans' opportunities for well-being through a conversion factors analysis

As previously argued in Chapter 3, after identifying the list of valued capabilities of the young participants, this thesis aimed to analyse how young Chileans' opportunities to live well are constrained by factors such as socioeconomic status (SES) and social constructions of childhood (SCC). For these purposes, the capabilities approach, through its notion of conversion factors, was proposed as a theoretical framework to identify the barriers young people face concerning their opportunities for well-being in the country.

This analysis involved a discussion of the role played by specific institutional frameworks, conceptualised as the critical structural inputs in this study, to better understand this relationship. Within this context, it was essential to explore the impact of the educational system, with a particular focus on the concept of segregation, to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of socioeconomic inequality on young people's opportunities to live well. Additionally, examining the role of the Politica Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia in shaping young Chilean's constructions around agency and participation was critical to shed light on this discussion.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological foundations of this study. The participatory inquiry was proposed as the primary framework for achieving this thesis's purposes in this context. The reason behind this decision can be summarised into two main points. First, this research paradigm emphasises the co-construction of knowledge through interaction and collaboration. Therefore, it challenges power dynamics within the research process concerning the hierarchical relationship between adults and children.

Furthermore, adopting a participatory approach recognises young people's agency within the research process. This feature of this research paradigm becomes fundamental to this study's purposes since it provokes a shift concerning the methodological approaches that dominate the study of young people's well-being in Chile, marked mainly by adults neglecting the voice of children when conceptualising this concept.

This chapter also discussed this project's research design. In this regard, a qualitative-participatory approach was proposed to construct the data. The rationale behind this

decision lies in the emphasis on people's interpretations and subjectivities that this approach offers, which, paired with a participatory framework, allows the positioning of young people's subjectivities at the centre of knowledge production concerning their well-being. Within this discussion, creative and visual methods based on the mosaic approach were proposed as the primary tool to guide the focus group discussions and explore this thesis' aims.

Subsequently, the chapter outlined the use of purposed sampling as the strategy to recruit the co-researchers of this study. In this context, it was discussed that young people's place of living, the type of school they attend, and their school year are critical factors that shape this process. This point was raised as fundamental since including voices in the research about well-being within that sampling criteria is critical to addressing the literature gaps discussed in Chapter 2.

Finally, this chapter describes the stages of the research process in detail. First, the data construction stage was outlined, which covered the process from the initial contact with schools and detailed each of the sessions and activities developed with the co-researchers. The second phase described the approach to analyse this study's data, which was predominantly based on the framework approach. As argued in that section, this process was critical to identifying young Chileans' dimensions of well-being, which were then expressed through a list of capabilities.

Moreover, this last section discussed the crucial role of this list of valued capabilities in the conversion factors analysis performed later in this thesis. It was argued that such a list of capabilities and its dimensions provides the input to examine and discuss the barriers and facilitators of young Chileans' well-being opportunities based on socioeconomic factors and social constructions of childhood.

Chapter 5
What is the life we value?
Young Chileans' list of valued capabilities

Introduction

This chapter describes the list of valued capabilities co-constructed with young people following the analytical steps described in Chapter 4. The results suggest that irrespective of their living conditions, young Chileans place importance on similar dimensions when assessing what defines a good quality of life. In this context, the four capabilities identified in the study reflect young people's well-being: *security*, *life project*, *community* and *recognition*.

The capability of *security* entails young people's possibility to live in tranquillity and calmness. This capability is closely tied to physical safety, in which the role of neighbourhoods becomes critical to the discussion. This capability also entails young people's possibilities of being physically and mentally healthy in terms of accessing medical treatment and medications in case of illness. Furthermore, the capability of security also has a material dimension, which involves young people's possibilities of living comfortably, which is closely tied to young people's possibilities to satisfy their basic needs, particularly concerning housing and food necessities. As further examined in Chapter 6, socioeconomic conditions are a critical conversion factor shaping this capability.

The capability of *life project* refers to young people's possibilities to pursue their career aspirations. In this context, the participants reflected upon the importance of developing a project based on their aspirations and expectations, not any project. Within this discussion, education's role at the school and university level became critical aspects of this capability. As elaborated in Chapter 6, socioeconomic factors, particularly those linked to the effects of inequalities within the Chilean educational system, are pivotal in shaping the possibilities to achieve this capability.

The capability of *community* involves young Chileans' possibilities to build intimate relationships with others based on care and support. Within this capability, friends, family and pets emerged as fundamental members of young people's communities. Furthermore, the possibility to choose the members of their communities arose as a critical dimension of this capability. Chapter 7 explores how SCC shapes young Chileans' possibilities to build supportive communities and receive support based on their needs.

The capability of *recognition* refers to young people's possibility of having their voices recognised and heard by adults. In this context, the opportunity for young people to be heard emerges as a crucial dimension and prerequisite for receiving support based on their needs rather than based on an adult's interpretation of what they need. Chapter 7 investigates the influence of SCC in shaping young Chileans' capability to be recognised. Within this discussion, that chapter discusses the key role of the institutional conceptualisations of childhood as a critical barrier shaping this possibility.

While the capabilities described in this chapter are common perspectives among the groups, critical disparities based on SES require further analysis. In this context, the data reveals that young people's possibilities to live securely and to develop their chosen life projects are influenced predominantly by students' SES linked to their places of living and schools. On the other hand, young people's decision-making opportunities, particularly concerning building communities and being recognised by others, transcend SES disparities and are strongly linked to young people's agency and participation spaces delimitated by SCC.

Therefore, while these two influential factors occasionally overlap within the four capabilities, for analytical purposes, Chapter 6 delves into the influence of SES as a central conversion factor impacting students' possibilities of living securely and pursuing their life projects. In contrast, Chapter 7 explores the role of SCC in shaping young Chileans' decision-making power within their opportunities to build communities and be recognised by adults as active agents in shaping their well-being.

The chapter is structured into five sections. Section 5.1 provides an overview of each capability, offering definitions and detailing the dimensions that constitute them. Section 5.2 introduces the capability of security, highlighting the importance of young people's ability to reside safely in their neighbourhoods, live in comfortable conditions, and maintain good health. Section 5.3 delineates young people's capability to develop a chosen life project, highlighting the relevance of education and securing employment aligned with their career aspirations.

Section 5.4 delves into the capability of building communities, emphasising the pivotal role of social relationships for Chilean students. This capability encompasses young people's possibilities of being friends, family members, and pet carers as integral components. Section 5.5 elucidates young people's capability to be recognised, a crucial factor influencing their decision-making power over the decisions that affect them. In this context, the opportunities to be heard and to receive adequate support from adults emerge as critical facets of this capability.

The final section provides a concise summary of the key points and insights discussed throughout the chapter.

5.1 What is the life we value? A summary of young Chilean's valued capabilities

The four capabilities identified in this study to conceptualise young people's well-being in Chile are:

1. *Security*: the possibility to live in tranquillity and calmness, encompassing safety, good health and comfort.
2. *Life Project*: the freedom to pursue a chosen life project, where the role of education and employment aspirations are critical.
3. *Community*: the possibility to build supportive relationships, particularly with friends, family, and pets.
4. *Recognition*: the possibility of being recognised and valued by others, where being heard and supported by adults is fundamental.

Each of these capabilities and its comprising dimensions are described in detail in the following sections.

5.2 Security

As previously introduced, security emerged as the first capability identified by young people as critical for their well-being, defined by the students as being able to live in tranquillity and calmness. In this context, living securely includes the possibility of being safe, which is heavily influenced by young people's neighbourhoods and encompasses young people's physical security and risk of harm. It also includes young people's possibilities of being healthy in terms of accessing medical treatment and medications in case of illness. In this context, being healthy not only includes physical health but also mental health, which was raised by students as fundamental for living well. Furthermore, security also has a material dimension, which involves young people's possibilities of living comfortably. This material aspect of well-being is mainly linked to young people being able to satisfy their basic needs, such as housing and food necessities.

5.2.1 Being Safe

This study's findings argue that young people's well-being is closely tied to their sense of safety, a notion well-supported by previous research (e.g., Fattore et al., 2009). Specifically, this sense of safety is intricately linked to their physical security, with neighbourhoods playing a fundamental role. The literature has consistently emphasised the significance of neighbourhoods in shaping young people's well-being, particularly its contribution to their life satisfaction (Ramírez Casas del Valle et al., 2017; Alfaro-Inzunza

et al., 2019; Oyarzún Gómez et al., 2019). However, in this study, the role of neighbourhoods in young people's safety is explored further, with factors such as loud noises, dogs, street conditions, access to green spaces, and exposure to crime emerging as critical aspects influencing their perception of safety within their living environments.

Loud noises

There was broad consensus among the groups that loud noises significantly disturb their sense of calmness and mood and interfere with their everyday activities. The latest results of the Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida y Salud (ENCAVI) (National Survey of Quality of Life and Health) support this finding, showing that loud noises are one of the most common problems that the Chilean population experience and affect their quality of life (MINSAL, 2017a).[1] Nevertheless, this study's findings indicate notable distinctions in the experiences of young people based on their socioeconomic backgrounds that are important to visualise. As one participant living in a high SES neighbourhood stated, *"he [neighbour] puts on the music like really loud and starts dancing, until 3:00 am (...) and the next morning I need to wake up to do stuff, but I cannot sleep well."* In contrast, a student residing in a low SES neighbourhood said, *"Living in this place means listening to gunshots and fireworks (...) I don't think it is a good or a bad thing. It is how it is."*

Consequently, the differences among the groups include variations like the nature of the noise and its safety implications. While high-SES individuals express concerns about disturbances caused by loud music and parties, low-SES students report facing different challenges, including the sounds of gunshots, fireworks, and fights. Thus, while both high and low-SES students experience distress due to loud noises, which mainly affect their possibility to rest, the latter group, particularly those in low-SES urban neighbourhoods, also encounter physical threats associated with these disruptive sounds. These SES-based distinctions related to loud noises and their safety implications will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 6.

Unknown dogs

As discussed in Section 5.4.3, relationships with pets are fundamental for young people's well-being. Nevertheless, unfamiliar dogs within their neighbourhoods affect young people's safety differently. This finding aligns with a recent ENCAVI report (MINSAL, 2017a), which reports that the presence of stray dogs is the most frequently cited factor negatively affecting the quality of life of Chileans, with a more significant impact on the

[1] This survey encompassed a sample of individuals aged 15 and older, residing in both rural and urban areas across all 15 regions of the country.

urban population than the rural. However, this survey lacks sensitivity to socioeconomic distinctions within neighbourhoods and does not include the perspectives of young people.[2] Therefore, further analysis is warranted to shed light on the impact of dogs on students' well-being within their neighbourhoods.

For high SES students living in urban areas, dogs on the loose threaten their sense of safety. As one student shared:

> *One of the things that I like least about the neighbourhood is that people leave dogs on the loose (...) Once when we were walking our dog, we found a huge, huge dog on the loose (...) and that dog jumped on me, and it's so aggressive (...) he is so big that reaches almost my belly.*

In contrast, students living in low SES neighbourhoods recognise dogs as part of the community, which positively influences their sense of safety:

> *When I cross the street to get to a bus stop, there are always four street dogs in there. I already know them, and even I have names for them (...) they are okay because sometimes they fight, but they are harmless (...) their names are Pelusa, Naranja, Ceri y Serpi.*

Therefore, SES significantly shapes attitudes towards neighbourhood dogs and perceptions of safety concerning them, particularly in urban settings. This discussion is further elaborated in Chapter 6.

Clean and safe streets

According to this study's findings, young people spend a significant portion of their day engaged in outdoor activities within their neighbourhoods. In this context, an important issue that emerged during the discussions revolved around the issue of safety while on the streets, whether for leisure activities or transportation to other places. This finding aligns with Alfaro-Inzunza et al. (2019), who emphasise the importance of clean and safe public spaces for young Chileans' life satisfaction.

In this context, cars passing through was a common factor influencing young people's sense of safety, particularly for those living in urban areas. High SES students perceived that their neighbourhoods were relatively safe. However, they argue that in specific locations, *"A lot of cars pass by here. In the morning, they go by really fast, and you wake up to the sound of the horn."* Within this discussion, students claimed that they must be careful when crossing the streets in those intersections to avoid getting hit by a car.

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[2] This survey includes individuals aged 15 and older, which falls outside the age cohort of participants in this thesis.

Similarly, students from low socioeconomic neighbourhoods also shared this concern with cars passing by. As one indicated:

> *My neighbourhood is divided into a section where it's closed off, somewhat like a dead-end alley or a passage. There's a downhill road where many cars pass by at night, and we can hear them, and sometimes people throw bottles when I'm outside with my friends.*

Furthermore, students living in urban low SES neighbourhoods identified other situations that make them feel unsafe. One of the students shared:

> *When it's getting dark, the lights don't turn up immediately. They turn on when it's already night. There is a moment when it is dark, and the lights still do not come on. And then when it's completely dark, they just turn on the lights, so you can't see anything.*

These students also referred to the prevalence of rubbish and debris around their residences, disrupting their tranquillity and exposing them to potential danger. As another student exemplified:

> *Something silly that I did in my passage is that there were many loose cables, and one of those cables was cut. And as a joke, I just started hitting it until I hit it wrong, and it hit me, I got electrocuted. It hurt me so much. I gave a shout that I think was heard as far as China (...) I would get rid of those cables if I could, the ones that are thrown on the floor. They look bad, and they can have energy, and people can get electrocuted.*

In the case of rural students, those from both high and low SES did not refer to their streets as unsafe or debris affecting their quality of life. Consequently, within this discussion, critical differences rooted in SES and place of residence are relevant to address and are further elaborated in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, being safe on the streets also links with a discussion towards public safety. In this context, young people's exposure to crime and robberies in their neighbourhoods was also an essential part of the discussion that affected their possibility of safety. This concern aligns with recent research highlighting young Chileans' apprehension of public safety and criminal behaviour within their neighbourhoods and the role of fear and insecurity in determining young people's neighbourhood satisfaction (Ramírez Casas del Valle et al., 2017; Alfaro-Inzunza et al., 2019). Nevertheless, there were differences between the groups concerning the influence of criminal activity on their sense of safety that are important to highlight.

During the sessions, high SES students were explicitly concerned with security and feeling safe. This point was made explicit through their Lego representations of well-being (see Chapter 4, Activity 5) illustrated in Figure 5-1. This student shared:

My house will have a big security fence because security is important, that's what I need so I don't get robbed (...) This will be the safest house, there has never been a house this safe.

Figure 5-1: Lego representation of well-being by high SES student[3]

In contrast, low SES students, particularly those living in urban areas, described the risk they faced within their neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, none of these students referred to these situations as determinants for well-being or identified security from crime as an essential factor for living well. As one of them said:

Sometimes there is 'undergrowth' (bad people), they start shooting, and that is bad in itself, they start shooting fireworks (...) people take drugs and a thousand of other things, it would take me a day to tell (...) it is happening to you in the place where you live (...), But it is what it is.

Regarding students living in rural areas, perceptions of danger also vary based on SES. High SES students manifest apprehension about being robbed because their houses are too far apart for anyone to assist them. Nevertheless, they perceive their surroundings as safe. As one student shared:

My neighbours leave the door open all the time and like without a lock and like everyone can enter. And the gate doesn't need a key, so like you just push it and enter. I mean, nothing ever happened to them like they were never robbed, and that impresses me a lot because as if leaving the door open, the gate opens by itself, and I don't know. It is very rare, very strange.

In contrast, low SES students living in rural areas find their neighbourhoods quiet and safe. However, they are aware that certain areas of their town are unsafe, where robberies and drug trafficking issues are more frequent than others. However, they say that Santiago

[3] "Seguridad" means security in Spanish.

is the most dangerous city because of the frequent robberies that require permanent surveillance, a problem they do not face. As one participant explained, *"My neighbourhood is quiet. But Santiago is Brrrr [noise]. And you are in danger at all times in there; there are constant assaults and robberies."*

It is interesting to note that high SES students did not report being exposed to dangerous situations, yet the dread of being robbed was present and a source of stress. On the other hand, students from low SES living in urban areas are exposed to significantly more risky scenarios, which they normalise and do not represents as a matter of concern. This disparity regarding safety perceptions based on SES is analysed in depth in Chapter 6.

Relationship with neighbours

The final aspect of young people's safety within their residential areas pertains to their relationships with neighbours. In this context, the quality of these relationships emerges as a significant factor influencing young people's perceptions of safety in their places of residence. Nevertheless, it is essential to highlight notable differences based on SES and residential locations that warrant further description. These contrasted perspectives concerning the role of neighbours in young people's safety are analysed in further depth in Chapter 6.

Neighbours play a vital role in ensuring the safety of low SES students in urban areas, where the sense of community leads to mutual assistance during adverse situations. One participant highlighted this by saying, *"A positive thing is like neighbours help each other (...) Like when a house catches fire, and the neighbours bring something, and everyone helps"*. Additionally, these students emphasise that the community has a significant positive impact, especially during celebrations and events. As one student exemplified:

> *In my neighbourhood, before you turn ten years old, on Christmas Day they give you toys, things like that, and it's something positive (...) It's beautiful, yes. Even when I don't get anything anymore.*

In contrast, high SES students in urban areas did not identify a strong sense of community and mutual assistance among their neighbours. Moreover, these students expressed interest only in neighbours of the same age:

> *And what bothers me is that there are no neighbours my age (...) Everyone says: 'Hey, no, I can't make plans because I'm going to get together with my neighbours'. And I don't have neighbours.*

These students' relationship with neighbours is primarily based on their ability to form friendships and share common interests, such as playing the same games, going to the park, or practising similar sports.

In rural areas, the dynamics of neighbour relationships are impacted by the considerable spatial distance between houses. Both high and low-SES students perceive that the distance between their houses hinders frequent interactions with neighbours. However, this distance has different effects on their sense of safety. For young people from low SES backgrounds, their limited interactions with neighbours tend to be predominantly negative, with many expressing dislike for their neighbours and citing various problems. Therefore, distance for them is favourable to their well-being. As one participant mentioned, *"The only thing I would change [about the neighbourhood] is the neighbours (...) too much gossip."* Conversely, high SES students perceive isolation as a concern that impacts their sense of safety. One student emphasised, *"It's not really like a dangerous neighbourhood. It's more like you're alone, quite isolated, and nobody else knows if something happens."*

Consequently, the data reveals that relationships with neighbours vary significantly among the different socioeconomic groups and serve distinct purposes. In the case of low SES individuals residing in urban areas, forming a tight-knit community fosters a strong sense of safety and security, as neighbours are dependable individuals who can assist during challenging times. Conversely, for high SES individuals in urban settings, the relationship with neighbours is primarily about building friendships, contributing to their sense of belonging.[4]

For students living in rural areas, the relationships with neighbours also impact their sense of safety differently. For low SES students, being isolated and without close neighbours contributes positively to their sense of safety. In contrast, high SES individuals in rural areas express concerns about isolation, especially in the event of potential robberies. Chapter 6 delves deeper into analysing the influence of spatiality and neighbourhoods' socioeconomic characteristics on young people's sense of safety.

5.2.2 Being comfortable

Another security dimension regarding young people's well-being is their potential for comfort, which encompasses having the material resources necessary to meet their needs and enjoy a certain level of ease. This dimension is particularly linked to material security, referring to the dynamic interaction between young individuals and their access to essential material resources that contribute to a sense of security in their lives. In this context, the critical importance of having stable housing emerged as a common need among all participant groups. Additionally, low SES students highlighted the importance of food and transportation as critical needs to live well. Chapter 6 delves into how

[4] This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 7, where I delve into young people's opportunities to establish and maintain friendships.

socioeconomic inequality and residential-spatial segregation shape young people's opportunities for experiencing comfort among these groups. The role of money is pivotal in this discussion.

Covering basic needs

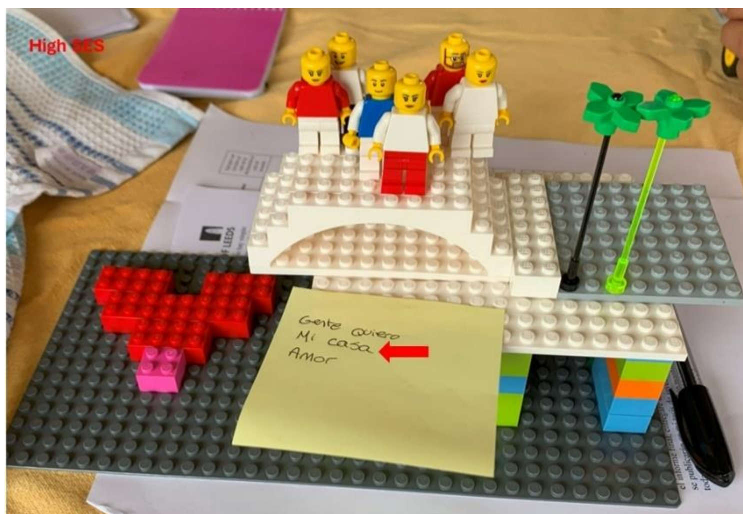
As illustrated in Figure 5-2, the significance of having a house as a fundamental requirement for a good life transcends socioeconomic disparities. Nonetheless, as Chapter 6 examines, there are divergent perceptions regarding the implications of owning a house and the role of finances in acquiring one, shaped by differences in SES. Notably, for high-SES individuals, owning a house is seen as a natural step towards a good life, whereas for low-SES individuals, it represents an avenue to enhance their quality of life, benefiting themselves and their families.

Furthermore, as shown in the figure, low SES students identified other resources, such as food and transportation (cars and horses), as critical to living well. Within this discussion, financial resources emerged as critical, enabling access to other resources. As a low SES student highlighted, *"Without money, you can't survive (...) With money, you can buy things, food, clothes (...) That's it. You can't live without money."*

Figure 5-2: Housing as a critical dimension of well-being[5]

[5] The word "casa" is translated as house, or home in English.

Low SES
1 CASA
1 AUTO
1 CABAllo
PERSONAS


High SES
Gente Quiero
Mi casa
Amor

High SES
Casa
Familia
Mascotas

The significance of money and its role in accessing essential resources emerged as a central theme among low SES individuals, urban and rural. Conversely, money was perceived by high SES students as a necessary resource for maintaining their existing living standards rather than a means to enhance their quality of life. Consequently, high SES students require money to sustain their current lifestyle, while their low SES counterparts view money as a pivotal resource for improving their overall well-being, as it provides access to specific resources that contribute to their sense of security. It is worth noting that the role of money in young people's well-being is examined at various points throughout this analysis.

Leisure time

The availability of spaces for relaxation and engagement in activities beyond school-related responsibilities emerged as a crucial aspect of young people's comfort. This was a common concern among all four groups of young participants, who expressed the stress induced by the heavy academic workload, including homework and exams. One participant stated, *"They need to think about us. All our time is dedicated to school. So we go to school every day, and then they send you homework."* Within this discussion, a student from another group pointed out that the only moments of relaxation during the school day occur during breaks because they lack adequate space to rest. They expressed:

> *Breaks are the best part of the school day because we are free, and we don't have teachers bothering us (...) we can be free and just relax (...), And freedom is important for us (...), but breaks are too short.*

The participants in this study actively partake in various extracurricular activities outside of their school responsibilities, such as cycling, playing football, socialising with friends, enjoying music, and utilising social media platforms. These activities predominantly occur outdoors, within their respective neighbourhoods. However, as highlighted in Section 5.2.1, there are significant disparities in young people's safety in their neighbourhoods. Therefore, Chapter 6 thoroughly explores how SES and residential-spatial segregation impact students' freedom to engage in leisure activities safely.

5.2.3 Being healthy

The possibility of being healthy is the last dimension of young people's capability to live securely. This finding aligns with a consultation in Chile, showing that young people express that health is one of the most relevant dimensions affecting their quality of life (PNUD, 2015).[6] Furthermore, according to the International Survey of Children's Well-

[6] The other two are education and participation.

Being (ISCWeb) (Oyanedel et al., 2015), health is one of the three highest-rated aspects of life satisfaction among young Chileans.[7]

During the discussions, the students raised various health concerns, including access to health care and medicines, the importance of mental health and the influence of global pandemics on their quality of life, dimensions of health that are further analysed in Chapter 6. While all groups acknowledged the importance of health to a secure life, its implications for well-being varied across the groups, rooted in SES differences, which are important to differentiate in further detail.

The discussion about healthcare was particularly prevalent among low SES students (urban and rural), who highlighted the importance of health to a good life at different moments of the data construction process. These students did not mention specific diseases they had (or did not have) at the time of the focus groups that impaired their quality of life. Instead, they pondered the likelihood of becoming ill, whether they would have access to medical care and medications, and whether this could lead to other complications. In this context, they suggest that a medical condition that hindered their parents' ability to work would directly influence their household income.

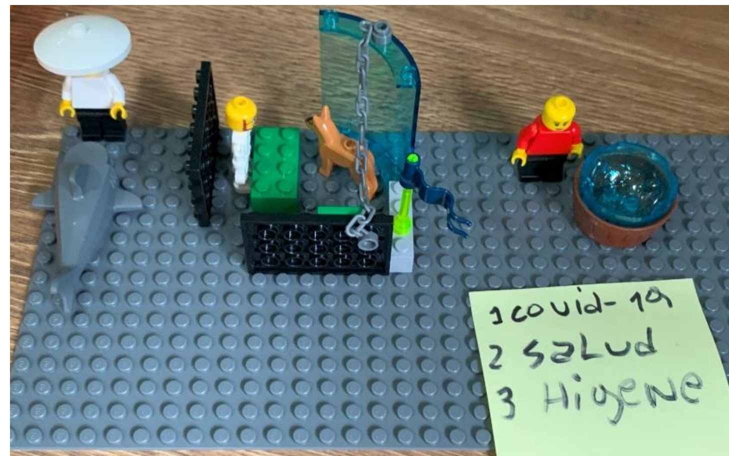
Access to healthcare and medications

The monetary concern of being able to afford medical attention was emphasised at several points during the conversations with low SES students. A student made this point explicit when presenting their Lego model of well-being illustrated in Figure 5-3, saying:

> *This means the coronavirus [figure on the left], this means health [centre figure], but inside, if you realise, it has money. So it is a double meaning. Health and money. Because to have health you need money (...) And this [figure on the right] means hygiene because if you're all dirty nobody wants you.*

[7] The other two are family and material goods. It is crucial to mention that this study was carried out in three major urban cities. Therefore, the entire rural population was not included in it. A more detailed analysis is presented in Chapter 6.

Figure 5-3 Low SES student's representation of well-being



In contrast, while high SES recognise the importance of accessing health services, as represented in Figure 5-4, financial concerns are absent in their discourses. Furthermore, health is considered a fundamental aspect of well-being that extends beyond themselves and is heavily linked to mental health. As this student emphasised, *"[well-being is] companionship and health, not just for me but everything around me, like plants and animals. And the environment as well."*

Figure 5-4: High SES student's representation of well-being

Mental health

While low and high SES students referred to the importance of mental health, high SES emphasised mental health rather than bodily health for living well. As this student emphasised when explaining Figure 5-5:

This is a thing full of heads because it refers to mental health [on the right]. This is like a treasure chest because of economic stability [middle]. Because to have this [mental health], you need this [money]. And this is more of a hands thing because it refers to emotional relationships [on the left].

Figure 5-5: High SES student's representation of well-being

In this context, clinical depression and substance addiction (drugs and alcohol) are cited factors affecting their chances of a secure life, particularly among low SES students. Furthermore, financial stress emerged as an important element affecting the quality of life of young people, particularly for low SES ones, who are more aware of their life restrictions when a family member is afflicted with a physical illness. This concept of financial stress will be examined in further depth in Chapter 6.

Global pandemics

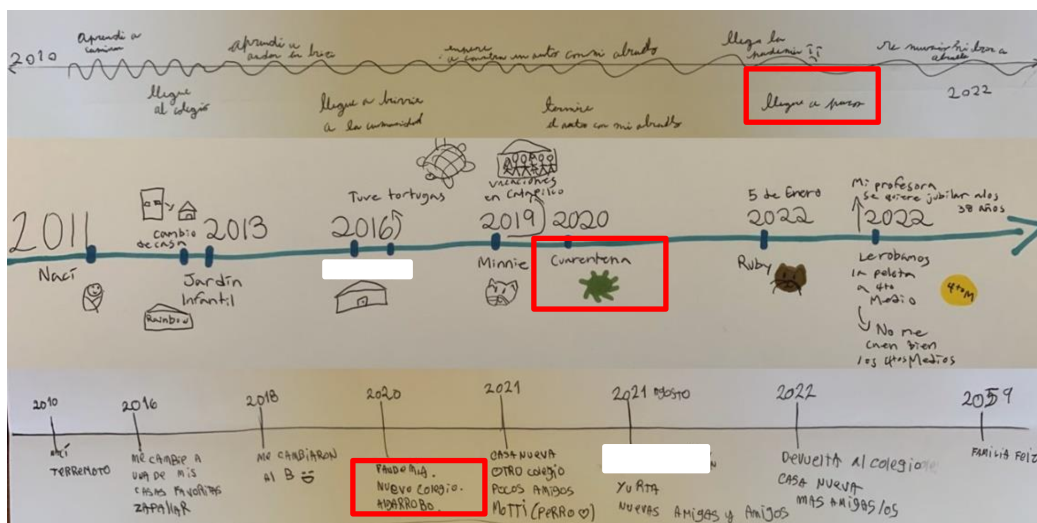
Global pandemics, particularly COVID-19, are the last dimension that emerges as relevant to being healthy. Notably, beyond the physical health implications of the virus, low and high-SES students emphasise the broader consequences, including national lockdowns and the shift to online education. Within these consequences, SES-related differences become evident and warrant further exploration.

In this context, low SES students emphasised the critical role of pandemics in influencing people's health and, consequently, their ability to lead healthy lives. However, they pointed out that material challenges, including limited access to resources such as technology, internet connectivity, and suitable study spaces, characterised their pandemic experiences. It is worth noting that the discussion of the pandemic was not a central theme within the low SES groups. Instead, it arose primarily during activities related to

identifying factors influencing their well-being, such as the 'snakes and ladders' exercise (see Chapter 4 Activity 4), and when constructing Lego models to represent their well-being, as indicated in Figure 5-3.

As shown in Figure 5-6, COVID-19 substantially impacted the lives of high-SES students. The pandemic emerged as a significant factor in many of their life maps, negatively affecting their overall quality of life. As one student pointed out, *"We all have in common that we hated the pandemic."* While these students acknowledged the virus's impact on their family members' health, the most significant effects of the pandemic stemmed from feelings of isolation and the transition to online classes. Notably, high SES students did not experience material constraints during this period but instead highlighted the challenges of online learning, particularly the limitations in interacting effectively with their teachers.

Figure 5-6: COVID-19 in high SES students' life maps[8]



Furthermore, high-SES students emphasised that the most significant implication of the pandemic for them was social. They expressed frustration over the inability to attend school and engage with their peers during this critical period. One student articulated this concern by stating:

> *The worst part was that it happened [the pandemic] in third year, right when they mixed us up, and we didn't know our classmates. I mean, we didn't know anyone in the class because there were groups for going to school; one group was at school, and the other was online. If you were in group one, you didn't know anyone from group two afterwards.*

[8] The words "pandemia" and "cuarentena" refer to pandemic and lockdowns respectively.

Hence, these divergent viewpoints and experiences regarding COVID-19 have brought to light significant underlying inequalities within the Chilean educational system that extend beyond health-related disparities, warranting further in-depth analysis. Additionally, stability emerged as an important factor influencing young people's well-being, particularly linked to their mental health. Chapter 6 delves into a more comprehensive exploration of this discussion.

5.3 Life project

The freedom to pursue a meaningful life project emerged as the second essential capability for young people to live well. According to the participants, life projects predominantly include education and employment opportunities and can take two routes. The first option aligns with a more "traditional" path, involving the completion of their education, enrolling in a preferred university, obtaining a specific degree (not just any), pursuing a desired occupation (not just any), and earning a substantial income. The second alternative can be characterised as "non-traditional," encompassing careers in digital media (e.g. becoming a YouTube streamer or professional gamer) or excelling as a professional athlete (e.g. a footballer or cyclist).

While all students from the different groups desired to pursue one of these career paths, it is noteworthy that only low SES students emphasised the significance of money as a critical factor in achieving their aspirations. This observation aligns with the earlier discussion in Section 5.2.2, underscoring the role of money among these groups in accessing broader resources. In this context, while the ultimate goal for both low and high-SES students is to earn money through their life projects, for low-SES individuals, money serves as a significant barrier to pursuing their career aspirations. Chapter 6 offers an in-depth exploration of this issue, analysing the relationship between money, SES, and educational inequalities as crucial factors shaping young people's opportunities to pursue valued life projects in Chile.

5.3.1 Being educated

As previously introduced, education is fundamental in young people's pursuit of their valued life projects, especially for those aspiring to follow a traditional path. This educational journey comprises two primary stages: schooling and university. Notably, significant disparities exist among the groups based on SES regarding their perceptions of the value of schooling and university, warranting a more detailed exploration in subsequent sections.

Schooling

Conversations regarding students' schooling experiences were prevalent among all the groups. However, schools hold diverse and multifaceted meanings in the participants' narratives regarding their life projects. For instance, completing school emerged as a pivotal milestone in the life maps of low SES students when discussing their future aspirations. Furthermore, these students underscored the significance of academic performance, as good grades enhance their prospects of accessing university through scholarships. In response to the question about the importance of school in their lives, one participant stated, *"It is important because we need to study to have a job and earn money (...) we need to study. Otherwise, we will be ruined and living on the street."* While these students value their peer relationships, academic performance precedes their school experience.

In contrast, while discussions about school were common among high SES students, they emphasised the social aspect more than the academic one. This point was also made explicit when discussing these students' life maps, where meeting new friends within the school context were highlighted as important events throughout their lives. Furthermore, when asked about the importance of school, one participant responded*, "I just go there to meet my friends".* This statement aligns with Section 5.2.3 discussion concerning the effects of the pandemic on these students' school experience, which highlighted the lack of interaction with their peers as one of the most important ones. Hence, for high SES, academic performance is not the predominant attribute of utmost value but the social one.

As detailed in the following section, students' life projects are closely intertwined with their financial prospects, particularly when pursuing higher education. Furthermore, Chapter 6 analyses the varying roles of schooling among the different socioeconomic groups, exploring the influence of SES and educational inequalities within the educational system on young Chileans' valued life projects.

University

As previously mentioned, obtaining a university degree is a pivotal step for students pursuing a traditional career path. However, the cost of tuition emerged as a significant determinant in this pursuit. This concern was particularly pronounced in the narratives of low SES students. One of them underscored, *"Many people cannot study because of financial issues."* Consequently, these students greatly emphasise scholarships or loans as the primary means to access higher education. They acknowledge that despite their aspirations, attending university may not be entirely feasible for them. Nonetheless, they are aware of the critical link between education and future financial prospects, stating, *"If you don't study, you can't work, I think (...), so you don't have any money."* In this

context, limited financial resources to cover tuition costs, debt, and low academic performance emerged as critical "snakes" hindering these students' possibilities of pursuing higher education. Refer to Appendix G for more details about the snakes and ladders identified by low SES students living in an urban location.

In contrast, accessing university education is a natural progression for high SES individuals. When discussing their plans, one student expressed:

> *I have everything planned. I am going to the university (...) I will study orthodontics because I'm not going to university without studying anything (...) but I am still thinking about it because I don't like blood (...) it is obvious that I will have a lot of money after going to the university.*

Therefore, these students know that university access is the more probable step after finishing school. Furthermore, monetary constraints are not present within their narratives as barriers to accessing university, and they did not refer to relying on scholarships or loans in order to be able to study.

This contrasted perspective around access to education holds critical significance for this thesis' aims. Low SES individuals perceive a professional degree as fundamental for accessing high-income employment, which, in turn, could enhance their overall quality of life. In contrast, high SES students, while recognising the correlation between university studies and employment opportunities, view earning a high income as a means to sustain their current quality of life rather than as a means to improve it. Therefore, the disparity in educational opportunities and its relationship to the possibility of living well among Chilean students is subjected to in-depth analysis in Chapter 6.

5.3.2 Being employed

The aspiration to secure employment emerged as a common thread across all groups. Regardless of their educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, all the students unanimously agreed on the critical role of employment in ensuring a good quality of life. Furthermore, they explicitly emphasised the relevance of pursuing careers that resonate with their interests and passions for living well. As one student reflected, *"To live well and have a good life, we need a job that favours us, not any job."* Within these discussions, students contemplated two primary career paths: traditional and non-traditional.

Traditional careers

The concept of traditional careers, which entails completing university studies and securing a formal occupation within their chosen field, was prevalent among low- and

high-SES students. However, there existed a stark contrast in their aspirations and narratives. Low SES students perceived a direct link between acquiring a university degree, attaining a high-paying job, and improving their overall quality of life. One student expressed this perspective by stating:

> *[After school] I will study veterinary. Afterwards, I will work hard, I will save money, and then I will buy a house and have many cats (...); without money I can't buy a house, I can't keep my cats. I cannot travel, which is my dream. Without money, I can't do anything.*

Conversely, high SES students also considered traditional careers but approached them with a distinct outlook. While attending university to secure a well-paying job was present in their narratives, it was not the sole focus of their career aspirations. One student exemplified this when outlining their career path:

> *In the future, in 2026, finish school. In 2027 have a gap year and travel. In 2028 study psychology in Chile, and in 2033 or so, I will go to Europe to finish my degree with my friend. In 2035, have my own house in front of the ocean and be neighbours with my friends and have a hippie haircut.*

The distinction between low-SES and high-SES students' narratives regarding their life projects becomes evident when considering their primary motivations. Low SES students tend to emphasise their life project narratives with a central focus on fulfilling basic needs and enhancing their overall quality of life. This emphasis can be attributed to the challenges and financial constraints they frequently encounter, where financial stability becomes a paramount concern. As a result, their aspirations revolve around addressing immediate needs and improving their socioeconomic situation.

Conversely, high SES students transcend the notion of working solely to meet their basic needs. Within their narratives, they articulate a vision of earning money not merely for survival but also for enjoyment and personal fulfilment. Their life project goals extend beyond immediate necessities, allowing them to explore personal interests and experiences beyond basic survival.

Non-traditional careers

As previously introduced, non-traditional careers were also present in some cases and do not involve a university degree. In this context, financial constraints played a significant role in shaping these career aspirations. However, it is worth noting that the nature of these financial constraints varied depending on students' socioeconomic backgrounds. For instance, when asked about their career aspirations, a low SES student expressed:

> *I am going to be a Youtuber, that's my only goal (...) I need to upload videos, two videos at least every week. Or save them in my gallery and then upload them (...) But I need a lot of money to buy the gamer things and all that to make gameplays and all that.*

When discussing career aspirations with high SES, one participant argued that choosing a career does not depend entirely on them, even when their families have the financial resources to support them. This student illustrated such phenomenon as follows:

> *Like, for example, my uncle is very good at football. When he was about to start studying, he wanted to be a football player, and my grandfather did not support him. So, in the end, he is a psychologist (...) he loved football, but he didn't have support, so he ended up being a psychologist, and he couldn't achieve his life dream.*

As these two examples illustrate, the influence of SES on young people's prospects of pursuing career paths is multifaceted. Chapter 6 further explores young Chileans' power of choice within their career choices, shedding light on the intricate relationship between SES and the development of their life project aspirations. This examination highlights how SES significantly influences their outlooks and ambitions, ultimately shaping their paths toward achieving their life goals.

5.4 Community

As previously outlined, social relationships play a pivotal role in the lives of young people. In this context, their capacity to build communities emerged as a fundamental capability in shaping their well-being, marked by relationships founded on affection, care, and support. As discussed in earlier sections, friendships hold particular significance. Additionally, family consistently featured as a crucial factor in the well-being of all groups, assuming a central role in enabling young people to build communities. Notably, pets were critical in young people's possibilities of building communities.

5.4.1 Being a friend

Building friendships with people of their choice is a significant part of a student's supportive community. In this context, relationships with school peers, neighbours and 'life friends' are the most significant social relationships among young people other than those with their biological families. Friends are present in young people's discourses across all the groups and emerge as fundamental "ladders" (see Chapter 4, Activity 4) in their lives. As explained by a student, *"Having friends helps you fit into society, to be happy"*.

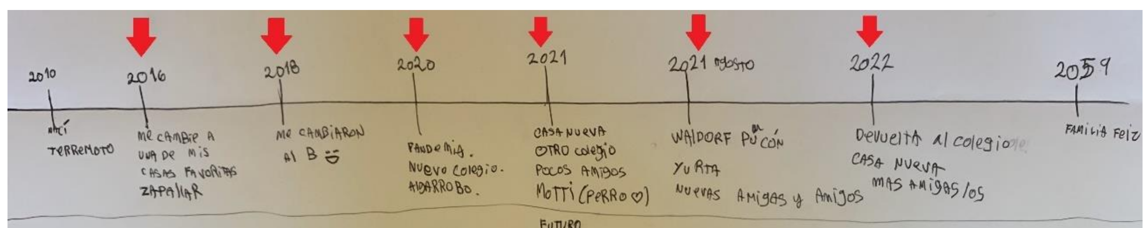
The literature has widely explored the role of friends in young people's lives and their role in their well-being (e.g., Howes, 2009; Poulin and Chan, 2010; Afshordi and Liberman, 2021). However, in Chile, research on young people and friendships is scarce. While studies have demonstrated the importance of relationships with friends and their impact on young people's life satisfaction, particularly concerning school peers (Carrillo et al., 2021; Aspillaga et al., 2022), there is a lack of exploration into the deeper meanings of friendships for young Chileans and how these social connections influence various aspects of their lives beyond satisfaction measures.

Therefore, there is still an underexplored area in the literature regarding understanding the nuances of friendship among young Chileans. This discussion becomes particularly relevant since this thesis's findings reveal that the meanings and roles of friendship vary depending on students' SES. In this context, this study's data reveals that both high and low-SES students agree on the importance of friends and consider them as individuals they choose, with some even regarding them as important as family. However, crucial differences in how students attribute meaning to friendships, rooted in their SES disparities, warrant closer examination.

What do friends mean for Chilean students?

The data revealed different definitions of friendships among the groups based on SES. As illustrated in their life maps, friendships hold a central and indispensable role in shaping the life experiences of those with high SES. As one student expressed, "*Friends are truly people that one chooses, and you learn to love and be with them (...) There are friends who truly last a lifetime*". Figure 5-7 illustrates the life map of one student, with the red arrows denoting various life events involving friends or school peers. The notable presence of friends in these life maps underscores the pivotal role that friendships play in the lives of high SES students. It suggests that their well-being is intricately linked to these relationships, as evidenced by the friends they encounter throughout their lives and how these relationships shape their significant moments.

Figure 5-7: Life map of high SES student



Among low SES students, friendships relate to enjoying the moment. They are more concerned with appreciating the present and spending time with people who make them joyful than forming meaningful emotional connections. Unlike high-SES students, low-SES students do not view friends as critical actors in their lives. While they acknowledge the potential positive influence of friendships on their well-being, their narratives do not reflect a strong emotional bond or attachment to their friends. One student said, *"Having friends could be a good thing as well (...), they make us laugh and cheer us on difficult times, but studying is more important"*. In the life maps of low SES students, friends have a minimal presence, with family events and life projects taking precedence. Their life events primarily revolve around their family, education, and future career aspirations. Within their narratives, friends are often linked to school or neighbourhood connections.

Who are young people's friends?

A notable distinction between low and high-SES students lies in the separation of friendships into different communities based on school and neighbourhood associations. Low SES students view school and neighbourhood friends as distinct groups, reflecting their understanding of neighbourhood communities. While friends are important, they emphasise that these relationships are not necessarily close or deep. Moreover, interactions with school peers primarily occur within the school setting, and they do not commonly visit each other's homes.

In this context, neighbours are seen as a separate group of friends unrelated to school peers, highlighting the distinction between the school and community contexts. They mainly meet their neighbourhood friends in public spaces such as streets or nearby squares. As one student explained their neighbourhood map, *"Yeah, I have some friends that live over there (...) I have two options of friends to have fun with where I live"*. Furthermore, in the narratives and neighbourhood maps of low SES students, friends are more prominent in the neighbourhood community than in school. Therefore, their friends are individuals they hang out with during school breaks, sharing laughter and relaxation, or neighbours with whom they play on the streets.

In contrast, for high SES students, friendships are closely tied to their neighbourhoods and play a significant role in their sense of belonging and psychological security. The boundaries between school and neighbourhood social relationships are less defined for these students. They frequently visit the homes of their school peers, and their friendships extend to interactions with each other's families. Therefore, for high SES students, friendships extend beyond the confines of school and neighbourhood, encompassing both spheres as interrelated spaces of social interactions. Additionally, high SES students mentioned the concept of "life friends", who are not necessarily school peers or

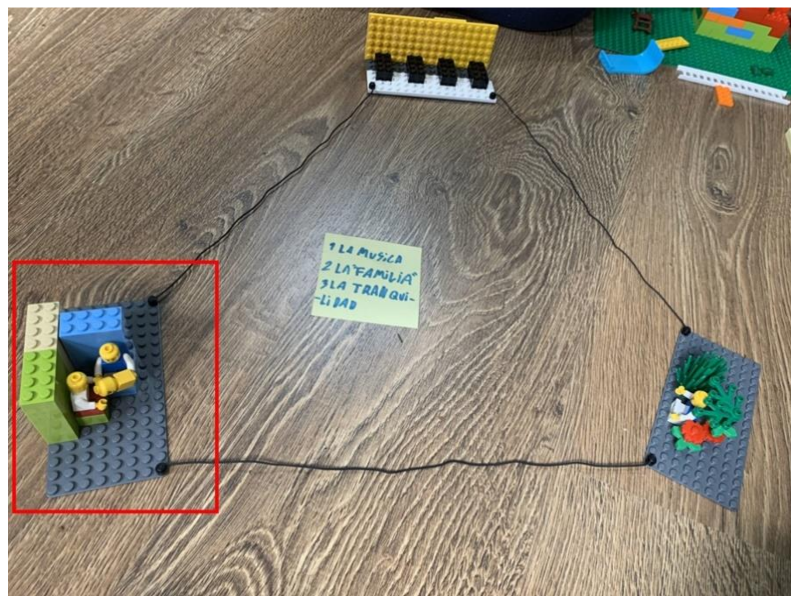
neighbourhood friends. These friendships often originate from past experiences. As one student said, *“like former schoolmates, former neighbours, or family friends”.*

While the definitions of friendships and their significance in young people’s lives may vary among different groups, they unanimously agree on one crucial aspect of their friendships: the ability to choose them. As one participant expressed when discussing the importance of friends, *“It is the people you choose to be in your life. You don’t choose your parents, but friends are people you choose, and you learn to love and be with them.”* Chapter 7 delves into a comprehensive analysis of how social constructions of childhood (SCC) limit young people’s agency in selecting friends and building supportive communities.

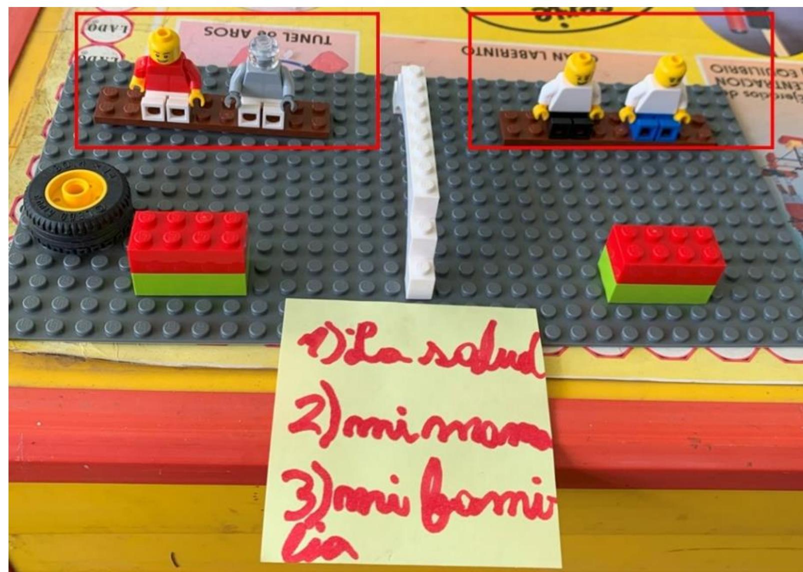
5.4.2 Being a family member

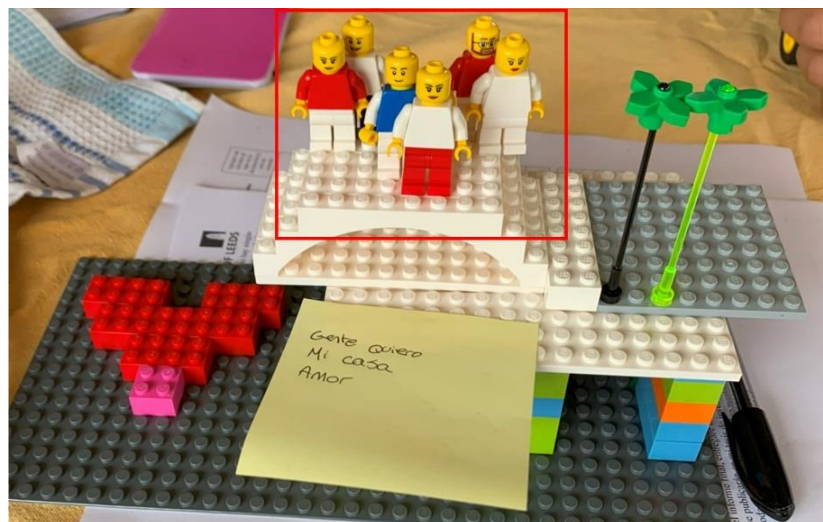
Family is crucial for young people’s well-being, and as illustrated in Figure 5-8, it is present in most students’ representations of well-being across the different groups. Moreover, family-related events feature prominently in many of their life maps, underscoring the support they receive, with most acknowledging the unconditional presence of their families in their lives. Furthermore, the family holds a distinct place in their future life projects, with many asserting that having a family is integral to their well-being and the pursuit of a fulfilling life. As summarised by a student when asked about the most important dimensions of well-being, they replied, “*In this, I bring to you two concepts: my family and a house.”*

Figure 5-8: Family in students’ representation of well-being[9]



[9] “Familia” is family in Spanish.





The study participants consistently underscored the significance of family, attributing it to both instrumental and emotional value. They expressed sentiments such as *"Family loves, support, and help us"*. Furthermore, the family drives them to aspire to a higher

standard of living, especially for those from low socioeconomic backgrounds who perceive that their well-being is closely tied to that of their family. As one student pointed out, *"If my family is happy, I am happy".* Within this context, Chapter 7 examines the role of family in framing and supporting young people's life projects and career aspirations.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that families can also be a source of worry and stress for young people, potentially negatively impacting their well-being and stability. As pointed out by a student:

> *Family can also be our worst enemy. In that sense, sometimes they don't do us so well. They don't always love us, and they don't always support us. Sometimes, they are more of a hindrance than a help (...) Sometimes, cousins and uncles are envious. They compare us to each other, belittling us (...) There are times when we don't want to be with the family, and that's good for us, that distance is good for us.*

Therefore, family is a complex and contested concept for young people, encompassing positive attributes such as affection and support and potential conflicts that negatively influence their well-being. Moreover, they identified different types of families that are relevant to examine closer.

Family configuration from young people's viewpoint

Within the discussions, participants identified two types of family: one based on biological relationships and another based on chosen relationships, primarily consisting of friends and significant individuals who may not be biologically related. Therefore, for young people, the concept of family extends beyond the traditional notion of biological ties. One student said: *"Family is someone that loves you and supports you (...) There are different types of family; there are the ones that you share the same blood, but they can also be friends."* In this context, participants argue that choosing the people around them, especially friends, who can also be considered family, is essential.

In this context, young people's social relationships become crucial to their configurations of what family means, including friends and other significant people who are similar to the traditional concept of a family, mainly by offering support, care and affection. Furthermore, as elaborated further in the following section, young people also perceive pets as family members, highlighting the importance of non-human companions in their lives.

While the concept of family in Chile has evolved in recent years, the literature agrees that family is a complex system of personal relationships encompassing filial, marital, and sibling bonds (Herrera Guerrero et al., 2004; Valdés, 2008; Del Picó Rubio, 2011).

However, there is a dearth of literature exploring the concept of family from a childhood studies perspective in Chile. While studies exist on young people's roles in family court proceedings (e.g., Vargas Pavez and Correa Camus, 2011), no studies explore what family means to young people themselves or their power to choose their extended families. Therefore, the configuration of a family from a young people's viewpoint represents a key contribution to this literature in Chile.

This expanded perspective on the concept of family is explored further in Chapter 7, which examines the influence of SCC on young people's ability to choose their supportive communities and redefine family boundaries. Furthermore, that chapter discusses the extent to which adult family members, particularly their parents, recognise their children as individuals with agency and valid opinions. Such opportunities for recognition are crucial for their ability to build communities and receive the support they need to flourish and pursue their life aspirations.

5.4.3 Being a pet carer

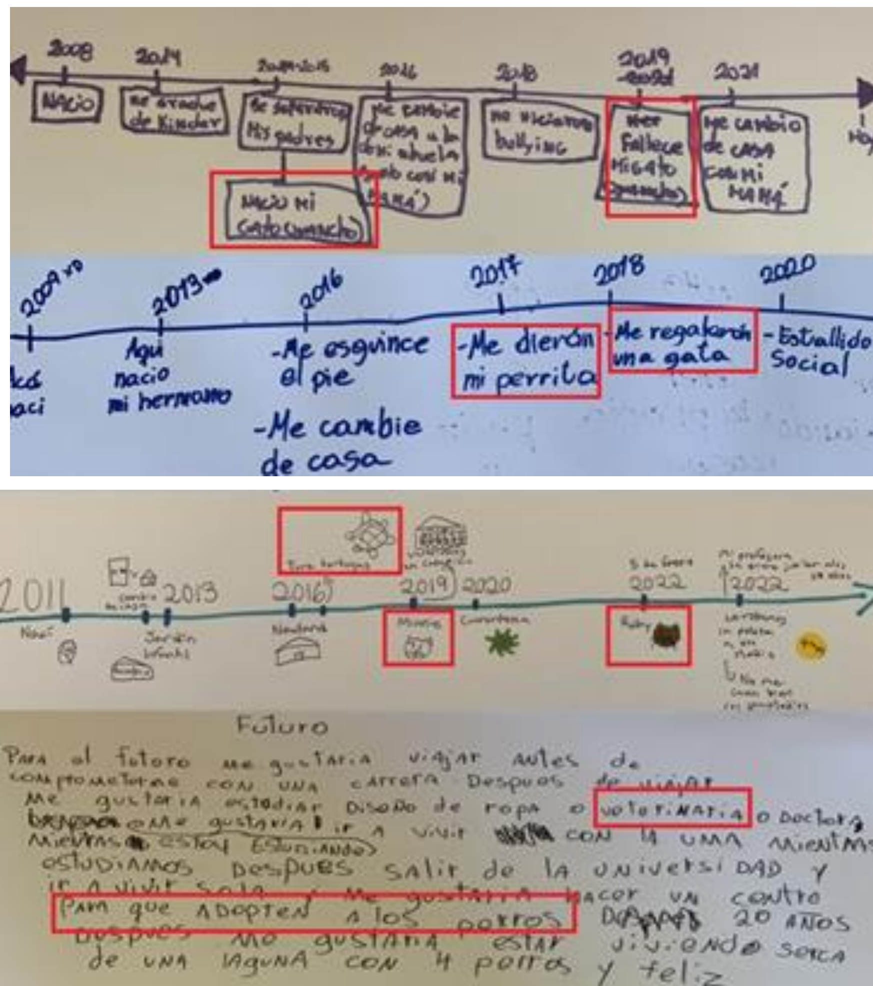
The relationship between students and their pets emerged as a vital aspect of their quality of life. Figure 5-9 illustrates that when students were asked about the three most essential aspects needed to live well, several included pets and animals in their shortlist of essential dimensions across different groups. One student articulated, *"What I want most in my life is to make my family happy, have a home, have money, and care for my cat and dog"*. In this context, pets are not merely companions but hold a significant position within the family. As indicated by a participant, *"Family is important: my dad, my sister, my mum, the pets I have, three dogs, who are very important. And the house"*.

Figure 5-9: Pets in students' representations of well-being[10]

[10] In the picture on the top, the student refers to "mascotas", pets in Spanish. While the picture below, the student includes their "conejo", rabbit in Spanish.

Additionally, pets held a prominent place in the life maps of numerous participants. These life maps depicted significant moments, such as the birth or adoption of their pets and the unfortunate event of their pets' passing. These pet-related events were recognised as critical turning points in their lives. Figure 5-10 highlights the importance of pets in shaping the life experiences and narratives of different participants within their life trajectories.

Figure 5-10: Pet-related events in students' life maps[11]



When describing their relationship with their pets, they expressed sentiments such as, *"It's someone that gives you company and just be with you".* Another student pointed out, *"It is like unconditional love. They are always there for you and make your day happier".* In some instances, students preferred interacting with animals over people, as pets are seen as better listeners who provide a space for their voices to be heard. As one

[11] The red rectangles point out situations involved with pets in young peoples' lives, emphasising the years when they first met them and when they passed.

student indicated, *"When you want to talk to them, they stay there and listen (...) I think pets listen to you more than people sometimes".* In addition to the deep connection young people build with their pets, these quotes reflect their need to being recognised and heard by others, an issue discussed in further details in the following section and in Chapter 7.

These perceptions of pets are consistent with existing literature. Walsh (2009) emphasises that pets are considered important family members and are incorporated into family rituals, receiving gifts on special occasions like birthdays. In some cases, students expressed that the well-being of their pets is even more important than their own, such as when discussing how loud noises affect their quality of life, considering the impact on their pets with ear problems. As one student indicated, *"You can always hear fireworks, and they upset my dog since my dog has ear problems that trigger crises".*

A recent Chilean study found that one of the main reasons to have a pet is due to the company they provide (SUBDERE, 2022). However, there is a scarcity of literature in Chile exploring the role of pets in young people's quality of life and their significance as new members of Chilean families. While studies exist on the therapeutic benefits of pets from a psychological perspective (e.g., Schencke and Farkas Klein, 2012), their role in forming supportive communities for young Chileans remains unclear. Moreover, it becomes relevant to explore this relationship, as the literature reveals that animals contribute to emotional support, facilitate social interactions, and enhance individuals' sense of community (Bulsara et al., 2007).

Pets as family members

Participants in this study emphasise that pets are not merely companions but hold a significant position within the family. Moreover, on certain occasions, young people prefer interacting with their pets over human family members. As one student expressed, *"They watch TV with you (...), and the best thing is that they are like siblings but don't bother as much".* Therefore, recognising the role of domestic animals in young Chileans' well-being as family members emerges as a critical finding of this thesis.

In this context, considering pets as family members is not a new concept in the literature (Cain, 1985; Cohen, 2002; Rodrigo and González, 2014). Moreover, a recent survey conducted in Chile revealed that most pet owners in the country consider their pets part of the family (CADEM, 2022). However, such a relationship has not been addressed from a young people's perspective. This represents a significant gap since in the literature, considering pets as family members can positively contribute to individuals' well-being, as these animal family members serve as additional social connections alongside human relationships (McConnell et al., 2019). Furthermore, as elaborated further in Chapter 7, analysing young people's agency concerning pet care becomes critical to shed some light

on the power of decisions that young Chileans face in their capability to build supportive communities.

5.5 Recognition

As introduced in the preceding section, relationships with others emerged as a recurring topic across all the groups, transcending socioeconomic differences. Notably, these interactions extend beyond mere physical presence, where students' primary concern lies in being recognised, accepted, and supported by significant individuals, particularly adults. Within this discussion, participants perceived that adults often disregard their opinions due to their age and immaturity, leading to a sense of unfairness and frustration. As one student highlighted:

> *It is very important that they ask our opinions [adults]. Although they have more years and have more, more wisdom, that doesn't mean they can 'cancel' us (...) is not that our opinion is not worthy of anything.*

Hence, students emphasised the importance of having their voices recognised by adults, asserting that expressing their perspectives is crucial for accessing necessary support. However, they noted a limited space available to share these perspectives.

The analysis concerning young people's well-being and recognition theories is not novel in the literature. According to Carrillo et al. (2021), the studies of children's well-being analyse recognition from two perspectives. First, recognising young people's uniqueness and singularity as individuals. Second, an analysis from an active participation lens in terms of how young people express their opinions and influence decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the theorisation about recognition as a capability has not been addressed yet within this field.

In this context, this study contributes to the discussion of recognition as a crucial dimension of young people's well-being by highlighting the importance of being heard by adults and receiving support based on their needs rather than solely on adults' perceptions. Chapter 7 presents a comprehensive analysis of this capability, examining how the absence of recognition, influenced by prevailing SCC, constrains young people's agency and participation in shaping their opportunities for well-being. These constraints impact them on various levels, particularly regarding their decision-making power over their communities and life projects. Therefore, that chapter explores the extension of this capability to encompass institutional recognition and support, emphasising its critical role in enabling young people to pursue their vision of well-being, challenging the traditional approach that relies solely on adults' perspectives of what is best for young Chileans.

5.5.1 Being heard

The theme of being heard emerged as a crucial dimension in the context of young people's well-being. Throughout the discussions, students expressed that adults often do not pay enough attention to their voices and opinions. They believe that adults tend to prioritise their own life experiences when making decisions and do not adequately consider the perspectives of young people. As one student stated, *"They don't listen to us (...) they think something (adults), but children think something different, and when you tell them, they realise it is true".* Throughout the conversations, students emphasised the need for spaces in both their homes and schools where they need to be heard and their perspectives recognised.

Family dynamics and routine changes often arise at the household level due to various factors, such as parents changing jobs or going through separations. As reflected by the students, these changes commonly result in anxiety and uncertainty concerning the future. However, the most pressing concern expressed by the participants regarding these changes was their exclusion from the decision-making process, which undeniably had a significant impact on their quality of life. For instance, one participant shared their discomfort with their current circumstances, stating:

> *I am currently not in a house-stable situation (...) In 2015, many things happened. I got to live in two places in the same year (...), and it was very significant for me. Therefore, it was something important for me to get here and settle (...) But tomorrow I'm moving again and I don't want to.*

When asked for further details, they added, *"I really don't care; it's not up to me. It's my dad's issue, so whatever."* This statement underscores the lack of recognition students experience regarding decisions that significantly affect their quality of life. When asked about the relevance of moving to another city and changing schools, one student pointed out, *"I had about 20 friends, so it was a whole group, and they were very close friends. It was like a tough situation start all over again."* This student's experience illustrates how decisions made by their parents can profoundly impact them, particularly in terms of losing contact with close friends, which is vital to them. The prospect of having to make new friends in unfamiliar circumstances generates feelings of anxiety and frustration.

Moreover, students also express that they often feel unheard at school, pointing out the absence of formal channels or instances where they can voice their opinions. Students recounted numerous instances where they were unable to provide input on matters such as school uniforms, food choices, gender-related issues, and leisure activities. When reflecting on their participation in this research project, one participant expressed their desire for greater spaces of participation, stating:

> *I would have liked to participate a little more time, this was fun, and we talked about a lot of things. I feel this is the only place where we can talk about these things, and it is unfair because it is my opinion what counts (...) they are speaking for us.*

Similarly, when discussing the importance of having spaces to talk, they replied:

> *I think it is important because generally young people, especially our age, are not taken much into account in our opinion. In other words, as adults, more. Like they take things for granted regarding the things they experience.*

This statement underscores the prevalent SCC within Chilean society, where adult opinions tend to hold more weight than those of young people regarding decisions that affect them.

5.5.2 Being accurately supported by adults

Building upon the earlier discussion, the theme of receiving support from adults emerged as a crucial aspect of being recognised and heard. In this context, young people emphasise the need for adults, including parents, teachers, and other significant figures, to recognise them as individuals with valid perspectives. They believe that adults must actively listen to their voices to provide adequate support when making decisions that impact their future.

Therefore, support is closely linked to young people's expectations of interacting with adults non-hierarchically, where interactions revolve around young individuals' perspectives and life projects rather than an adult's preconceived notions of what they should be. However, a crucial precondition for such support is that young people can express themselves and be heard. Without this space for dialogue, as highlighted by one student, support can be mistaken for pressure. They explained:

> *It is important that people believe in you, that they support you if you want to do something, that they tell you 'you can do it' (...) but sometimes, being told 'you can do it' stresses you out, and it's worse (...) When support is excessive, it's harder. You get very nervous, and you can do it wrong.*

Therefore, adequate support should be tailored to meet the specific needs of young people. Within this context, it becomes apparent that young people require adults to actively validate and respond to their feelings, rather than focusing exclusively on achieving a predetermined goal. Chapter 7 delves deeper into exploring how SCC influence young people's possibilities to be heard and accurately supported by adults around them. Additionally, it argues that active participation in broader discussions concerning their quality of life is crucial for receiving adequate institutional support through policy

frameworks that incorporate the perspectives of young people during their elaboration process.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the list of valued capabilities that were co-constructed with the participants of this study to conceptualise well-being in Chile. It began by outlining security as the first capability, discussing the relationship between young people's neighbourhoods and their ability to live safely. Furthermore, it explored young people's possibilities of living comfortably, emphasising the satisfaction of basic needs and opportunities for leisure as crucial components within this capability. Additionally, the discussion addressed the role of access to healthcare in influencing students' possibilities of living securely.

The subsequent section introduced the second capability identified in this study: the freedom for young people to pursue their chosen life projects. Within this context, young people's career aspirations were categorised into two main types: traditional and non-traditional. Traditional career aspirations involve pursuing university studies and obtaining a job within the field of study. On the other hand, non-traditional careers include paths such as becoming a social media influencer or a professional athlete.

The discussion in the third section centred around young people's capability to build communities. Within this context, social relationships' paramount role in shaping young people's well-being was emphasised. Specifically, the roles of friends, family, and pets were explored, underscoring their significance in determining young people's prospects for living well.

Within this discussion, young people's possibility to choose the significant people around them was critical. Furthermore, the notion that young people's concept of family extends beyond their biological relatives was introduced, emphasising the importance of friendships in this expanded definition of family. In this context, analysing the role of pets as family members becomes critical when studying young people's well-being in Chile, as these represent an important interaction that influence their quality of life.

Lastly, the capability of recognition emerged as fundamental for students' well-being. Being accepted and supported by significant individuals in their lives was identified as crucial, extending beyond mere physical companionship. Instead, it highlights the fundamental need for their perspectives to be heard and valued. As a result, having the space to be heard and supported by adults, particularly parents and teachers, were outlined as critical dimensions shaping their decision-making power concerning their well-being.

While the capabilities described in this chapter are common perspectives among the groups, critical disparities based on SES require further analysis. In this context, young people's possibilities to live securely and to develop their chosen life projects are heavily influenced by SES. On the other hand, young people's decision-making opportunities, particularly concerning building communities and being recognised by others, transcend SES disparities and are strongly linked to SCC. Therefore, while these two influential factors occasionally overlap within the four capabilities, Chapter 6 delves into the influence of SES as a central conversion factor impacting students' possibilities of living securely and pursuing their life projects. In contrast, Chapter 7 explores the role of SCC in shaping young Chileans' decision-making power within their opportunities to build communities and be recognised by adults as active agents in shaping their well-being.

Chapter 6
Discussion
The influence of socioeconomic status in young Chileans' well-being

Introduction

This chapter builds upon the list of valued capabilities reported in Chapter 5 to discuss the role of socioeconomic status (SES) as a critical conversion factor influencing young people's capability of security and of developing a life project. As indicated in previous chapters, the literature exploring the influence of socioeconomic inequality on young Chileans' well-being is scarce and influenced by adult-centric and monetary approaches. Therefore, this chapter contributes to this debate by expanding the scope of the discussion, analysing the relationship between socioeconomic variables and young individuals' quality of life through the concept of segregation.

As outlined in Chapter 3, segregation predominantly entails the lack of interaction between groups and the unequal distribution of groups within a specific area (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2001). While there are different types of segregation, this thesis investigates segregation derived from SES, one of the most prevalent types of this multifaceted phenomenon in Chile (Valenzuela et al., 2010). Specifically, the analysis emphasises examining the influence of young Chileans' SES on their well-being by examining the impact of residential (also known as socio-spatial) and educational segregation.

In this context, the chapter discusses how residential-spatial segregation affects young people's possibilities of living safely within their neighbourhoods. The analysis reveals that residential segregation primarily impacts young Chileans from low SES backgrounds living in urban areas. Within this discussion, disparities of resources at a municipal level linked to segregation emerged as fundamental constraints in shaping students' possibilities to be safe. Notably, the chapter reveals that young people's sense of safety is more relevant in explaining their well-being than the exposure to danger itself. Hence, this finding suggests that the sense of safety among young Chileans could be socially constructed, influenced more by SES than by objective crime rates.

Subsequently, this chapter also examines how educational inequalities influence young Chileans' possibilities to pursue their valued life projects, in which being educated and securing employment are fundamental aspects of the discussion. In this context, the discussion reveals that disparities within the educational system directly influence young Chileans' possibilities to pursue their life projects. Moreover, the analysis revealed that SES greatly influences students' aspirations. However, the role of social capital, which

particularly favours those in private schools and among the elite, emerged as a determinant factor in young people's possibilities to pursue their career choices.

Lastly, the chapter discusses how healthcare systems' inequalities influence their possibility to live a healthy life, in which access to treatment and medication, both for physical and mental issues, arise as critical for the discussion. In this context, the literature concerning the effects of health inequalities on Chile's youth population is scarce. For instance, some studies show that the private system performs better than the public in certain areas of early childhood development (e.g., Bedregal et al., 2016). Others emphasise public health system success linked to sexual health programs (e.g., Castro-Sandoval et al., 2019). Therefore, this analysis contributes to this gap by providing novel findings concerning the influence of health on young Chileans' quality of life.

In this context, mental health emerged as a critical factor influencing young people's well-being, where disparities in mental health treatment based on socioeconomic factors arose as determinants in shaping young Chileans' sense of security. Within this analysis, the data chapter identifies "financial stress" as a critical factor shaping young Chileans' well-being, which is experienced across all groups but operates differently depending on socioeconomic factors. Furthermore, the chapter reveals that uncertainty linked to young people's experiences during the pandemic emerged as a critical factor influencing their stability and overall mental health.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. Section 6.1 delves into analysing young Chileans' opportunities to be safe within their neighbourhoods. Within this discussion, the role of loud noises, dogs, streets, and the relationship with neighbours is critical for shaping students' safety. Furthermore, the section examines how inequalities within municipal services, as an effect of segregation, constrain low-SES students more significantly than their high-SES counterparts.

Section 6.2 delves into analysing the influence of the health system in shaping Chilean students' possibilities of accessing healthcare and being physically and mentally healthy. In this context, it examines aspects such as access to and the quality of healthcare and medications as the repercussions of global pandemics on their mental health. Furthermore, it introduces the concept of financial stress, a novel phenomenon within Chilean literature affecting young people's mental health and, subsequently, their opportunities for well-being.

Section 6.3 analyses how educational inequalities within the Chilean educational system influence young Chileans' life project. It argues that the unequal quality of education offered between public and private institutions affects young people from low SES to pursue their career aspirations. Furthermore, the section highlights the critical role of social capital in securing employment in Chile, positioning high SES in an advantaged situation due to the role of private education in enhancing this type of capital.

The last section summarises the main findings and concludes the chapter.

6.1 Security and residential-spatial inequalities

Chapter 5 illustrated that young people's neighbourhoods are critical to the capability of security. In this context, safety emerged as a critical dimension affecting their well-being. Nevertheless, this section argues that perceptions of safety differ among the groups based on the neighbourhood's socioeconomic context. Hence, as elaborated in Chapter 3, the analysis explores the role of residential-spatial segregation as an essential mediator when discussing young people's possibilities to live in safe environments.

Furthermore, it discusses how SES shapes young Chileans' sense of safety and security within their living areas, which differs from the actual crimes. In this context, even when low SES are more exposed to dangerous situations, they do not perceive their surroundings as dangerous. In contrast, while high SES are less exposed to risky situations, their perception of danger and unsafeness is more prevalent among their discourses. Hence, the analysis reveals that SES affects not only the opportunities to be safe but also the perception of safety. Such distinction becomes critical to discuss how SES influences young Chileans' well-being opportunities within their places of residence.

6.1.1 Safety, neighbourhoods and municipal services

Chapter 5 underscores the critical role of young people's safety in their capability to live securely, emphasising the profound influence of their immediate environment, particularly their neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the data revealed that socioeconomic SES shapes not only young people's actual safety but also their perceptions of safety. High-SES students often manifested a subjective sense of danger, while low-SES, primarily urban students, commonly recounted objective exposure to risks in their narratives. Interestingly, these students did not consider these situations dangerous but instead considered them typical aspects of their environment. Hence, the following subsections analyse how young people's neighbourhood's socioeconomic context frames their possibilities to be safe, influenced by exposure to loud noises, encounters with unfamiliar dogs, crime experiences, and relationships with neighbours.[1]

Within this discussion, it is essential to acknowledge the pivotal role played by Chilean municipalities, also called local governments, and the significant disparities in resource allocation among them. Chilean municipalities bear the responsibility of local administration within their respective jurisdictions, including a wide range of duties, such

[1] As described in Chapter 5, these are the critical factors that influence young people's possibilities to be safe within their neighbourhoods.

as maintaining public spaces, lighting, and upkeeping parks and squares (MDI, 2006; Fernández Richard, 2013). Additionally, municipalities play a crucial role in overseeing the security and well-being of their residents (Uttamchandani Mujica, 2020).

However, it is crucial to highlight that municipal budgets and resource availability to provide public services are intrinsically linked to the income levels of their residents. Therefore, as the literature reveals, low-income neighbourhoods often have fewer resources than their high-income counterparts (Henríquez Díaz and Fuenzalida Aguirre, 2011; Bravo Rodríguez, 2014; Ruiz-Tagle, 2016). Consequently, this unequal distribution of resources results in disparities in residents' access to local public services, significantly affecting low-income populations (Cortés, 2021).[2]

Hence, disparities in municipal resources emerge as a critical factor constraining young Chileans' opportunities to be safe, warranting further examination. In this context, the adequate management of surroundings is directly related to municipal resources and involves predominantly dealing with loud noises, stray dogs, streets' safety, and spaces to interact socially with neighbourhoods. It is essential to note that beneath these factors of safety described in Chapter 5, exposure to crime emerges as an overarching disparity among low and high-SES students, which considerably constrains young people from low socioeconomic contexts.

Loud noises

Chapter 5 highlights the significant impact of loud noises on young people's quality of life, where participants from all the groups reported that loud noises substantially affect their well-being, mainly through mood disturbances and sleep disorders. Nevertheless, that chapter also described notable distinctions in the experiences of young people based on their socioeconomic backgrounds that are important to visualise. While high-SES individuals express concerns about disturbances caused by loud music and parties, low-SES students reported the sounds of gunshots, fireworks, and fights.

In 2011, the Chilean Ministry of Energy legally mandated municipalities to implement noise control measures within their jurisdictions (MMA, 2012). However, due to the limited resources available in low-income municipalities to address public concerns, young Chileans living in such areas may have fewer options for dealing with loud noises than their high-SES counterparts. Moreover, the nature of the noise-related safety challenges faced by students with low SES backgrounds accentuates these disparities, not

[2] Although there are mechanisms to reduce budget inequalities among Chilean municipalities, the problem persists. See Henriquez Diaz and Fuenzalida Aguirre (2011) for more details about Fondo Común Municipal (Municipal Common Fund) (FCM), a national policy tool defined as a solidarity redistribution mechanism of income amongst municipalities.

only leading to the emotional distress discussed in Chapter 5 but also compromising their physical security.

As Cuneo and Medina González (2022) observed, gunshots and fireworks are often associated with criminal activity and the Chilean “narco culture”, highlighting the risk and exposure to violence that neighbours face when living in areas where drug trafficking occurs. Consequently, as elaborated later in this chapter in the section, exposure to loud noises poses a multifaceted challenge for low-SES students, especially those in urban areas. Such a problem is intertwined with public safety concerns and the heightened risk of crime exposure, placing them in a disadvantaged position in their opportunities for well-being compared to their high-SES counterparts.

Interaction with unknown dogs

Chapter 5 highlighted that students’ interactions with neighbourhood dogs, specifically those not belonging to them, also shaped their sense of safety and security. However, the chapter identified that the nature of the relationship between students and unfamiliar dogs differed. In this context, two significant SES-related differences emerged from the data, which warrant discussion. The first difference lies in the dogs’ care and ownership situations. As described in Chapter 5, low SES students commonly encounter stray dogs within their neighbourhoods, which do not have identifiable owners and are regarded as part of the community, receiving care from multiple individuals, including themselves. High SES students also mentioned encountering dogs within their neighbourhoods. However, all the dogs have owners, even when they occasionally roam freely in the surrounding streets.

This disparity aligns with the findings of Ibarra et al. (2006), who observed that a higher concentration of stray dogs is typically found in low-income municipalities while fewer in high-income neighbourhoods.[3] According to the existing literature, a potential explanation for this disparity is the limited resources available in low-income municipalities to address issues related to street dogs and provide essential veterinary care, leading to challenges associated with the overpopulation of stray dogs (SUBDERE, 2016; Garde et al., 2022).

The exposure to stray dogs presents several problems, including sanitation and disease transmission concerns (Acosta-Jamett et al., 2010). Moreover, it increases the risk of dog attacks on individuals, which is noteworthy given that Chile has one of the highest rates of such incidents in public places globally (Bonacic and Abarca, 2014). Consequently, students residing in low-income neighbourhoods, particularly in urban areas, face significant safety limitations due to the widespread presence of stray dogs. Nevertheless,

[3] The focus of this investigation was centred in Santiago.

it is worth noting that students residing in low-income neighbourhoods did not perceive stray dogs as a safety risk.

In this context, the second difference found among the groups lies in the role of SES in shaping students' perceptions of safety around unfamiliar dogs. As indicated in Chapter 5, low SES students argued that all dogs are part of their communities and positively influence their well-being. In contrast, for high SES students, unfamiliar dogs negatively affect their well-being and sense of safety due to the fear that they may attack them or their pets. For these students, only the ownership of their dogs contributes positively to their well-being. Chapter 7 provides a more comprehensive discussion regarding pet ownership and its impact on young students' well-being.

Safe streets and green areas for leisure

As outlined in Chapter 5, young Chileans spend a significant part of their day in outdoor activities within their neighbourhoods. In this context, students cited cars passing by, malfunctioning streetlights and debris as factors influencing their sense of safety outdoors. Additionally, they identified incidents related to robberies and associated risks as further contributors to their safety concerns. However, it is essential to delve deeper into the critical disparities in young people's safety conditions and their perceptions of safety, considering the socioeconomic context of their neighbourhoods. Within this discussion, differences based on SES warrant further exploration, particularly concerning the parallel between actual crime and perception of danger among the groups.

Availability of green areas

The analysis reveals that a critical factor in young people's possibilities to be safe is the availability of green areas, such as parks and squares, identified by students as crucial places to socially interact and engage in physical activity in their neighbourhoods. This finding aligns with Alfaro-Inzunza et al. (2019), who report the high value of green areas and nature in young Chilean's well-being. Similarly, Oyarzún Gómez and Reyes Espejo (2021) reported that young people's well-being is strongly linked to leisure and outdoor activities. Hence, it becomes critical to examine further how the unequal distribution of municipalities' resources limits young people's availability of public spaces for leisure purposes.

As illustrated in Figure 6-1, students living in low-income urban neighbourhoods described a scarcity of green areas and parks. In contrast, as illustrated in

Figure 6-2, students living in affluent neighbourhoods identified a variety of parks, hills, and other natural green spaces to enjoy and reported having relatively easy access to these

spaces due to their proximity and ability to walk to them. Notably, rural students, both low and high SES, report having access to green places within an acceptable distance, especially given that many rural students reside far from urban areas.

Figure 6-1: Presence of green areas in low SES student's neighbourhood

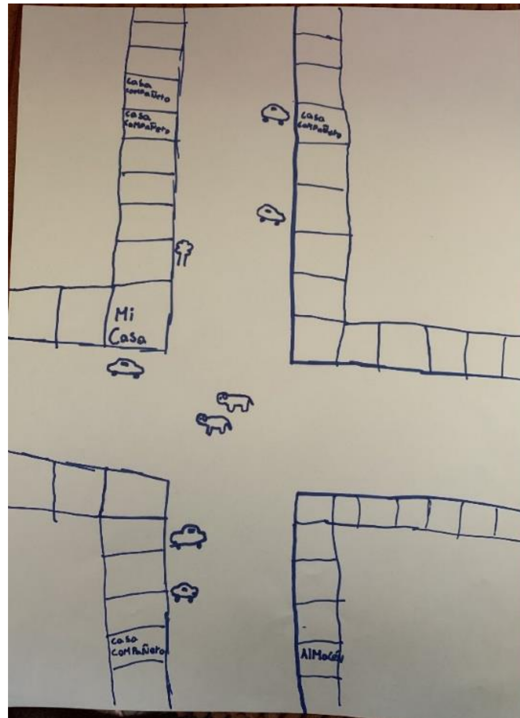


Figure 6-2: Presence of green areas in high SES student's neighbourhood

These findings align with those of Escobedo et al. (2006), whose results demonstrate that wealthy municipalities have more access and more budget for green areas and parks than

poor municipalities. Similarly, Reyes Päcke and Figueroa Aldunce (2010) conclude that the lower the mean income of a municipality's population, the lesser the access to green areas. As a result, students living in low-income urban neighbourhoods face greater restrictions than their high-SES counterparts in accessing safe recreational areas.

Furthermore, as reported in Chapter 5, low SES students living in urban areas explicitly raised concerns about inadequate street lighting and debris affecting their sense of safety when spending time on the streets.[4] One student said, *"I hardly go out, especially at night since it gets too dark".* In contrast, high-SES students living in urban areas did not express safety concerns regarding their neighbourhoods or maintenance issues. Similarly, regardless of their SES, rural students did not perceive their neighbourhoods as unsafe.

Public safety

Within this discussion, exposure to crime in public spaces, primarily associated with incidents like robberies, gunshots, and drug trafficking happening within their surrounding environments, emerged as a critical factor of young people's safety. As reported in Chapter 5, students from low SES backgrounds, particularly the ones living in urban locations, described different hazardous situations they encountered in their living locations, such as exposure to gunshots, people consuming drugs, and witnessing fights on the streets. However, none of these students referred to safety from dangerous situations as an essential dimension of well-being.

In contrast, security was a recurrent theme among high SES students and was critical to living well, particularly for those living in rural locations, where being safe and protecting themselves from robberies and thieves was fundamental for their well-being. Nevertheless, they explicitly mentioned that robberies are rare within their neighbourhoods, and none directly referred to experiencing such a situation. Consequently, analysing how SES conditions shape young people's perceptions of safety becomes relevant within this discussion, exploring further the relationship between actual crime occurrences and students' perceptions of danger.

At a national level, recent studies show that crime rates are significantly lower in the Araucanía (rural groups) than in the Metropolitan Region (urban groups) (MISP, 2021) and concentrate on low and medium-socioeconomic-status populations (FPC, 2022). Furthermore, high-income neighbourhoods have lower crime rates, lower rates of violent victimisation and fewer home robberies than deprived neighbourhoods (Olavarria-Gambi

[4] Aravena et al. (2013) underscored the importance of adequate lighting systems and cable management in enhancing Chileans' quality of life. However, this study only focussed on the adult population, representing a gap in the literature that should be addressed in further studies within this topic.

and Allende-González, 2014). Hence, while these students live with an objective exposure to risk, they do not manifest fear regarding their neighbourhoods and perceive their surroundings as safe.

In contrast, high-SES individuals, despite having less exposure to crime, tend to perceive their surroundings as more dangerous, where the fear of being robbed negatively influences their possibilities of living well. This suggests that young people's sense of safety is, to some extent, socially constructed and influenced by their SES rather than solely based on their personal experiences. As discussed in the subsequent subsection, relationships with neighbours and the sense of community play crucial roles in shaping young people's sense of safety within their neighbourhoods, irrespective of the actual crime rates.

Relationship with neighbours

As discussed in Chapter 5, the quality of relationships with neighbours is essential in shaping young people's perceptions of safety within their living environments. In this context, developing a sense of community among neighbours is a critical factor influencing young people's perceptions of safety.[5] While existing literature also highlights the importance of unity and collaboration among neighbours in cultivating neighbourhood satisfaction (Ramírez Casas del Valle et al., 2017), the impact of neighbours on young people's sense of safety remains unclear in the literature. Furthermore, significant differences among young people concerning the role of the community based on SES are significant to elaborate further. It is essential to note that Chapter 7 delves deeper into discussing the young people's capability of community and its influence on their well-being.

As previously discussed, relationships with neighbours and their sense of community vary among different groups. Students residing in rural areas highlighted the physical distance between neighbours, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds. However, only high-SES students referred to isolation as a matter that negatively affected their sense of safety. In contrast, low SES students emphasised the presence of neighbours as disruptive, disturbing their peace and tranquillity. Hence, for rural students, spatiality has a dual effect depending on socioeconomic conditions. While for low SES, distance emerged as a factor of protection, for their high SES counterparts, it arose as a constraint in their possibilities to feel safe.

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[5] As discussed in Chapter 2, young people's sense of community is a critical concept for this thesis. In this context, rooted in the work of McMillan and Chavis (1986), sense of community is the feeling of belonging among its members, a recognition that they hold significance to one another and to the collective, and a mutual belief that their needs will be fulfilled through their dedication to staying connected and united.

Significant disparities also surfaced in the relationships with neighbours among urban students. Low SES students strongly emphasised the importance of their neighbours in their communities, where mutual support and collaboration were identified as essential attributes for collective thriving.[6] For these students, a sense of community well-being was paramount, with collective welfare outweighing individual interests. Hence, aligned with Alfaro et al. (2017), the community has a pivotal role in low SES students' quality of life by offering support, care, and a collective pursuit of a better future.

In contrast, for high SES urban students, neighbours' significance is primarily based on the desire to build friendships rather than a collective sense of support and thrive. Their recognition of the community's role in shaping their sense of safety and collective well-being is not as pronounced as that of their low SES peers. Instead, they place exclusive importance on forming relationships with neighbours of similar ages, considering these connections essential for fostering a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, this does imply that high SES students lack a sense of community. In this socioeconomic group, the sense of community is closely linked to the cultivation of social connections, ultimately leading to the accumulation of social capital. As detailed in Section 6.3, this form of capital becomes a determining factor in young Chileans' career opportunities.

6.2 Security and healthcare inequalities

Young people's possibility to be healthy emerged as a critical dimension within the capability of security across all the groups. In this context, physical illnesses and mental health issues were raised by the students as affecting their possibilities to live a secure life. However, as further elaborated in the following subsections, while socioeconomic inequality is one of Chile's most relevant determinants of health among adults (MINSAL, 2012b), the impact of health inequalities on young people's well-being remains unclear in the existing literature. Therefore, it becomes critical to explore the influence of the disparities within the health system concerning young Chileans' possibilities to be healthy and contribute to this debate.

From a policy perspective, every Chilean child has the right to healthcare (MDSF, 2022b). Nevertheless, Chile's healthcare provision system offers two primary options: public health (FONASA), administered and provided by the state, which the majority of the youth population (and the general population) subscribes to (see FONASA, 2020). In contrast, the private health system (ISAPRE), managed and delivered by private institutions, serves a minority of the population. Thus the focus of this discussion does

[6] The organisation and collective support among residents of lower SES neighbourhoods in Chile are not a new phenomenon. See, for instance, Daniels et al. (2021) for a discussion about "ollas comunes" (common pots), a prevalent practice in low income communities to provide free food to neighbours in times of crisis (Daniels et al., 2021).

not revolve around access but rather on differences in the quality of service provided by private and public institutions. In this context, it is essential to mention that public health system users are often characterised by low to medium SES (Becerril-Montekio et al., 2011).

Socioeconomic inequality as a Social Determinant of Health

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the social determinants of health (SDH) encompass the structural determinants of health inequalities, which are the non-medical factors influencing people's health outcomes, including, among others, the unfair distribution of power and the access to a range of goods and services within a society (WHO, 2008). In the words of Frenz (2005, p. 18), the SDHs can be understood as "the social conditions in which people live and work, which have an impact on health."

In this context, the literature highlights socioeconomic inequality as one of Chile's most significant social determinants of health (MINSAL, 2012b, p. 48).[7] While Chile's healthcare system demonstrates satisfactory results in health indicators among OECD countries (OECD, 2021), public investment in health remains low, resulting in shortages of health professionals, hospital beds, and medicines (Goic, 2015). Consequently, the health system benefits individuals with favourable socioeconomic conditions, which has detrimental effects on the health outcomes of low-income populations (Arteaga et al., 2002).[8]

However, the literature exploring socioeconomic inequalities as an SDH within younger populations is scarce. Consequently, the following analysis contributes to this gap in the literature, discussing how health inequalities affect young people's well-being opportunities in Chile.

6.2.1 Treatment, financial stress and uncertainty

As discussed in Chapter 5, significant differences were observed among the groups based on SES regarding their perceptions of health and the impact of illnesses on their well-being. Low-SES students placed particular emphasis on how illnesses are directly linked to employment constraints, which, in turn, affect their household income. For this group, the financial aspect of health was a central concern, encompassing both the ability to

[7] MINSAL adaption of Blum and Mmari (2006).

[8] As pointed out by Gallardo et al. (2017), studies among the Chilean adult population show that household income and place of living are significant determinants of inequality of opportunity in health. In this study, gender and the educational level of the mother are also important factors for inequality of opportunity in health status.

afford proper healthcare and the repercussions of illnesses on their capacity to work effectively. Conversely, high-SES students acknowledged the impact of physical illnesses on their quality of life but predominantly focused their discussion on the importance of mental health for overall well-being.

Consequently, the following analysis builds upon the dimensions of health elucidated in Chapter 5, encompassing aspects such as access to and the quality of healthcare and medications, mental health, and the repercussions of global pandemics. Furthermore, it introduces the concept of financial stress, a novel phenomenon within Chilean literature affecting young people's mental health and, subsequently, their opportunities for well-being. This discussion contributes to the scarce debate on health inequalities affecting young Chileans' access to healthcare by examining the critical role of SES as a determining factor in shaping their prospects for good health and secure living.

General health care and medications

As indicated in Chapter 5, accessing healthcare in case of illness and being able to afford it was a critical discussion among low SES students. This financial concern about affording medical attention aligns with Aravena and Inostroza (2015), who argue that users of the public healthcare system (FONASA) feel financially vulnerable under their current plans.[9] Similarly, Benítez et al. (2019) reported that Chilean families spend a substantial portion of their household income, approximately 35%, on medicines, placing Chile among the OECD countries with the highest medication costs. Therefore, the literature supports low SES students' concern about illnesses affecting their household income, where inequalities within the health system become manifest by heavily constraining Chileans' possibilities to access proper and affordable healthcare.

Additionally, residential segregation emerges as a critical factor influencing young Chileans' possibilities of access to medication, affecting mainly low-SES students residing in specific locations. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention that the cost of the same medication can vary depending on the pharmacy (Balmaceda et al., 2015; De Elejalde and Maturana, 2021).[10] Furthermore, the distribution of pharmacies is also

[9] Notably, the study by Aravena and Inostroza focussed exclusively on adults in their sample, yet similar financial concerns regarding healthcare affordability are shared by the young participants of this study as users of the public health system.

[10] Different public initiatives and regulations exist to amortise Chileans' medication expenses (see, for instance, Saavedra et al., 2018). Communal pharmacies, known as "farmacias populares", are among these initiatives established by certain municipalities to offer lower-priced medications to their residents. According to the Central de Abastecimiento del Sistema Nacional de Servicios de Salud (CENABAST), there are currently 141 popular pharmacies in the country, with the majority located in the Metropolitan Region (CENABAST, 2023; MINSAL, 2018). While effective, these initiatives are unable to fully

unequal in the country. The study by Correa-Parra et al. (2020) shows that wealthy urban neighbourhoods have more pharmacies at a walkable distance than low-income areas. Additionally, when comparing the number of pharmacies at a national level, 51% are located in the Metropolitan Region, and 50 municipalities of the country do not have a pharmacy (Saavedra et al., 2018).

Consequently, the evidence supports this thesis's findings regarding healthcare opportunities being a concern to low SES students due to the high cost of healthcare in Chile. Moreover, due to residential segregation, these students have fewer pharmacies available and may need to travel longer distances to get the medicine they need. Hence, these students are not only constrained by their household income in being able to afford healthcare but also by the place where they live and the "medication segregation" existing in the country.

Mental health

As reported in Chapter 5, mental health emerged as a critical dimension concerning students' well-being and possibilities of living securely. In this context, students cited conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse as common conditions affecting young people's possibilities to live well. Moreover, the findings of this thesis reveal that financial stress emerged as a novel subtheme within mental health that has not been addressed previously in the literature and requires further discussion.

While mental health was a recurring theme across all groups, significant differences in the availability and access to mental health treatment exist within the Chilean health system. These disparities are deeply rooted in health inequalities, disproportionately affecting young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This issue gains added importance when considering that young Chileans with low SES exhibit higher rates of mental health issues compared to their peers from higher SES backgrounds (Santa-Cruz et al., 2022).

Concerning treatment, a recent report showed that over 14,000 Chilean children and adolescents are waiting for mental health treatment in the public system, attributable to the pandemic's effects, a lack of supply, a lack of opportunity, a lack of child and adolescent professionals, and an insufficient budget (UDP, 2022). This situation is problematic since one-third of the young Chilean population presents with psychiatric

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address health inequalities deep-rooted within the Chilean health system, particularly impacting young people in low-income areas across specific regions.

disorders yearly,[11] and the majority do not receive proper treatment owing to the public system's lack of resources (Vicente et al., 2012).

Therefore, young people's possibilities to be mentally-emotionally healthy are significantly impacted by socioeconomic factors, particularly when considering the critical differences between public and private healthcare in terms of waiting times and access to mental health treatment. Students from low SES backgrounds, who primarily rely on the public healthcare system, often face longer appointment wait times than their high SES counterparts. Consequently, these structural inequalities within the Chilean public healthcare system impose more significant constraints on the well-being opportunities of low-SES students than their high-SES peers.

Financial stress

As introduced earlier, financial stress emerged as a noteworthy phenomenon within the data analysis. However, it is essential to highlight that both low and high-SES students experience it differently, and this distinction warrants further exploration. Financial stress is a topic commonly explored in the literature through the Family Stress Model (FSM), which examines the consequences of a family's economic hardship and economic pressure on young people's well-being (Masarik and Conger, 2017). Therefore, it arose as a pivotal concept influencing young Chileans' security, ultimately affecting their opportunities for well-being.

As argued in different sections of this chapter, low SES participants explicitly manifested financial concerns concerning their possibilities of living well. They expressed feeling pressured by the need for money to satisfy their needs and enhance both their quality of life and that of their families. As illustrated in Figure 6-3, the need for money was a central theme in many of the Lego models created by these students, representing a significant aspect of their valued well-being. As one student summarised, *"You need money for everything (...) without money, you can't live"*.

[11] According to the Health Ministry, these conditions are predominantly linked to substance abuse and depression (MINSAL, 2012).

Figure 6-3: Money in low SES representations of well-being[12]

In contrast, while the role of money was not a transversal discussion among high SES students for their well-being, there is an implicit form of financial stress related to maintaining a certain standard of living and feeling pressure from their families, particularly regarding their career choices, as elaborated further in Chapter 7. Figure 6-4 illustrates a high SES student's Lego model, highlighting the most crucial aspects of living well: *"Having a mansion, a family, and an Alfred [Batman's butler]"*. Although this student did not directly mention money in their description, it is depicted in scattered green pieces throughout the Lego representation beneath the text in the picture. Thus, it can be inferred that money is pertinent to achieving the desired level of well-being and being able to afford such a lifestyle.

Figure 6-4: Money in high SES representation of well-being

[12] "Plata" and "dinero" are different words for money in Chile.

While the detrimental impact of financial stress on subjective well-being is well-established in international research (e.g., Main et al., 2019; Lindberg et al., 2021), its specific effects on young people's well-being in the Chilean context remain largely unexplored, representing a notable gap in the literature. Consequently, financial stress has emerged as a novel dimension of well-being, warranting further investigation among young Chileans. Considering the country's socioeconomic complexities marked by high levels of inequality and segregation, such exploration can offer valuable insights and contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between household income, socioeconomic inequality, and young people's well-being.

Global pandemics and instability

As discussed in Chapter 5, global pandemics, mainly COVID-19, arose as an essential factor in young people's conversations, affecting their quality of life. However, the effects of pandemics varied across the groups. While high SES individuals expressed frustration with the limitations imposed by lockdowns and online classes, particularly the inability to socialise with friends, low SES students, both in rural and urban areas, faced material challenges such as limited access to technology, internet connectivity and suitable study spaces. These learning disparities are underscored by Quiroz Reyes (2020), highlighting how the pandemic exacerbated existing structural educational inequalities in Chile, especially in terms of access to technology and opportunities for distance learning, disproportionately affecting those from low SES backgrounds.

Furthermore, beyond the immediate disruptions caused by the pandemic, changes in routines, uncertainty, and constant adaptation emerged as critical factors influencing young people's stability and constraining their opportunities to live well. Adapting to new ways of interacting with peers and learning methods proved particularly challenging. High SES students emphasised that in addition to limiting their social interactions with peers, online classes hindered their learning abilities during those years as they struggled to engage effectively with their teachers. One student expressed frustration, stating, *"[teachers] keep telling us: 'Do this. If you do it wrong, you get a two'[13]. How were we going to do it? We couldn't ask anything".* These students argued about the stress they felt when returning to school and being unable to cope with the assignments.

Conversely, when discussing the effects of the lockdowns and their return to schools with low SES students, they did not mention any issues with their learning process despite the technical challenges they faced when migrating to online learning spaces. Instead, they

[13] The Chilean school grading system ranges from 1 (lowest grade) to 7 (highest grade). Any score below 4 is a failure.

primarily noticed the impact of the lockdowns on their social interactions. These students observed that some of their peers seemed to have forgotten the norms of behaviour in school and reacted impulsively in conflict situations. As one student described, *"I feel people came back more violent (...) every day there is a fight".* This situation concerned them, as they now felt unable to predict how others would react to jokes and daily interactions at school, leading to increased stress due to the constant presence of fights.

The situations reported by students align with recent literature, which reveals an increase in mental health problems among school students during the pandemic. According to experts, this rise can be partially attributed to social isolation and routine disruptions, directly affecting students' well-being (Cifuentes-Faura, 2020; Larraguibel et al., 2021). However, while both high and low-SES students experienced negative consequences linked to COVID-19, affecting their stability, the inefficiencies of the health system discussed previously impose greater constraints on low-SES students' access to proper aid to overcome the effects of the pandemic.

6.3 Life project and educational inequalities

Chapter 5 reported students' possibility to pursue valued life project as a central capability for their well-being. Within this discussion, two main career paths emerged: the traditional, encompassing a career university followed by securing a job within that studied field, and the non-traditional, which involves developing a career in social media or as a professional athlete. While a few students referred to their desire to pursue non-traditional careers, they acknowledged the importance of material resources over education to achieve this path.

In this context, most of this study's participants emphasised the importance of obtaining a university degree and securing a formal job to live well. Aligned with Puga Rayo et al. (2017), Chilean students view the transition to higher education as a necessity and a natural progression in their life plans, and not pursuing such a path, while considered by some students, is framed as a risk. Therefore, despite the increasing availability of digital careers and the influence of social media, access to university education remains at the core of the life projects of most Chilean students.

The following section builds upon the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 to analyse how educational inequalities within the Chilean educational system impact young Chileans' career prospects within their life projects. It argues that students' socioeconomic contexts strongly influence their career opportunities, primarily owing to the unequal quality of education offered and the critical role of social capital in pursuing the desired life project. Moreover, this section also examines how SES influences young people's power of choice over their career paths.

6.3.1 Education, opportunity and life project

As discussed in Chapter 5, young people's education, including schooling and university studies, emerged as crucial for their life projects. The following subsections discuss the influence of SES in framing young Chileans' opportunities to access higher education and to secure employment based on the school and type of education received. The analysis centres on the quality of the education provided and the role of social capital emerging as a determinant factor within the Chilean job market, framing young people's possibilities to pursue their valued life projects. The key attributes of the educational system discussed in this chapter are directly relevant to the discussion presented in Chapter 7 regarding the institutional support available to students and the role of education in enabling this capability.

School quality, university access and educational trajectories

Previous chapters of this thesis have highlighted the issue of unequal education quality within the Chilean educational system. As discussed in Chapter 3, experts have identified a significant disparity between private education, which offers substantially higher quality, and public education provided by the state. This discrepancy presents a double-bonded problem as it restricts students attending low-performing schools from accessing university education and simultaneously hinders their trajectories in higher education. Hence, the following section explores how educational inequalities shape young Chileans' life projects.

As previously discussed, performance is pivotal in determining higher educational opportunities. As indicated in Chapter 5, low SES students are aware of this issue, highlighting the need for good grades to access university. Chapter 3 revealed a strong correlation between academic achievement during school years and access to university, as grades and performance in the university entrance exam[14] are crucial factors for gaining entry into higher education in Chile (e.g., Rodríguez Garcés and Padilla Fuentes, 2016).

However, despite notable increases in university enrolment rates in recent years, SES remains a significant obstacle for Chilean students in accessing higher education (Aguirre and Matta, 2022). Moreover, compared to other OECD nations, Chile has some of the lowest rates of university attendance and graduation (OECD, 2019). According to King-Domínguez et al. (2020), this may be attributed, in part, to inadequate educational conditions and the high cost associated with attending and completing university.

[14] Refer to Chapter 3 for a description of this exam called Prueba de Acceso a la Educación Superior (PAES).

In this context, while educational programmes aimed at increasing access to higher education have successfully expanded enrolment rates,[15] recent research demonstrates substantial differences in students' educational trajectories based on their socioeconomic background. For instance, the study by Amo and Santelices (2017) reveals that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face additional challenges in achieving success in university beyond the initial barrier of access, including financial difficulties, inadequate academic preparation and limited social networks. Soto Hernández (2016) argues that the challenges faced by first-generation university students intensify. Hence, access alone is insufficient to ensure equitable outcomes in higher education, where the disparity in graduation rates between first-generation and non-first-generation students is substantial (Jarpa-Arriagada and Rodríguez-Garcós, 2021).

The literature reveals that one possible reason behind this phenomenon lies in the fact that students from high-income families often benefit from greater access to resources, such as private schools and tutoring, situating them in an advantaged position in terms of academic preparation and performance (Espinoza and González, 2013). Furthermore, those students are more likely to have parents who have obtained a university education, enabling them to receive support and guidance throughout their academic journey (Sepúlveda and Lizama-Loyola, 2022). Blanco et al. (2018) echo these findings, emphasising the importance of social and cultural capital in influencing students' trajectories and their ability to navigate the higher education system.

Consequently, the disparity in educational quality within the system places students from high SES backgrounds in an advantageous position compared to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds when successfully pursuing higher education. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, private schools not only provide a higher quality of education, but as the following section claims, elite education fosters social capital among their students, which has proved crucial in securing high-paying jobs in Chile.

[15] Within this discussion, it is vital to highlight the several public aids available in Chile to help students finance their university education. The Chilean state provides a range of scholarships targeting students from low-income backgrounds, indigenous communities, and students with disabilities, which cover tuition fees and living expenses (see MINEDUC, 2023b). Moreover, there are public grants available based on academic merit (see MINEDUC, 2023a) and student loans with state guarantee (CAE) (see MINEDUC, 2023c). Additionally, in 2019, the free tuition program was launched, providing free higher education to students coming from the 60% lowest income households in the country (see MINEDUC, 2023d). Moreover, universities have implemented various initiatives to address the inequality in access to higher education. For example, the University of Chile has introduced 'equity quotas', which provide unique access opportunities to priority students (Moya, 2011). Another program worth mentioning is the Foundation Courses, designed for outstanding academic students who can be exempt from the national PAES exam (see Walker-Janzen et al., 2019).

Employment and income inequalities: meritocracy vs social capital

The possibility of being employed emerged as critical within students' life projects. As discussed in Chapter 5, most participants emphasised that obtaining a university degree is essential for securing employment, especially within a traditional career path, including degrees such as psychology, law, and veterinary studies. This finding aligns with the existing literature, where education's role in enhancing the quality of life for Chileans is a recurring theme (Aguirre and Matta, 2022). However, this section argues that the connection between education and employment in shaping the opportunities for well-being of young Chileans extends beyond acquiring technical knowledge; it also involves the social capital they acquire.

This study adopts Bourdieu's definition of social capital, which refers to "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). Building upon Hart's work (2012; 2019) by combining Bourdieu's concept of social capital with a capabilities framework, the following analysis explores how students' social connections and the type of school they attend influence their opportunities to pursue their valued professional projects.

Within this discussion, the literature reveals that social capital positively impacts individuals' employment opportunities (Contreras et al., 2019). Furthermore, research indicates a strong correlation between SES and access to high-paying occupations (Nuñez and Gutiérrez, 2004). Despite similar education and qualifications, discrimination based on SES tends to favour those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Undurraga (2019) reinforces this point by providing additional evidence that personal connections and networks play a dominant role in job placements in Chile. The author highlights that social connections often precede merit-based selection processes, indicating a preference among employers for candidates who share similar backgrounds, regardless of their qualifications.[16]

However, underlying this phenomenon is the unequal distribution of this form of capital, which poses significant challenges. Recent studies conclude that an individual's SES determines their access to social networks (Otero et al., 2021). As a result, high-SES

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[16] Barozet (2006) sheds light on the pervasive influence of the *'pituto'* culture in Chile, which serves as a distinguishing factor between the middle-high and lower classes. *Pituto* refers to a personal connection or a network of contacts that grants individuals access to job opportunities, irrespective of their qualifications or merit. This author emphasises the negative consequences of the *pituto* culture, including the promotion of nepotism, corruption and perpetuation of social inequality. By relying on personal connections, this culture reinforces a climate of individualism and competition, where individuals must continually expand their network of *pitutos* to thrive. Consequently, the prevalence of the pituto culture has profound implications for employment prospects, exacerbating the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources within Chilean society.

individuals tend to possess more social capital than those with low SES (Contreras et al., 2019). This thesis posits that social capital inequalities can be attributed, at least in part, to the Chilean educational system's excessive focus on standardised tests and academic performance, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Hence, aligned with the work of Araujo and Martuccelli (2015), a critical part of the problem lies in the education system's focus on rankings and performance, which creates a highly competitive environment. Such an environment favours individuals with access to resources and support while constraining those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Consequently, it perpetuates inequality and strengthens existing power structures within the education system. Moreover, such a system affords a dual advantage to privileged students in accumulating the crucial social capital necessary for pursuing their career aspirations.

As discussed previously, achieving better academic performance is essential to Chilean families who aspire to enrol their children in private schools. However, private institutions not only excel academically but also contribute to enhancing their students' social capital. Stillerman (2016) contends that private schools' unique combination of academic excellence and social capital development makes them the preferred choice for families seeking advantageous prospects for their children.[17] However, this option is financially inaccessible for some families, leading to restricted opportunities for low-SES families to choose schools capable of strengthening their children's social capital, creating a cycle of social stagnation across generations.

As illustrated in Chapter 5, such an emphasis on developing social capital is patent in high SES participants' discourses, where their primary objective of the school is to meet their friends and strengthen their social ties. Notably, as further elaborated in Chapter 7, these students' neighbours are also their school peers. Hence, as revealed in the data, a fundamental aspect of their present well-being involves social interactions and developing friendships. In contrast, as argued earlier, low SES are less focused on the social aspect of school but on their academic performance as the key to entering higher education and enhancing their quality of life.

As a result, structural inequalities in Chilean society, driven by the significance of social capital over merit and the limited opportunities for young Chileans from low socioeconomic backgrounds to develop this form of capital, emerge as critical factors influencing students' life projects and their actual well-being opportunities. Consequently, low-SES students are disadvantaged in pursuing their desired professional careers compared to their high-SES counterparts, facing limited employment

[17] Bellei et al. (2020) further expand this point, referring to the existence of a hyper-segregation in elite schools, suggesting that the school choice among the upper class in Chile is driven by a desire to maintain social and cultural capital within their community rather than solely prioritising academic quality or educational outcomes.

opportunities, particularly when aspiring to secure high-paying jobs. This limitation can directly impact their ability to access the financial and material resources they deem essential for leading a comfortable life.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the study participants assigned different meanings to pursuing higher education and securing their desired job in the context of their well-being, particularly emphasising the role of money as a resource for achieving a comfortable life. High SES students regarded money as crucial for maintaining their current standard of living and supporting their desired lifestyle. They also did not perceive significant barriers to their career aspirations. One student expressed this viewpoint: "*Obviously, I will have a lot of money after college. I need a lot of money to go to Miami with my friends*".

In contrast, for low SES students, money held a different importance, as it was seen as essential for thriving and improving their overall quality of life. Furthermore, these students acknowledged that their ability to meet their needs depended on pursuing higher education and a specific type of career rather than just any career. One student asserted, *"I need a good degree with good money (...) we need money for everything (...) we need money to survive"*.

These contrasted perspectives illustrate that while young Chilean students have similar aspirations regarding their career paths, their expectations differ based on socioeconomic factors. While high-SES students, to some extent, take the possibility of pursuing higher education and being employed for granted, it is a life-changing possibility for low-SES students. However, due to the positive correlation between SES and employment opportunities, low-SES students are in a disadvantaged position concerning their possibility of earning an income that allows them to satisfy their needs, live comfortably and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty (Nuñez and Gutiérrez, 2004; Nuñez and Miranda, 2010). Therefore, analysing further the influence of SES in shaping young Chileans' career aspirations and opportunities becomes critical to this discussion.

Opportunity, power of choice and SES

This section examines the influence of educational inequalities on young Chileans' possibilities to have genuine opportunities for the future concerning their life projects. As raised by low SES participants, *"not getting into the degree you wanted and not getting into the university that you wanted"* are critical obstacles impeding them from pursuing their life projects. Therefore, examining the relationship between the power of choice and SES becomes critical in this discussion. The concepts of adaptive preferences, expectations, and aspirations become critical to these purposes. Moreover, Chapter 7 builds upon this analysis to explore the role of adults in framing young people's power of choice within their life projects and influencing their well-being opportunities.

Adaptive preferences, expectations or aspirations?

Within the poverty and well-being literature, the notion of adaptive preferences indicates that individuals living in deprived conditions adjust their preferences and aspirations based on their experiences of poverty, resulting in lower life expectations (Elster, 1982). This phenomenon suggests that "the subjective assessment of one's well-being is out of line with the objective situation" (Robeyns, 2017, p. 137). Therefore, there might be a discrepancy between individuals' subjective well-being and their objective circumstances. As Halleröd (2006, p. 377) argues, "It is extremely irrational for a poor person to choose a rich reference group, especially if the condition of poverty is likely to persist". However, this debate surrounding adaptive preferences encompasses various tensions that require further exploration and analysis.

The capabilities approach challenges this phenomenon by focusing on opportunities rather than just material possessions and proposes an alternative interpretation of the relationship between life satisfaction and expectations (Teschl and Comim, 2005; Robeyns, 2017). According to Sen (1985), people's desires and expectations align with their actual circumstances, and they can find pleasure and happiness in simple things even when they lack particular necessities. Hence, closer to the subjective well-being literature reviewed in Chapter 2, a capabilities approach suggests that objective conditions do not solely determine well-being but also subjective ones, including attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the preferences of adults and children differ due to the limited opportunities that children have to articulate and express their preferences (Unterhalter, 2012). In the context of child poverty, the evidence regarding adaptive preferences varies, suggesting that social factors play a significant role when young people express their desires and identify their unmet needs (Main and Bradshaw, 2012; Main, 2013; Bradshaw, 2015). The literature demonstrates that deprivation profoundly impacts young people's future expectations, as socioeconomic circumstances and family experiences shape their aspirations (Skattebol et al., 2012). Moreover, Redmond et al. (2022) argue that social exclusion and deprivation are not solely a result of individual characteristics but are also influenced by broader socioeconomic structures that constrain young people's opportunities and aspirations.

Therefore, it is critical to move beyond the assumption that young people simply adapt their preferences based on their circumstances. Instead, young people envision their future concerning their aspirations and dreams, which may go beyond their current circumstances. The data of this study support this perspective, as no significant disparities were observed in the life projects among different socioeconomic groups since most of the participants wanted to pursue a traditional career and access university, suggesting

that SES alone is not a determinant of expectations. This finding aligns with the Chilean literature, which suggests that most secondary students, regardless of their SES, aspire to pursue a university degree (Sepúlveda and Valdebenito, 2014).

However, during the *conversion* process, disparities become evident, as education plays significant roles in shaping opportunities for students from low SES backgrounds to realise their aspirations. Despite being aware of their limitations, primarily related to financial constraints and the affordability of higher education, students' aspirations remain unchanged. Roberts and Atherton (2011) refer to this as *poverty of opportunity*, emphasising that low SES students have similar aspirations to pursue university studies as their high SES counterparts but face disparities in access and choice. Similarly, Sepúlveda (2006) shows that most Chilean students aspire to access higher education, even when this is challenging to achieve due to their low socioeconomic background, because this aspiration is driven by the belief that education serves as a gateway to better job opportunities.

Hence, the notion of adaptive expectations or aspirations emerges as a more suitable approach to examine the influence of SES on Chilean students' opportunities to develop their life projects, which, as further elaborated in Chapter 7, are heavily influenced by the community. According to Burchardt (2005, p. 58), "individuals' subjective evaluation of their situation is not determined by their current objective circumstances alone, but is also influenced by their expectations, aspirations, previous experiences and social reference groups". Therefore, interaction with others becomes crucial in understanding young people's life aspirations, highlighting the significance of building supportive communities as a critical capability to enhance students' opportunities to live the lives they have reason to value.

This perspective emphasises that the community plays a fundamental role in shaping and supporting students' career aspirations. Within this discussion, SES and SCC intersect. Aedo Henríquez (2010) study stresses the correlation between parental involvement in shaping their children's life projects and class. The author suggests that parents from higher social classes tend to be extensively engaged in their children's life projects, offering multifaceted support and nurturing expectations for personal growth, happiness, and social connections. Conversely, parents from lower social classes emphasise equipping their children with essential resources for personal development, focusing on securing material support and prioritising access to higher education as a means to enhance future opportunities.

Expectations, aspirations and opportunity

As argued elsewhere, most participants in this study expressed a desire to pursue higher education upon completing school. This aspiration aligns with the findings of Sepúlveda

and Valdebenito (2014), who argue that a significant proportion of Chilean students want to enter higher education and obtain a professional degree, regardless of their SES. However, the differences lie in access timing, with low SES students often postponing their entrance to higher education to save money for tuition. In contrast, high SES students tend to enter higher education immediately after completing secondary school.

In this context, it is uncommon for high SES students not to pursue university studies. Most participants from high SES backgrounds in this study envisioned themselves pursuing a university degree and did not perceive significant barriers to achieving this goal, unlike the financial constraints perceived by low SES students. As a result, private school students would typically need to engage in something exceptional, such as pursuing a career as a professional athlete or an artist, to forgo university. However, as further elaborated in Chapter 7, the decision to skip higher education is closely linked to family expectations for this group of students.

On the other hand, low SES students' aspirations are shaped by their financial constraints, both at present regarding being able to afford a degree and also regarding the monetary outcomes linked to the degree chosen. When discussing their professional aspirations, one student indicated, *"I don't know, having a good career with money (...) having all I need and that my family is well".* This finding is consistent with Carrasco et al. (2014), who observed that Chilean low-SES students facing significant financial constraints tend to choose career paths based on perceived better employment prospects or social status rather than following their interests or passions.

According to a recent study by Oliveira et al. (2020), a strong association exists between parents' occupations and their children's career expectations, influenced by factors such as gender, prestige, and personal interest. The authors argue that the socioeconomic circumstances in which young individuals are born, including the opportunities and advantages available, can significantly impact their SES throughout their lives. These findings support the notion that occupational inequalities are intergenerational and tend to persist over time. However, it is important to note that despite the perceived difficulty of achieving career and occupational aspirations among low-SES students, their aspirations do not differ significantly from those of students from more affluent backgrounds.

Chapter 5 presents evidence that students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds share similar aspirations, such as pursuing a career, owning a house, and starting a family. However, the distinction lies in that students from privileged backgrounds perceive these aspirations as natural outcomes, while students from low SES are acutely aware of their financial constraints and consider these aspirations as distant dreams. Despite their awareness of the challenges, students from low SES backgrounds recognise the importance of having aspirations as a source of motivation and purpose in life. As one

participant articulated, *"(dreaming) is what motivates us to keep going (...) otherwise, we wouldn't know what to do".* Araujo's (2018) study supports the notion that maintaining hopeful expectations for the future is essential for well-being and navigating challenges in daily life. In this context, educational aspiration emerges as a prominent theme in the discourse of low SES students, as they see it as a crucial factor for improving their quality of life.

Hence, the impact of SES on shaping students' career preferences and decision-making processes becomes apparent in this study. While the aspirations of students from public and private schools may be similar, their possibilities differ due to socioeconomic factors, particularly the ability to afford higher education tuition. Low-SES students' aspiration to earn a high income that improves their quality of life becomes central to their career path after completing secondary school. This aspiration influences their life project and limits their options, potentially hindering their ability to pursue alternative or non-traditional careers.

In contrast, high-SES students may experience more significant constraints in exercising their agency to determine their life projects due to the influence of their parents and influenced by their social position. Consequently, the interplay between the power of choice and career paths becomes complex due to the close relationship between these decisions and socioeconomic variables, impacting students differently based on their socioeconomic background. Chapter 7 builds upon this discussion, examining the role of SCC, communities, and particularly parents or caregivers in shaping young people's aspirations, constraining their agency and power of decision over their life projects.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the role of SES as a critical conversion factor influencing young people's capabilities of security and developing their valued life projects. It examined how socioeconomic inequalities and segregation influence various aspects of young people's lives, including their safety, education, employment prospects, and healthcare access. Specifically, the chapter analysed the impact of neighbourhood environments on safety, the significance of education type on career opportunities, and the role of healthcare in promoting physical and mental well-being.

Concerning young people's possibilities to be safe, the chapter revealed critical differences among groups. The analysis highlighted the impact of municipal service disparities, particularly affecting low SES students residing in urban areas. In these areas, exposure to crime is more prevalent, and public spaces pose a higher risk of physical harm compared to high SES neighbourhoods. Notably, despite the heightened risk, low SES

urban students perceive their surroundings as safe. Conversely, high SES individuals, even when facing lower risk levels, exhibit a higher sense of insecurity, citing concerns about potential robberies impacting their overall sense of safety.

Therefore, the analysis revealed that young people's sense of safety is more important for their well-being than the exposure to danger itself. Interestingly, among high SES students, a subjective sense of danger was prominent, with concerns about potential dog attacks or robberies negatively impacting their feeling of safety. Conversely, low SES students, especially those in urban areas, did not express feeling unsafe despite acknowledging unfavourable situations they encounter daily with their neighbours. This finding suggests that the sense of safety among young Chileans could be socially constructed, influenced more by SES than by objective crime rates.

Within this discussion, the crucial role of the community emerged as critical in enhancing low SES students' sense of safety and collective protection. In contrast, high SES, particularly those living in rural areas, highlighted isolation and the absence of community as significant factors negatively affecting their perception of safety. Nonetheless, the analysis showed that high SES also have some sense of community, albeit different from those observed in low socioeconomic communities, emphasising social connections among their same-age cohort neighbours. This finding is essential since social networking emerges as a pivotal element within the debate of young people's possibilities to pursue their life projects.

Following the examination of healthcare disparities in Chile, the chapter shed light on the inequalities and segregation within the system, as evidenced by the narratives of low SES students. They underscored the financial hardships faced by their families when illness strikes, citing the exorbitant cost of healthcare and the resultant loss of household income due to missed work opportunities. This discussion unveiled the concept of financial stress as a novel aspect in Chilean well-being literature, warranting further exploration in future studies. Interestingly, the analysis shows that both low and high-SES students experience financial stress, albeit with nuanced differences. While the former emphasised the need for money to fulfil basic needs and thrive, including healthcare and medications, the latter expressed pressure to maintain a particular lifestyle and social status through earning sufficient income.

In this context, a third type of segregation emerged from the study pertains to the disparities within the Chilean healthcare system. Within this discussion, the chapter highlighted uncertainty as another significant source of stress impacting young Chileans' well-being, stemming from the instability brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, disruptions in learning routines and social interactions with peers adversely affected their overall sense of well-being. This finding further emphasises the significant

impact of health inequalities on low SES students' well-being opportunities due to the limitations they face in accessing proper treatment.

Subsequently, this chapter argued that the Chilean educational system perpetuates segregation and inequalities, impeding young people from low SES from developing their valued life projects. Contributing to this constraint is that the public educational system prioritises academic performance over fostering peer-social relationships. The analysis showed that high-SES individuals utilise school to establish social connections, while low-SES individuals prioritise academic performance to access more resources and potential scholarships or university admission.

This finding underscores the powerful influence of elite education in Chile, highlighting that academic achievement and merit alone do not ensure economic success or social mobility—instead, social capital distinguishes young Chileans' employment opportunities. However, since high-SES students start building social capital early in their schools and neighbourhoods, low-SES students face greater challenges securing employment than their high-SES counterparts.

Consequently, young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds encounter numerous structural constraints that impede realising their valued life projects freely. In contrast, students from high socioeconomic backgrounds face fewer barriers in pursuing their career aspirations, as the labour market favours social networks over merit and academic achievement. Therefore, even if individuals from low-SES backgrounds succeed in accessing elite universities and performing well academically, they still face disadvantages due to their lack of social capital. This disparity is critical for young Chileans' well-being opportunities as it exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities and restricts upward mobility for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The chapter underscores the urgent need for institutions, particularly education and health systems, to acknowledge students' needs and provide appropriate support. Within this discussion, the following chapter delves into analysing how social constructions of childhood (SCC), as the second key conversion factor considered in this study, influence young Chileans' well-being opportunities in their capability to build communities and be socially recognised as individuals with valid perspectives.

Chapter 7
Discussion
The influence of social constructions of childhood in young Chileans' well-being

Introduction

This chapter explores how social constructions of childhood (SCC) influence young people's capabilities to build communities and be recognised by adults. As detailed in Chapter 2, Chile predominantly upholds a paternalistic SCC, portraying young people as incapable, immature and passive subjects that require constant control from adults. Within this framework, the chapter examines how SCC shapes young Chileans' possibilities to build supportive communities and have their voices recognised and heard by adults.

As detailed in Chapter 5, the capability of community emerges as crucial to young people's well-being. The chapter highlighted that young people's communities primarily consist of friends and family, encompassing their biological and extended families, with friends and pets emerging as vital members of their familial constructs. Notably, the significance of pets as integral members of young Chileans' communities emerged as a noteworthy finding of this thesis, contributing to the limited literature addressing the relationship between domestic animals and well-being in Chile. Furthermore, the data revealed that it is not only the possibility of being with others that proves fundamental for living well, but also the opportunity to choose those significant others. Therefore, this chapter delves deeper into analysing how SCC influences young people's power of choice in building communities.

Within this discussion, it is essential to emphasise young people's ability to establish meaningful relationships with others. In this context, one concept that proves particularly useful for these purposes is the notion of young people's intimate relationships, which encompasses personal relationships that are subjectively experienced and socially recognised as close (Jamieson, 2011). Furthermore, Giddens (1992) argues that changes in the nature of intimacy and relationships have led to more egalitarian and inclusive dynamics, empowering children to exercise agency in determining and regulating the terms and conditions of their connections. Therefore, acknowledging young people's agency in building relationships within their communities becomes critical to the analysis.

Moreover, Chapter 5 revealed that communities' role is fundamental in providing support. Nevertheless, that support must be based on young people's needs rather than

adult perceptions of well-being. In this context, the capability of recognition emerges as a central finding of this thesis, contributing a novel dimension to the literature on young Chileans' well-being. This capability is strictly connected to adults recognising young people's voices as valid and providing support based on their needs. Hence, this chapter argues that recognition is closely tied to acknowledging young people as agents and rights bearers, particularly regarding participation. It also involves acknowledging childhood as a structural component of society that interacts with other societal structures, moving beyond viewing childhood solely as a pre-adulthood period.

In this context, the analysis reveals that the capability of recognition involves acknowledging that socioeconomic inequalities directly impact their ability to actively participate and influence policy-making decisions affecting their quality of life. Hence, the chapter emphasises that the interconnected relationship between SCC and SES becomes critical to better understanding young Chileans' participation constraints in discussions about their well-being.

This chapter draws on Fraser's conceptualisation of recognition to examine the relationship between recognition and young people's well-being. Fraser argues that misrecognition is ultimately a social justice matter, defining it as "institutionalised patterns of cultural value in ways that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life", ultimately resulting in collectivities' subordination and impeding participatory parity (Fraser and Honneth, 2003, p. 29). The analysis is anchored in Fraser's (2009) three-dimensional model, which incorporates fair *redistribution* of resources, acknowledging the role of economic factors; *recognition*, addressing cultural and institutional barriers; and *representation*, pertaining to political participation, as essential prerequisites for achieving participatory parity. In this context, exploring the relationship between well-being opportunities and participation as a matter of social justice emerges as a crucial contribution to studying young people's quality of life in Chile.

The chapter is structured into three main sections. Section 7.1 explores the significance of communities in young people's well-being, highlighting their agency in selecting and constructing communities that meet their needs. The section examines how SCC shapes young Chileans' opportunities to choose their communities, particularly concerning friendships and relationships with pets. Furthermore, it examines the crucial role of SCC in determining young people's access to support tailored to their life experiences rather than support based solely on adults' perceptions of their needs.

Section 7.2 delves deeper into analysing the barriers young Chileans face to have their voices recognised by adults. For these purposes, Subsection 7.2.1 draws on Lundy's (2007) participation model to identify the barriers to young Chilean's possibilities to be heard. As noted by the author, fully promoting this right entails having a voice to be

shared and facilitated, a space to share it, an audience that actively listens, and the opportunity to influence or act upon those voices.

Subsequently, building on this analysis, Section 7.2.2. explores the institutional barriers behind the misrecognition of young peoples' voices concerning their well-being. In this context, the subsection highlights the misrecognition of young Chileans as agents and rights bearers as critical and the paternalistic and age-based SCC that fails to recognise Chilean childhood as a social structure interacting with other structures. Within this discussion, the subsection problematises the misrecognition of socioeconomic inequalities as a significant barrier constraining young Chileans' participation.

Finally, the last section concludes and summarises the key ideas addressed throughout the chapter.

7.1 Communities, support, and power of choice

As previously introduced, the ability of young people to build supportive communities is paramount to their overall well-being. In this context, young people's conceptualisation of community encompasses fostering close relationships and developing a sense of community with friends, family, and pets. As elaborated in Chapter 6, the significance of community in ensuring young people's sense of safety within their neighbourhoods became evident. Furthermore, social capital emerged as a crucial factor influencing the life aspirations and employment prospects of young Chileans. The subsequent section delves deeper into analysing the influence of SCC in choosing their communities and their possibilities to receive support based on their needs.

Emphasising the role of social relationships within the relational approach

As discussed earlier, this thesis adheres to a relational approach to agency, emphasising the pivotal role of interactions with others in shaping young people's decision-making power. Furthermore, as elucidated in Chapter 2, the existing body of literature on young people's well-being in Chile underscores the crucial influence of social relationships on their life satisfaction, particularly concerning friends and family (e.g., Alfaro et al., 2017; Oyarzún Gómez et al., 2019). Therefore, the findings of this thesis align with existing literature, highlighting that social interactions are critical for young Chileans.

In line with research within the sociology of personal life (e.g., Chambers and Gracia, 2021), this study acknowledges the profound significance of young people's capacity to cultivate meaningful relationships with others for their well-being. Therefore, the following discussion is theoretically framed under two main concepts: young people's ability to construct *intimate relationships* and its direct link to the sense of group

belonging, examined through the concept of a *sense of community*. As defined by Jamieson (2011), intimate relationships encompass connections that are both subjectively experienced and socially acknowledged as close to the individual. These relationships navigate a broad spectrum, encompassing the closest family members, friends, neighbours, and other individuals who hold significant roles in the lives of young people, extending beyond the peer group and including adults (Mason and Tipper, 2008; Davies, 2016).

Acknowledging young people's capacity to establish intimate relationships is crucial in this study as it theoretically positions them as social agents with the power to select and nurture meaningful relationships. In this context, Giddens (1992) emphasises the importance of recognising young people's ability to build these intimate relationships, as it leads to more equitable and inclusive dynamics, especially within the traditionally imbalanced relationship between adults and children. According to the author, this perspective aims to empower children to exercise agency in establishing and regulating the terms and conditions of these connections.

Therefore, the following analysis delves into examining the role of SCC in shaping young Chileans' ability to freely choose who can be part of their communities for their well-being. Additionally, it discusses the essential role of communities in providing support, particularly from adults. Young people assert that this support should be based on their own needs and perspectives rather than solely on an adult's understanding of what they require. Within this analysis, it is crucial to explore the extent to which SCC shape young people's agency, thus influencing their ability to choose their communities, and how their access to the necessary support is influenced and controlled by adults.

Power of choosing communities

Chapter 5 explored various conceptualisations of intimate relationships among different groups, revealing a consensus that friends are individuals whom one actively chooses. This underscores a clear distinction between friendships and familial relationships, which are typically not chosen but rather inherited. Consequently, selecting friends emerges as a significant decision-making opportunity for young people, representing one of the few relationships where they exercise agency. However, as the subsequent analysis indicates, parental influence significantly shapes their children's friendships. Thus delving into intra-household dynamics of decision-making power becomes essential for a comprehensive discussion.

As outlined in Chapter 3, a prevalent Chilean SCC tends to assign children a passive role within families, viewing them as individuals who require constant care and supervision rather than active participants in household affairs (Gómez Urrutia and Jiménez Figueroa,

2015). Therefore, this conceptualisation underscores children's treatment primarily as a familial responsibility. Acknowledging this construction is crucial for understanding the extent of young Chileans' agency limitations within their family structures, which ultimately hinder their ability to cultivate intimate relationships with friends and foster a sense of community.

Agency, family dynamics and friendships

The data underscores the significant influence of family dynamics on young people's agency to form friendships. Notably, a family's SES emerged as a key factor shaping this aspect, warranting closer examination. As discussed earlier, friendships hold substantial importance in the lives of high-SES students, often being regarded as extensions of their families. These students, particularly the ones living in urban areas, frequently spend time together in each other's homes, with their parents actively encouraging and supporting the development of friendships. This proactive approach to friendship-building within high-SES families resonates with the broader debate presented in Chapter 6, which highlights how these families facilitate the early development of social capital.

In contrast, individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds typically do not incorporate friends into their family dynamics to the same extent. While they recognise the significance of friends for leisure activities, the data indicates that fostering friendships is not given the same emphasis within their family structures. This observation resonates with the conclusions drawn in Chapter 6, which underscore how low-SES families often prioritise academic performance at school—a focus strongly influenced by their family's expectations regarding their children's life projects. This point is elaborated further later in this section.

In this context, parents' expectations regarding the role of school becomes an important factor in shaping young people's friendship opportunities. According to Stillerman (2016), parents from higher socioeconomic classes tend to select schools that can facilitate the development of their children's social capital, seeing the social relationships their children could form at school as valuable assets that can extend beyond their years of formal education. In contrast, according to that author, parents from lower socioeconomic classes tend to take a more practical approach to school selection, considering factors such as proximity to their homes, the relationship with the school principal, and the availability of scholarships. This contrast highlights the disparity of friendship conceptualisation between different socioeconomic groups, where the priority for social networking that higher socioeconomic classes attribute to schools shape high SES students' opportunities to build social capital.

Furthermore, among rural students, spatial constraints and transportation challenges emerged as significant factors affecting their ability to cultivate meaningful relationships

with friends. as indicated by the participants, due to longer distances and difficult access, families often prioritise essential trips, making it impractical for friends to visit each other regularly. As indicated by the participants, owing to longer distances and difficult access, families often prioritise essential trips, making it impractical for friends to visit each other regularly. As one student described:

> *My road is very narrow, like this (gestures with fingers). It's very easy to crash, like two cars can't pass each other. One has to move to a gate, for example, to let another one pass. It's very hard for people to reach here. My friends never come because of that, like their parents don't want to drive here.*

The existing literature acknowledges the communication challenges faced by rural residents and highlights the potential of digital tools and social media platforms to facilitate socialisation (e.g., Valentine and Holloway, 2001; Leander et al., 2010; Salemink et al., 2017). However, the participants in this study expressed a preference for physical interactions over digital ones. A student remarked on this inclination by stating: *"Here, for example, like the few people my age, they're glued to their phones all day and stuff, like when I go out, and there's nobody around, I don't know, it could be like something negative".*

In this context, family decisions regarding residential relocation and migration to rural areas emerged as crucial factors influencing young people's ability to maintain friendships, especially among high SES students. Many students described how moving residences affected their social circles, often resulting in losing contact with close friends. One participant shared, *"[my brother] used to have like 20 friends, so they were a whole gang, they were very close friends (...) But for him, that's why it was tough to start over."* While most attributed relocations to their parents' decisions driven by job opportunities or divorces, what affected them the most was not being included in the decision-making process. As further elaborated in Section 7.2., beneath this narrative lies young people's fundamental need for recognition and the importance of their voices being heard by adults in decisions that influence their ability to build intimate relationships with others.

Hence, family dynamics limit young people's agency in forming friendships, where adults' decisions and expectations regarding their children's needs influence their opportunities to establish social connections. However, as reported in Chapter 5, the findings of this thesis reveal that building communities involves not only human members but also pets as fundamental actors that contribute to their well-being. Therefore, it becomes crucial to analyse young people's agency constraints regarding their possibilities to care for pets and include them in their communities.

Beyond Human Interactions: Building Supportive Communities with Animals

As indicated in Chapter 5, participants identified domestic animals as family members, and most included their pets as essential for their quality of life. While participants are aware of the financial considerations involved in pet-caring responsibilities, this discussion transcends the monetary limitations associated with household income.[1] It explores how SCC shapes young people's agency in forming relationships with pets, interwoven with their roles, responsibilities and adults' expectations within their households.

Participants in this study assert that the decision to have a pet is primarily a family matter, heavily influenced by their parents' willingness to have one. One student said, *"I don't have a dog because my mum doesn't allow it"*. When delving deeper into the rationale behind not having pets, young people indicated that it stemmed from their parents' lack of confidence in their ability to care for a pet responsibly. Therefore, the discussion surrounding young people's opportunities to become pet caregivers is entwined with parental considerations regarding their children's caregiving abilities.

According to Kerry-Moran and Barker (2018), pet-care duties are unevenly distributed among households, where parents, particularly mothers, predominantly take on this responsibility. The authors suggest that the issue underlying this unequal distribution of care duties lies in a mismatch of expectations and perceptions regarding caregiving, as younger family members often associate care with play and giving attention to their pets. Similarly, Muldoon et al. (2015) assert that parental attitudes and unrealistic expectations regarding pet care can influence the extent to which young people are able to assume responsibilities and form deeper bonds with their pets beyond mere playtime interactions.

Hence, the decision against pet ownership can be attributed to a lack of information and education regarding responsible animal care, affecting adults and children. The data from this study suggests that young people's constraints in forming relationships with pets are more tied to SCC, which often portrays young individuals as immature and incapable of assuming responsibility rather than an inherent inability to care for animals properly. While literature concerning young people's pet care and its influence on well-being is non-existent in Chile, a study carried out in the UK demonstrated that providing young people with the necessary tools and knowledge can positively affect their ability to provide appropriate pet care (Baatz et al., 2020).

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[1] According to a recent survey, Chilean families spend, on average, 100,000 Chilean pesos (£101 approximately) per month on their pets (CADEM, 2022). It is important to note that the average salary in Chile is $681,000 (£688 approximately), with nearly 70% of the population earning less than that amount (see INE, 2021). Consequently, Chilean families allocate approximately 14% of their income to meet their pets' needs. This statistic underscores the significance of pets within Chilean families and highlights the challenges faced by those with low incomes in providing responsible care for their pets.

Given the benefits of pet ownership for young people's quality of life and its significant role in their communities, the data reveals an urgent need to develop multi-sectoral programs that address pet ownership as a structural phenomenon. Nevertheless, current policies and programmes concerning responsible pet care focus exclusively on adults (MINSAL, 2017b; Villafañe-Ferrer et al., 2020). Hence, it becomes critical to provide comprehensive education on responsible pet ownership to empower young people and overcome these agency constraints that limit their opportunities to build communities with animals. This approach should involve collaboration across the educational system, policy frameworks, and families.

While the decision to have a pet ultimately remains a family matter, providing young people with the necessary knowledge and tools to care for a pet responsibly can enhance and equalise their agency in influencing such decisions alongside their parents. In this context, the findings of this thesis serve as a starting point for this discussion in Chile, emphasising the importance of conducting child-derived research to develop inclusive programs, such as those related to responsible pet ownership, that address the needs and expectations of young people. Such an approach moves beyond relying solely on adults' perceptions of what young people can do and accomplish. Within this discussion, the following section delves deeper into the relevance of listening to young people's voices as a prerequisite for providing them with the support they need.

Support and well-being: analysing the role of adults

As previously discussed in this thesis, young people's communities play a crucial role in their overall well-being. While the significance of friends and pets has been highlighted, particularly in enhancing leisure activities, fostering a sense of belonging, and providing emotional contentment, the role of adults, especially parents, has also emerged as pivotal for young Chileans' well-being. In this context, as introduced in Chapter 6, the role of parents emerged as critical in shaping and supporting young people's career choices. Hence, it becomes critical to analyse further how adults, as key members of young people's supportive communities, shape their agency regarding their possibilities to pursue their valued life projects.

Parents' role in shaping career aspirations

As introduced in Chapter 6, young people's career aspirations are significantly shaped by parental expectations, indicating that these aspirations are not solely individual constructs. Nevertheless, when analysing the data, notable differences emerge in how families contribute to students' career aspirations, depending on the family's

socioeconomic background. Hence, in this discussion, young people's agency concerning career paths is simultaneously limited by SES and SCC, warranting closer examination.

As described in previous chapters, low SES students' life project aspirations are deeply rooted in their desire to support and improve their families' living conditions, where enhancing the quality of life for their families becomes a fundamental motivation for them. This sentiment was expressed by a low SES student when asked about their future aspirations: *"To have the career as a chef that I want and have my mum in the mansion like that, having lots of luxuries but also sharing them with my family".* This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Aldinucci et al. (2021), which reveals that the motivation to provide for the family is a crucial factor driving young people's aspirations to pursue higher education.[2]

In this same conversation, as illustrated in Figure 7-1, another student questioned: *"Is it wrong for my happiness to be based on the happiness of my parents?"* The consensus among the group was that it was not wrong, affirming the importance of family in their aspirations since, as one student emphasised, *"they have given you everything, your life*." While this group of students perceived fulfilling their parents' expectations as something positive, beneath this discourse lies a limitation on students' agency concerning their life projects, in which parents' expectations weigh more than their own in the final decision. This finding brings to the surface a constraint on young people's agency concerning their life projects in which young Chileans perceive themselves as indebted to their parents, compelled to fulfil their expectations as a form of reciprocity for the gift of life.

[2] International studies also support this finding. For instance, Walker and Mkwananzi (2015) conclude that aspirations are influenced by the community in which individuals are raised in South Africa.

Figure 7-1: Low SES representation of well-being[3]

Such a phenomenon was also present among high SES. When discussing the same topic, high SES students' aspirations revolved around fulfilling their families' expectations and, to some extent, preserving their families' SES. Within this discussion, a student shared a notable example that warrants closer examination concerning the role of family in supporting their career choices:

> *For example, my uncle is really good at football. When he was about to start studying, he wanted to be a footballer, but my grandfather didn't support him at all. So, in the end, he became a psychologist. He loved football, but they didn't support him, so he became a psychologist. Yeah, so because since they didn't support him, he couldn't fulfil his dream.*

Within this conversation, another student replied, *"so basically, his life was ruined because of his parents"*. This student's narrative highlights the influence of family well-being in shaping aspirations among high SES. It underscores the constraints on students' agency and freedom of choice imposed by the adults in their families, as certain aspirations, such as pursuing a football career, challenge their parents' aspirations of their children attaining traditional professional degrees.

Furthermore, it also highlights the relevance of their families in supporting their career choices as critical for their possibilities to pursue them, mainly owing to the financial support embedded in access to higher education. In this context, when discussing the snakes that constrain their possibilities to live well (see Chapter 4, Activity 4), a student

[3] This student identified as critical for their well-being "having a house, making my mum happy, and taking care of my cat and dog".

reflected on how it negatively affects them when adults *“take us down”* concerning their life projects and career aspirations.

Tensions between support and pressure in pursuing career aspirations

Within this discussion, adult support emerged as a critical dimension in young people’s possibilities to pursue their life projects, particularly among high SES. As one student expressed, *“We need a lot of support from our families and close people (...) they help you achieve what you want and help you to believe more in yourself”.* The literature supports this finding, where parental encouragement is critical in supporting young people’s life projects. Scholars have referred to this process as ‘familiarisation’, highlighting parents’ economic and emotional responsibility for their child’s educational trajectories (Ule et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, SES emerges as an essential factor shaping the degree of parental support. As Hart (2009) argues, individuals from social backgrounds where pursuing higher education is uncommon may face challenges such as potential isolation from their family and friends, which can impact their decision to enrol in and continue university education. The author further claims that parents’ lack of knowledge and understanding can determine young people’s ability to achieve their aspirations (Hart, 2012). Therefore, the pressure to conform to societal expectations or the lack of support of low SES students’ social circle can significantly influence their possibilities to pursue their career aspirations and thrive.

The data from this study shows that parental guidance often clashes with students’ opinions, particularly among high SES students. One student expressed frustration when parents do not support their career decisions, saying, *“I’m going to apply to a university to be a veterinarian, but they can say: no, that’s bad (...) they should tell us like: oh, that’s cool, and help you”.* Another student highlighted how parental support can easily shift into pressure, with adults expecting their children to fulfil their aspirations, noting, “*There are parents that try to live through their children. They are taking away their lives”.* In this context, young people emphasised the importance of balanced support, cautioning that excessive pressure can lead to heightened nervousness and an increased likelihood of mistakes when choosing their career paths.

The analysis revealed that pressure is a shared experience among high and low-SES students, particularly concerning financial stress (see Chapter 6). Among high SES students, pressure often stems from the need to meet family expectations to maintain or enhance their socioeconomic status. Conversely, low SES students feel pressured by the responsibility to financially support their families and improve their living conditions. Hence, family expectations are important factors shaping students’ agency and freedom

to choose their valued life projects, leading them to prioritise their parents' aspirations over their desires and career goals.

Consequently, SCC plays a pivotal role in shaping the opportunities for young people to access the necessary support. However, this support is often influenced by the prevailing belief that adults possess superior knowledge of their children's needs and wield authority over their life trajectories. This unequal power dynamic limits young people's freedom to pursue their desired careers and can hinder the alignment between the support they require and what they receive. Therefore, young people's possibilities to be recognised and have their voices heard by the adult world become critical to enhance their power of choice and provide them with a space to participate in the decisions that influence their well-being. The following section delves deeper into the relevance of recognition as a fundamental capability for young people's well-being.

7.2 Recognition, childhood, and well-being

Previous sections of this chapter have explored the interconnectedness of young peoples' critical communities, including friends, family, and pets, and their significant role in supporting their well-being. However, young people's possibilities to be recognised emerged as critical in shaping their power of choice, affecting their possibilities to build communities and their career aspirations. Therefore, the capability of recognition entails acknowledging young people as social agents with a valid voice and providing them with the space to participate in decisions that impact their quality of life.

As indicated in Chapter 5, the analysis concerning young people's well-being and recognition theories is not novel in the literature. According to Carrillo et al. (2021), those studies emphasise recognising agency and participation as critical dimensions of young people's well-being. In this context, existing studies are predominantly rooted in Honneth's (1995) approach to recognition, which emphasises socialisation processes, where recognition refers to the mutual acknowledgement and validation of individuals in social relationships, whether in terms of affection (love), legal rights (law), or social belonging (esteem).[4]

For instance, Thomas and Stoecklin (2018) discussed the contribution of combining Honneth's recognition theory and Sen's capability approach as compatible frameworks

[4] Honneth argues that social reproduction occurs through reciprocal recognition, where individuals develop a sense of self based on the normative perspectives of others with whom they interact. This understanding emphasises the importance of reciprocity in social interactions for the development of individuals' self-conceptions and identities. Hence, Honneth's theory emphasises on individual identity and self-realisation through reciprocal recognition in social interactions, highlighting the importance of being acknowledged and respected by others.

when analysing young people's rights limitations, arguing that while the capability approach centres on the actions individuals can freely (or not) undertake, recognition theory emphasises on self-identity and social freedom, both theories ultimately referring to freedom. The authors conclude that such a combined conceptualisation facilitates a connection between individuals' capabilities and identities, a relationship strongly shaped by their opportunities for recognition.

While these studies have initiated critical discussions about the role of recognition in young people's well-being, they overlook the significance of socioeconomic inequalities as critical factors shaping their quality of life, representing a critical gap in the literature. Hence, given the fundamental role of socioeconomic factors in young people's well-being opportunities examined in Chapter 6, this thesis draws on Fraser's conceptualisation of recognition to analyse the relationship between recognition and young people's well-being. As previously introduced, this author argues that misrecognition is a matter of social justice, resulting in a minority's exclusion from participation due to socioeconomic and cultural norms (Fraser and Honneth, 2003).[5]

In this context, Fraser (2000) contends that achieving social justice requires not only recognition but also redistribution, highlighting the essential role of both socioeconomic and cultural dimensions.[6] Thompson (2005) notes that while Honneth and Fraser's approaches to recognition share similarities, a fundamental distinction between the two theoretical frameworks lies in Fraser's dual perspective. As pointed out by the author, Honneth emphasises interpersonal recognition for individual identity and social integration, whereas Fraser's focus extends to cultural recognition and socioeconomic redistribution within broader structural contexts for social justice. Hence, Fraser emphasises the intersectionality of recognition struggles with other axes of oppression, such as class, race, gender, and sexuality.

For this thesis, Fraser's approach is particularly suitable as it enables an exploration of the interconnection of SCC and SES as interdependent factors that constrain young Chileans' agency and participation concerning the decisions that affect their well-being. Hence, aligned with this thesis's conceptualisation of childhood as a minority group subordinated to adult-centred constructs and measures of well-being (see Chapters 2 and

[5] The author focuses on collective disputes, particularly concerning gender and race, arguing that economic and cultural factors are interconnected and mutually influence each other. In this context, Fraser's model of recognition does not necessarily aim for achieving a good life, but to achieve social justice. To Fraser, well-being and recognition are conceptualised as a moral pursuit, in which "everyone has an equal right to pursue social esteem under fair conditions of equal opportunity" (Fraser and Honneth, 2003, p.22).

[6] Robeyns (2003) critises Fraser's work, emphasising that not all theories of social justice are incorrect, as Fraser argues. Nevertheless, Robeyns aknowledges the key contribution of the notion of collectivities and power relationships inherent to Fraser's model to conceptualise social justice from a capability standpint.

3), the following analysis seeks to investigate how SCC limits young Chileans' capability of recognition by examining the extent to which young people's possibilities to be heard are directly related to a misrecognition of the adult world regarding their agency and participation rights. Furthermore, it explores how the effects of structural socioeconomic inequalities further constrain young individuals from low SES to participate in discussions concerning their well-being.

7.2.1 Listening to young Chileans' voices

As described in Chapter 5, participants perceive that adults often disregard their opinions due to their age and perceived immaturity, leading to a sense of unfairness. As one student expressed, *"It's frustrating. Sometimes adults make decisions based on their own experiences, but that can be very different from our own lives. That's why our opinion should be taken into account"*. Hence, this section delves deeper into examining the barriers linked to SCC that young people face in Chile concerning their possibilities to be heard by adults, which, according to the data, encompasses being heard at a micro level, particularly within their families and school settings. Furthermore, this section argues that the misrecognition of young people's voices at a micro level is shaped by a misrecognition at a macro level, including a discussion concerning young people's participation at an institutional-political level.

As introduced in Chapter 3, this thesis discussion about young people's participation is framed within a rights-based approach. As argued in that chapter, young people's agency and participation can be observed through their social interactions and are strongly connected to their decision-making power (Sinclair, 2004; Oswell, 2013). Within this discussion, the UNCRC was discussed as the prevailing framework when conceptualising young people's participation through the enactment of Article 12, commonly known as children's right to be heard. The following analysis expands upon that theoretical framework and draws on Lundy's (2007) participation model, including voice, space, audience, and influence, to identify the barriers to young Chileans' possibilities of being heard by adults.

Although Lundy's model has influenced the conceptualisation of participation in research and policy debates, the literature is scarce when exploring its application and operationalisation (Kennan et al., 2019). In Chile, Child Advocacy (2021) draws on this model when sharing young Chileans' suggestions within the Constitutional debate,[7] providing concrete guidelines for participation in that specific context, which is a positive

[7] As discussed in further detail in Section 7.2.2, between 2019 and 2023, Chile engaged in debates on the possible creation of a new constitution. Within this context, Child Advocacy arranged a range of activities for young Chileans to voice their ideas and aspirations about their rights in the upcoming new constitution.

starting point. However, the project is confined to the Constitutional process alone. Therefore, this analysis contributes to the discussion concerning participation in Chile and identifies barriers limiting young people's engagement in broader discussions concerning their well-being.

Voice

As discussed previously in this thesis, the UNCRC explicitly underscores children's and young people's right to form and express an opinion through Article 12 (UNICEF, 1989). In this context, the data from this study shows that young people are keenly aware of the value of their voices concerning their quality of life. As illustrated by a student, "*It is very important that we are heard. Our opinions matter since these are our lives"*. Nevertheless, they often perceive that adults disregard their voices because they are young, highlighting that *"sometimes adults speak for us"*. This observation underscores a common tension surrounding Article 12 of the UNCRC concerning the value attributed to young people's voices, particularly regarding their capacity and weight.

Archard (2015) argues that while Article 12 of the UNCRC grants children and young people the right to express their opinions on matters affecting their lives, this right is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, it applies only to children and young people who can form their own opinions, excluding younger children who may lack the ability to communicate effectively owing to their age. Secondly, there is a condition regarding the weight of these opinions, with the views of young people carrying more significance as they approach adulthood. According to Archard, defining children's competence is heavily influenced by the paternalistic constructions of childhood.[8] Consequently, translating this right into practice remains challenging as it is subject to adult interpretation and SCC.

Within this discussion, the role of adults is crucial in facilitating and guiding the expression of children's opinions (Lundy, 2007). Participants acknowledge the relevance of adults' experiences as critical orientations for their lives. However, they claim that adults' opinions usually weigh more than theirs. As one student indicated:

> *While the opinion of adults is important because they have more experience, ours should also be taken into account and valued. Sometimes we feel invalidated and undervalued simply because we are younger.*

The data clearly illustrates the subordination of young Chilean voices to those of adults. This subordination can be attributed to the prevailing SCC that portrays young people as

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[8] Archard also emphasises the tensions between a child's best interest (Article 3) and the right to be heard (Article 12), claiming that special caution is required when assessing adults' competence over children's concerning their needs.

too immature to comprehend their needs. Additionally, as discussed in the following sections, the limitations young people face in having their voices recognised stem from the ambiguous conceptualisation of young people as rights holders in Chile and adults' challenges in effectively listening to and promoting their voices.

Space

According to Lundy (2007), creating an adequate and safe space for children and young people to express their opinions without fear of repercussions and where all voices are respected is critical. Nevertheless, a group of students identified *repression* as a critical snake limiting their possibilities of living well (see Chapter 4 Activity 4). When delving deeper into this, they said, *"Like being repressed, like when you are not allowed to express freely".* Within this discussion, students mentioned instances where sharing their opinions, particularly at school and within their families, could get them into trouble, *"Sometimes it is better not say anything. I learned this the hard way and will get into trouble".* Therefore, due to fear of negative repercussions, students silence their thoughts and exclude themselves from the discussions.

In this context, young people reflected upon the lack of space they encountered to express their opinions at different moments of the discussion. As highlighted in earlier sections, parental voices often take precedence over those of young people in decisions regarding various aspects of their lives, including schooling, relocations, pet ownership, and career choices. However, this lack of participation spaces extends beyond the family sphere to encompass the school environment, particularly concerning school policies such as dress codes and mental health support. This finding aligns with Albornoz et al. (2015), who similarly observed that Chilean students perceive a deficit in being heard by teachers and a scarcity of genuine participation opportunities within the school community.

Across the discussions, students expressed a desire to have a say in such matters, but they perceive their opinions are not considered in the school. For instance, one student highlighted the school's dress code gender inequity, saying:

> *I would love to change my school's dress code. It is so unfair. Girls can use long hair, but not boys. Why is that? Also, we are compelled to wear skirts, and it's terrible (...) the problem is that we don't have the space to talk about these things, and it is unfair because our opinion matters.*

Similarly, students expressed their frustration over the lack of space to raise personal concerns with teachers, stating:

> *Sometimes it's a bit annoying when they don't ask how you're doing, they never ask your opinion or how you are doing. I mean, imagine someone bothering you*

all day, and the teachers don't do anything and don't listen to you. This feels bad. You know what I mean?

Consequently, the data indicates that young people in Chile lack adequate space to share their opinions within their communities. This is problematic since providing spaces for children to express themselves and participate in decision-making is not only a means of visibility and social positioning but also crucial for their integration into society (Miranda et al., 2017). As further elaborated in Section 7.2.2, that spatial barrier is strongly influenced by SCC, which fails to institutionally recognise young Chileans as agents with valuable opinions to inform policy-making processes and fails to recognise childhood as a structure of the social fabric.

Audience

Lundy (2007) argues that the right to be heard entails children and young people expressing their opinions through formal communication channels and being listened to by individuals who influence decision-making. It is important to note that having the right audience means that young people's voices are not just heard by anyone but by experts in the relevant field. The author emphasises that young people's right to be heard by a specialised audience does not necessarily guarantee immediate changes but implies proper channels and the formal expression of their petitions.

In this context, having a specialised audience is critical for young people's opportunities to be heard. Furthermore, it is essential to consider whether these audiences are prepared to engage with and listen to younger citizens, particularly within the institutional-political context. As Lansdown (2009) suggests, it is vital to ensure that young people are not being used to fulfil adult agendas, as this would only perpetuate existing power imbalances between adults and children rather than challenging them. As discussed in Chapter 4, participation involves more than just raising young people's voices on a specific issue; it is crucial to consider how the participation takes place and with whom to make it meaningful.

For instance, within the school setting, as Valdés et al. (2013) point out, participation involves the active involvement of different actors, including government authorities, stakeholders, civil society, school administrators, families and students, to improve educational quality. Nevertheless, a specialised audience working with young people should understand and employ specific tools and techniques to generate inclusion and promote spontaneous communication (e.g., Kesby, 2000; James, 2005; Veale, 2005; Crivello et al., 2009; Clark, 2011). Proper training and proficiency in these techniques are essential for successfully incorporating young people into these debates.

The participants in this study perceive a dearth of receptive audiences to listen to their opinions and needs. Hence, this study emerged as a valuable platform for them to discuss matters influencing their quality of life. One student succinctly summarised their experience, *"I liked it, but it was too short. Normally, we don't have spaces to talk and be heard"*. Another student added, *"Yes, I feel like no one understands us or takes the time to try to understand, so this is one of the few places where we can talk, and everyone listens"*. This reflection underscores the fact that young people lack an appropriate audience that actively listens to them, with their opportunities to be heard often arising sporadically rather than from systematic and structural spaces specifically designed for these purposes.

Consequently, as elaborated further in the subsequent subsection on influence, there is an urgent need to create more participation spaces where the audience comprises experts adept at effectively communicating and engaging in discussions with children and young people. This finding addresses a gap in the Chilean literature by highlighting the deficiency of trained audiences when involving young Chileans in broader political discussions, ultimately constraining their agency in actively influencing decisions that affect them.

Influence

Influence is the last component of effective participation. According to Lundy (2007), this concept goes beyond simply listening and implies that the expressed views should be acted upon appropriately. Therefore, influence means an action or response from the audience after the opinion has been given. However, it does not imply that every petition should be granted, but it does require a real opportunity for young people to influence matters that affect them. In this context, to provide feedback on how children's opinions are being used and to inform them about the outcomes or decisions made based on their voices. Therefore, procedures play a significant role in this process.

In the Chilean context, the literature exploring young people's possibilities to influence decisions that affect them is scarce. Díaz-Bórquez et al. (2018) argue that while there have been efforts to incorporate young people's voices in public debates, the practical impact of these initiatives remains unclear. The participants in this study explicitly mention their desire to participate in school debates, such as those regarding dress codes. However, when exploring student's interest in participating in broader discussions such as those linked to the policy-making sphere, one replied with uncertainty and scepticism, *"Can we? I don't know (...) I mean, really? It would be great, but no one listens to us"*.

This quote reveals that participants perceive a lack of opportunities to engage in discussions that concern them. Furthermore, it suggests that young people may not fully

comprehend their participation rights. Despite some studies suggesting that young Chileans clearly understand their rights (e.g., CNDI, 2017)[9], this thesis reveals that young people lack clarity about what these rights entail in practical terms, particularly regarding participation and its influence, ultimately affecting their possibilities to actively engage in debates about their well-being. This finding underscores the importance of examining the role of citizenship education in Chile as a potential barrier influencing young Chileans' possibilities to participate in and influence broader political discussion. Section 7.2.2 delves deeper into this discussion.

This section revealed that students have limited opportunities to share their voices, primarily due to adult constraints. Additionally, they perceive a lack of understanding from their audiences, particularly adult teachers, indicating a communication gap between adults and children in Chile. Moreover, the analysis suggests that Chilean students may not fully grasp the meaning of their right to participation. The following section contributes to the discussion by examining the role of SCC, particularly concerning the role of institutions, in shaping young Chilean's possibilities to actively engage in the decisions that affect their well-being.

7.2.2 Structural barriers to recognising young Chileans' agency and participation

The following analysis builds upon the discussion elaborated earlier in this chapter. In this context, this section argues that the barrier to recognising young people's agency and participation rights can be attributed, in part, to the distant relationship between childhood, youth, and institutions. Shaped by SCC's paternalistic posture toward children, this separation delineates an adult-institutional world distinct from that of children and young people. Within this paradigm, adults design policies and programs based on assumptions about young people's needs, often without establishing systematic and meaningful participatory processes. This phenomenon is exacerbated by outdated conceptualisations of childhood and an unclear understanding of children's and young people's rights in Chile. Additionally, due to the paternalistic SCC, young Chileans are not actively encouraged to participate in discussions concerning their well-being, nor are they provided with adequate tools to comprehend and exercise their participation rights.

[9] The findings of this study, called "Yo Opino, es mi Derecho", reveal that most Chilean students have a clear understanding of their rights.

Misrecognition of young Chileans as right-holders and citizens

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Política Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia (National Policy of Childhood and Youth) (PNNA) (CNDI, 2015b) serves as the guiding framework for developing plans and policies concerning the rights of children and young people in Chile. Notably, the development of this policy embraced a participatory approach, incorporating diverse perspectives and stakeholders, including governmental authorities, civil society, and children and adolescents. The participatory formulation process, in which Chilean children and adolescents were involved, stemmed from the project "Yo opino, es mi Derecho" (I have an opinion, it is my right) (CNDI, 2015a). This initiative aimed to discuss and promote the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2016) and involved students from educational institutions nationwide.

While the involvement of young people in this discussion represents progress in recognising them as agents with a voice, the project's design lacks a theoretical conceptualisation of participation, and the methodology detailing how participants were engaged remains unclear. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether young people had systematic involvement in the project. Consequently, whether this process constituted genuine participation or merely tokenistic involvement is unclear. As discussed later, the theoretical and methodological gaps in the policy's conceptualisation of young people's participation present a significant barrier to the genuine involvement of Chilean children and youth in policy-making debates, revealing an institutional misrecognition of young Chileans as social agents as rights holders that warrants further examination.

Within this discussion, Chapter 1 outlined Chile's conceptualisation of young people's well-being as associated with the full realisation of their rights. In this context, the Plan de Acción Nacional de Niñez y Adolescencia 2015-2025 (National Action Plan for Childhood and Adolescence 2015-2025) (MDSF, 2015), which derives from the PNNA, was described as the government's strategy to establish an Integral System for the Protection of Rights (SPID), focusing on four fundamental rights axes: survival, development, protection, and participation (MDSF, 2015). Notably, despite the presence of participation in these institutional rhetoric, the latest Analysis of the Situation of Children and Adolescents in Chile reveals that minimal funding is allocated to the participation axis (UNICEF, 2022).

Furthermore, while young Chileans' rights are fundamental within this central policy, and Chile has ratified the UNCRC, the country's Constitution does not recognise individuals under 18 as rights holders or citizens. As Sola-Morales and Campos Garrido (2019) concluded, the State's discourse on young people's rights in Chile is not aligned in practice with the principles of the UNCRC. As highlighted by the authors, while the State often uses children and young people to demonstrate its effectiveness in addressing "their" needs, they are excluded from decision-making processes regarding policies and

programs that directly affect them, overlooking the central UNCRC articles concerning young people's participation role in expressing their needs and advocating for their best interests. Similarly, Munchmeyer et al. (2020) argue that despite progress in childhood-related policies, Chile's prevailing approach remains one of protection and control, with the State assuming a subsidiary role instead of being a guarantor of children's rights.

Beneath the ambiguous conceptualisations of young people's rights lies the misrecognition of young Chileans as citizens in its Constitution. In this context, Cabrera et al. (2005) assert that citizenship comprises two primary dimensions. Firstly, it entails a legal status, acknowledging individuals as rights holders with corresponding responsibilities. Secondly, it involves effective participation, which encompasses a sense of community belonging and the ability to engage in matters that affect them. Therefore, tensions and ambiguities within institutional conceptualisations of young people's participation rights limit their possibilities to be citizens and participate in political debates (James, 2011). Similarly, Lister (2007) emphasises that for young people to fully participate as citizens in their communities, they must first be acknowledged and recognised as members of those communities.

Hence, the misrecognition of young Chileans as citizen rights holders directly impedes their opportunities for participation and diminishes their sense of community. As further elucidated in the subsequent section, this institutional misrecognition constitutes a significant barrier constraining young Chileans' well-being opportunities, as adult-centric institutional assumptions regarding their competencies delimit their participation. In this context, the continued emphasis on a paternalistic model inherent to Chile's SCC perpetuates the image of children and young people as becoming citizens who are not yet competent beings who can identify their needs and transmit them in participatory processes in policy-making debates.

As a result, while some level of participation can be identified, particularly concerning young people's role in the design of the PNNA, such space is delimitated by adults and remains closer to tokenism than genuine and systematic involvement.[10] The following section argues that the misrecognition of young people as agents and rights holders at a constitutional level can be explained by the conceptual-theoretical gap that influences the relationship between the institutions linked to childhood and youth well-being and young Chileans' life experiences. Inherent to this discussion lies an institutional debt that warrants further examination, primarily tied to the educational system's responsibility to provide students with the essential tools to comprehend and assert their rights.

[10] As outlined in Chapter 4, following Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992; 1997), tokenistic participation refers to symbolic forms of involvement where children's voices are acknowledged in specific discussions but are not genuinely considered in decision-making processes.

Institutional misrecognition of childhood

As reported in Chapter 2, this study acknowledges the critical role of institutions linked to young people's well-being in providing the guiding frameworks to design policies and programmes to enhance their quality of life. Nevertheless, this chapter argues that those institutional constructions are disconnected from young people's life experiences. Therefore, the misrecognition of childhood as a social structure and the lack of clarity concerning what their participation entails ultimately limits their possibilities to engage and influence policy-making discussions concerning their well-being. In this context, it becomes critical to analyse further how those constructions operate as a barrier to young Chileans' agency and participation rights.

The literature reveals that the level of trust individuals have in their institutions serves as a crucial indicator of their perception of the political system's functionality (Baeza Correa, 2011). However, to date, there is a dearth of studies examining the perspectives of Chileans under 18 years old regarding the institutions representing their interests. This lack of institutional engagement with young people's opinions may contribute to the scepticism of young participants when questioned about their prospects of being heard by authorities shaping programs related to their well-being (see Section 7.2.1). In this context, this study's data reveals that adults have rarely sought participants' opinions throughout their life experiences.

Notably, the institutional discourse around young people's participation is paradoxical. While there is encouragement for their engagement, the actual space for participation is limited (Flores-González and García-González, 2014; Soler-i-Martí, 2015). This paradox can be attributed to the prevalent conceptualisation of childhood engrained in the PNNA and the Constitution, portraying young people as passive, not yet competent individuals who must be controlled and protected by adults. Hence, the dominant paternalistic SCC is a critical barrier shaping young people's possibilities to participate and influence the decisions that affect them.

As discussed in Chapter 4, providing a clear conceptualisation of participation is critical when adopting such an approach when working with young people. In this context, the deficient theoretical and methodological framework around young people's participation in the design of the PNNA is critical. While the process included young Chileans nationwide (see CNDI, 2015a), which is a positive standing point, the participatory methodology adopted is not entirely clear, and it lies in a consultive approach based on pre-defined questions and reflections prompted by adults.[11] Furthermore, as argued

[11] The project invited students to reflect upon three thematic cores pre-established as critical dimensions of young people's rights: participation; respect and inclusion; progressive autonomy. According to the report, the process employed two distinct methodologies

previously, young Chileans' participation at this institutional level of the discussion has not been systematic, and the impact of their opinions on the policy is unclear.

Therefore, the unclear conceptualisation of participation also acts as a barrier constraining young Chileans' opportunities to have their voices recognised at an institutional level. Coupled with the paternalistic SCC, this conceptual gap is significant because it shapes adults' perceptions of what to expect regarding young people's opinions, limiting their chances of being taken seriously and regarded as experts in their own lives. Moreover, it impacts children and young people by depriving them of the information and tools necessary to effectively convey their opinions through tailored methodologies to an audience trained to interpret their voices without the paternalistic bias ingrained at the institutional level in Chile.

Within this discussion, the role of education emerges as fundamental to addressing such a gap. Valenzuela and Toro (2017) suggest that integrating political commitment within the educational curriculum, mainly through citizenship education, becomes critical to enhancing student participation. These authors argue that comprehending the interplay between government branches, political parties, and representation is critical for students' civic engagement and political commitment.[12] However, recent research indicates that teachers are not adequately trained in citizenship topics during their education (Soto Lillo and Peña Hurtado, 2020). Therefore, young people's barriers to participation are systemic, requiring multi-sectoral approaches.

Aligned with James (2011), the analysis reveals that current institutional conceptualisations of childhood and participation constrain young people's possibilities to be citizens and participate in the political sphere. These adult-based constructions limit Chilean students' agency to influence the decisions that affect them since they are not yet considered agents with lived experiences and unique perspectives on their lives. Hence, as suggested by Liebel (2022), it is critical to advocate for constitutional reforms that explicitly recognise and protect the rights of young people, including their right to

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tailored to the participants' age groups. For students aged 4 to 9, the activity centred around interactive storytelling, prompting children to answer questions about the narrative. Conversely, for students aged 10 to 14, the approach involved a participatory qualitative methodology designed towards eliciting opinions and fostering the development of proposals through group discussions. The document does not offer further details about the participatory methodology followed.

[12] Citizenship education has been a topic of discussion in Chilean policy debates. The "Plan de formación ciudadana para los establecimientos educacionales reconocidos por el estado" (Citizenship education plan for state-recognised educational institutions) (MINEDUC, 2016a) serves as the legal framework for promoting citizenship values among young students based on the framework of children and young people's rights. This plan aims to integrate citizenship education as a core component of the curriculum, primarily through the subjects of History and Geography. It also requires schools to establish participatory spaces to foster citizenship and collective well-being (see MINEDUC, 2016b).

participate and have their voices heard in decision-making processes. Without such reform, students' agency and ability to engage in political discourse remain limited to symbolic gestures, lacking the substantial impact necessary to improve their quality of life and enable them to participate fully in society.

In this context, this analysis concludes that the recognition of young people's agency and as rights holders and the conceptualisation of childhood as a social structure that extends beyond an age period would allow a more equitable distribution of voice and influence, irrespective of age, and foster a more inclusive and participatory culture where young people's opinions are consistently guided and respected. This shift in Chilean SCC is pivotal, as it has the potential to foster a transformation in societal attitudes and cultural norms, leading to a greater appreciation and respect for the perspectives of young people. As such, it would create formal environments where young people can safely share their voices and contribute to the debate concerning well-being.

Misrecognition of the interconnected role of SES and SCC as barriers to participation

As previously discussed, the paternalistic and age-based construction of childhood is a critical barrier to participation since it neglects young people's voices to influence the decisions that affect them. Furthermore, as reported in Chapter 2, such conceptualisation of childhood fails to recognise it as a social structure, which limits the possibility of exploring its interactions with other structures, such as the ones linked to socioeconomic inequalities. In this context, the following analysis contributes to this gap in the literature, arguing that socioeconomic factors affect not only young people's opportunities for well-being linked to spatial, educational, and health inequalities (as reported in Chapter 6) but also influence young Chileans' possibilities to participate and engage in policy-making discussions concerning their quality of life.

Before delving deeper into this analysis, it is crucial to provide context regarding the political situation when the focus group discussions occurred. Chile was experiencing what has been widely referred to in the literature and media as the "social outbreak" or "revolt", characterised by a large number of protests starting in October 2019.[13] This was a particularly complex period, marked by contrasting attitudes toward the political sphere and high uncertainty levels in Chile, culminating in a historic referendum where most Chilean citizens voted to draft a new constitution.[14]

[13] See, for instance, Garcés (2019) for an in-depth discussion about this process.

[14] It is important to mention that two constitution drafts were proposed and rejected by Chileans. Consequently, the existing constitution remained unchanged.

Within this context, only high SES students explicitly addressed this phenomenon during their discussions, characterising it as "*dangerous and strange*." Furthermore, these students perceived the potential change of president as negatively impacting their quality of life. In contrast, when prompted directly, the remaining groups neither mentioned nor engaged with this issue. Consequently, an initial interpretation suggests that individuals from low SES backgrounds exhibit a certain degree of indifference toward current political discussions. Conversely, high SES individuals, particularly those residing in urban areas, demonstrated active engagement in national political affairs, expressing opposition to the ongoing social movement and the prospect of a change in leadership at that time.

Those findings align with the literature. For instance, Castillo et al. (2014) demonstrated that students from low SES attending public schools are less likely to be formally involved in the political system when reaching adulthood.[15] These authors argue that factors linked to young people's education, particularly the deficient preparation in civic education in the public system and their parents' level of education, are relevant predictors behind that conclusion. Hence, socioeconomic inequalities affect young people's participation through disparities in civic skills within the educational system, limiting their participation. Nevertheless, those studies adopt an adult-based approach to predict young Chileans' future participation, conceptualising childhood as becoming adults, neglecting their status as beings in the present.

In this context, when analysing the role of SCC and SES as intertwined conversion factors in shaping young Chilean's participation, the data suggests that low SES students' silence does not mean indifference or lack of engagement necessarily, but an effect of the structural inequalities which reduce the space to share their voices. In this context, as illustrated in Figure 7-2, low SES students may not engage in political discussion because they do not feel represented by the current political and social system, which fails to recognise their voices. When this student was invited to share their representation of well-being, they replied, "*I don't know [what well-being is], but I do know that some people hold the money and power, and the rest are prisoners of them"*.

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[15] Castillo et al. (2014) argue that there are two major theoretical approaches when examining the relationship between SES and political participation: the *relative power model,* which argues that groups from high SES engage in political participation and mobilise their agendas in relation to their own interests, whereas the low SES population has less space to mobilise, and the *theory of rational action,* which argues that individuals engage in politics as a motivation to change and improve their current living standards. See Solt (2008) for a comprehensive discussion of the relative power model when exploring economic inequality and political participation. Read Whiteley (2005) for a discussion about the theory of rational action within the political engagement discussion.

Figure 7-2: Low SES student representation of well-being[16]

Within that student's discourse and representation of well-being, an overarching sense of injustice emerges, stemming from the perceived limitation of their well-being by dominant elites. The representation of faceless individuals in subordinate positions, chained and seemingly invisible, juxtaposed with a minority holding money and displaying a smile, symbolises the unequal power dynamics perceived by low SES students that ultimately constrain their possibilities to live following their aspirations. This powerful image encapsulates their frustration with entrenched inequalities in opportunities for well-being and their profound distrust of Chile's political and economic system, where a small minority wields disproportionate power over the majority. Consequently, participating in discussions concerning their well-being within existing spaces seems futile, as they perceive their voices as marginalised and unheard.

In this context, the connection between well-being and social justice becomes evident. Such a finding resonates with Garretón and Cumsille (2002), who claim that inequality is perceived by young individuals from low SES as a form of social injustice and an abuse of power, leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness. Similarly, Baeza Correa (2011) further argues that the lack of trust among Chilean youth can be attributed to the unequal distribution of wealth in the country. Hence, indifference or silence in low SES students is not exclusively linked to a lack of skills and knowledge inherent to the educational system deficiencies, but to a nuanced interpretation of their surroundings

[16] "No sé" means I don't know in Spanish.

which makes them full aware of the unfair distribution of power that constrains their voices to being heard.

Consequently, by integrating Fraser's model of recognition with the discussion on conversion factors, the analysis exposes the foundational institutional misrecognition of SCC and SES as interconnected influences shaping the participation spaces of young Chileans in matters of well-being. In this context, the misrecognition of childhood as a social structure that directly interacts with structural inequalities and of young people as active agents and rights holders constrain the equitable redistribution of power and opportunities for well-being, particularly affecting those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. As a result, the limited understanding of the pivotal role of young people's life experiences and voices in informing policy-making debates constrains their possibilities to be accurately represented and participate in the decisions that affect their well-being.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the influence of SCC in shaping young Chileans' capabilities to build communities and be recognised by adults. In this context, it discussed that communities are fundamental for young people's well-being, providing support and contributing to their sense of belonging. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of young people's agency in choosing their communities, particularly concerning friendships and developing relationships with domestic animals. Within this discussion, the analysis underscores that adults heavily influence the decision-making power of young Chileans regarding their community-building opportunities.

In this context, the analysis revealed pets' critical role in student communities and their impact on students' well-being. Hence, this study represents a starting point in the matter, highlighting the value of conducting child-centred research to construct policies and programs, such as regarding pet ownership, that cater to the needs and expectations of young people relying solely on the perspectives of adults when it comes to understanding community development and social interactions.

Subsequently, the chapter delved into the pivotal role of communities, emphasising the support they offer to young individuals. Within this context, the analysis uncovered the critical influence of parents on young people's well-being, particularly in shaping their life goals and career paths. The discussion revealed that SES and SCC simultaneously impact students' agency in pursuing their life aspirations, irrespective of whether they come from high or low SES backgrounds. However, their influences manifest differently. In low SES settings, these factors shape students' agency as they strive to enhance their family's quality of life. Conversely, among high SES students, these factors operate

within the framework of maintaining a certain social status, often perpetuated through pursuing traditional career paths.

Within this discussion, the analysis revealed that support is closely linked to pressure, particularly concerning career paths. Hence, the capability of recognition emerged as fundamental for young people's well-being since their possibility of being recognised by adults is critical to receiving the support they need based on their life experiences and not on adults' perceptions of what well-being entails. Thus, the chapter delved deeper into analysing young Chileans' possibilities to be heard and participate in the decisions that affect them concerning their quality of life.

In this context, the analysis shows that students face different constraints regarding the lack of space to share their voices with adequate audiences, constraining their possibilities to influence their well-being. The findings of this subsection indicate that participants perceive a lack of recognition for their voices in their communities among adults, primarily due to the absence of spaces where they can fully engage and express their viewpoints. This subsection further argues that mere symbolic participation is insufficient and emphasises the need to systematically incorporate youth participation as a political practice linked to citizenship.

Within this discussion, the analysis identified three critical barriers that constrain young people's possibilities to be recognised and participate in the decisions that affect them. First, the misrecognition of young Chileans as rights bearers arose as a fundamental limitation. In this context, the discussion revealed that the ambiguous conceptualisation of children's rights in Chile, which are not recognised at a constitutional level, is critical in limiting their possibilities to exercise their rights of participation. Hence, such constitutional reform is critical to moving forward in this debate.

The analysis concludes that the misrecognition of childhood as a social structure beyond age constrains the equitable distribution of voice and young people's inclusion in society. Therefore, challenging paternalistic and age-based SCC is fundamental to transforming societal attitudes toward youth and creating safe spaces for their contributions to discussions of well-being. Aligned with this point, the analysis reveals that overlooking childhood as a social structure fails to recognise socioeconomic inequalities as critical factors further constraining young Chileans' participation. Hence, the chapter argues that discussions about young people's well-being and their political participation must be sensitive to the structural inequalities existing in the country.

Therefore, the chapter concludes that in discussing the limitations young Chileans face in their well-being participation spaces, it is crucial to recognise both SCC and SES as interconnected factors shaping these spaces. The chapter argues that recognition entails not only acknowledging young Chileans' agency and their right to participate but also understanding childhood as a social construct. Such recognition offers a theoretical

framework to examine how socioeconomic inequalities, particularly segregation, impact young people's well-being opportunities and their ability to influence decision-making processes.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

Introduction

As elaborated in Chapter 1, the study of young people's well-being has become a focal point for researchers and policymakers globally over the last decades. This thesis analysed the case of Chile, arguing that conceptualisations and measurements employed often stem from adult-based models from the Global North. This situation directly affects political outcomes concerning well-being, limiting young people's opportunities to enhance their well-being and be agents of change in their lives. Hence, the study argues that current conceptualisations of children and well-being emerge as a critical theoretical limitation that influences the comprehension of young Chileans' quality of life. Subsequently, the main objective of this research is to conceptualise well-being by including young people's perspectives as fundamental inputs of the knowledge production around this concept in Chile.

The study introduces a capabilities-participatory research framework to conceptualise young people's well-being in Chile. Such an approach recognises young Chileans' agency and voices as critical inputs to co-construct knowledge about their quality of life. Furthermore, this analytical framework allows for exploring the influence of socioeconomic inequality and social constructions of childhood as key structural forces shaping young Chileans' opportunities for well-being. The study concludes that young Chileans define well-being as the freedom to live securely, develop a valued life project, build supported communities, and be recognised by others, particularly adults.

Moreover, the discussion reveals that SES and SCC influence young Chileans' well-being opportunities. Within this discussion, SES emerged as a relevant factor shaping young Chileans' security and life project capability, where the role of students' neighbourhoods and schools became critical to this debate. Moreover, the discussion showed that SCC influences young people's decision-making power regarding their quality of life due to agency and participation constraints. In this context, the unclear conceptualisations of childhood and well-being emerged as significant barriers to young people's possibilities of being recognised as agents of change concerning their quality of life within institutional and policy rhetoric.

This conclusion begins by summarising this research's key findings and contributions. Subsequently, it discusses its limitations and considerations for further research.

8.1 Key findings and contributions

8.1.1 Theoretical Contribution

A capabilities-participatory theoretical framework to conceptualise well-being

Adopting a combined theoretical lens to conceptualise well-being was critical to achieve its purposes. In this context, embracing a childhood studies approach provided the theoretical framework for recognising children and young people as active agents within the social world (James and Prout, 1997; Prout, 2005). Such acknowledgement was critical to theoretically situate young people's voices as inputs for knowledge construction regarding their well-being. Furthermore, adopting such an approach allowed to recognise childhood structural form (Qvortrup, 2009; Wyness, 2019), which resulted in being able to discuss the relationship between young people's well-being and socioeconomic inequality and social constructions of childhood.

This theoretical standpoint contributes to recognising young people's voices regarding their well-being at the centre of the knowledge production process, addressing the theoretical gap identified in Chapter 2. Furthermore, such a theoretical framework has the potential to influence broader spaces than academia by promoting inclusive policymaking in Chile and improving the accuracy in identifying and providing the required aid to the young population in the country. Hence, the theoretical discussion of young people's agency and the problematisation of the constructions of childhood emerges as a critical contribution to the debate around young Chileans' rights and citizenship status in the country.

Additionally, combining a childhood studies theoretical standpoint with a capabilities perspective was critical to understand well-being as a process of transformation of resources into valued outcomes (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2005a). Within this discussion, while income appeared as a relevant resource for young Chileans' well-being, it was because of its instrumental value rather than an end on itself that proved to be important to young people as money allows them to access higher education, cover their basic needs, and afford other material resources needed to live well according to their aspirations.

Such an approach was critical to understanding further the relationship between socioeconomic inequality and well-being opportunities. In this context, adopting a capabilities framework was essential to guide a discussion based on conversion processes rather than exclusively on the expected outcomes. This analytical framework allowed to explore the relationship between inputs, such as those related to education and neighbourhood, and young people's well-being opportunities, going beyond the prevalent monetary income constructs. Additionally, such an approach allowed for a discussion about the influence of social constructions of childhood on young Chileans' well-being opportunities. In this context, the analysis identified significant barriers on agency and

spaces of participation that contribute to the political and practical discussions concerning young Chileans' possibilities to participate in the decisions that affect them.

8.1.2 Methodological contribution

A qualitative-participatory approach that recognises young people's agency

Methodologically, this study made a significant contribution by prioritising the voices of young Chileans as crucial inputs in constructing knowledge about their well-being. As previously stated, young Chileans' voices have been secondary in studying their well-being, mainly as survey respondents of adult-based and Eurocentric instruments. Therefore, this study addressed this methodological gap by embracing a relational understanding of the knowledge production process, as it challenges the imbalanced power dynamics in knowledge production between adults and children (Gallagher, 2008).

In this context, adopting a participatory research paradigm contributed to the discussion about young Chileans' well-being by offering a methodological framework to recognise and empower young people's agency within the research process, positioning them as experts in their own lives (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Clark et al., 2005b). As previously argued, participatory research is theoretically rooted in rights-based approaches, where young people's participation rights are emphasised by situating their voices at the forefront of discussions on their quality of life (Bessell, 2017b). Therefore, by promoting young people's agency and participation, this study challenged the existing subordinated status of children's knowledge concerning their well-being compared to that of adults, thereby addressing the power imbalances identified in the literature within the research on young Chileans' well-being.

This study addressed this methodological gap by conducting a qualitative inquiry exploring young Chileans' perceptions of well-being, which, according to Chapter 2, are scarce in Chile. By centring on qualitative methodologies and the perspectives of young people, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of well-being that reflects the lived experiences and cultural contexts of Chilean youth, thus enriching the discourse on well-being in Chilean society. In this context, the study created a participatory space that empowered young people to contribute to knowledge construction actively and developed a methodology adaptable to diverse contexts.

By involving young people not only in the initial stages but also in data analysis and result dissemination, this research expanded their role beyond mere participation consultation. Creative methods played a pivotal role in the study's success, enabling a deeper level of understanding and reflection on well-being than traditional approaches might allow. Particularly noteworthy was the use of Lego as a tool for data construction and analysis, which proved highly effective in engaging young co-researchers and facilitating

meaningful dialogue about their well-being experiences. Therefore, this research contributed with a framework that can serve as a starting point for future research by recognising young people's voices as fundamental in knowledge production concerning their quality of life.

8.1.3 Empirical contribution

A definition of well-being based on the co-construction of a list of valued capabilities

Empirically, this research contributes to a definition of well-being based on a capability perspective. This research's findings challenge the dominant construction of childhood, which portrays young people as becoming individuals who do not know what they need to live well. Furthermore, it provides a definition constructed in Chile, overcoming the epistemological subordination of young people's well-being that dominates the discussion in the country.

In this context, this thesis posits that young people define well-being as their freedom to live securely, develop a valued life project, build supportive communities, and be recognised. By emphasising the multidimensional aspects of well-being, including security, life projects, community support, and recognition, this definition provides a comprehensive foundation for constructing potential measurement tools that capture young people's diverse life experiences.

This thesis described the capability of *security* as young people's possibility to live in tranquillity and calmness, encompassing safety, good health and comfort. The capability of *life project* can be understood as a young Chilean's freedom to pursue a chosen life project, where the roles of education and employment aspirations became critical dimensions. The capability of *community* refers to young people's freedom to build supportive relationships, particularly with friends, family and pets. Lastly, the capability of *recognition* entails young people's possibility to be recognised and valued by others. Within this discussion, young people's possibility of being heard by adults is fundamental to receiving support based on their needs and not an adult's perception of what support should be.

Furthermore, the research reveals novel findings concerning the influence of structural inequalities on young people's opportunities to live well according to their expectations and aspirations. In this context, the study contributes to the discussion of well-being by highlighting that socioeconomic status and social constructions of childhood affect young Chileans' well-being opportunities. Within this discussion, the study discusses the direct influence of SES on young Chileans' security and life project capabilities, where the influence of their neighbourhoods and schools becomes critical in shaping these capabilities. Moreover, this research's findings show how SCC constrain young Chileans'

capabilities of community and recognition, problematising the limitations around agency and participation that young people face due to their status as children in Chilean society. This contribution is critical as it allows young people to be recognised as a minority group in Chilean society, providing empirical evidence to illustrate how structural forces influence their opportunities to live well.

Lastly, the research reveals that the relationship between recognition, well-being opportunities and participation is closely tied to social justice. This is a critical finding of this thesis, which expands current understandings of young people's quality of life in Chile by highlighting the structural constraints surrounding their well-being opportunities. Hence, this thesis concludes by stating that the study of Chilean childhood and youth's quality of life should be inherently attached to a discussion of justice, in which young people's subordinate position regarding adults in society limits the comprehension of their well-being and constraints their decision-making power of living well according to their aspirations.

8.2 Limitations

While the chosen framework provides valuable insights into understanding well-being from the perspective of young people and in identifying some of the decision-making power constraints they face, it may not comprehensively capture all dimensions or perspectives that alternative frameworks could offer. For instance, incorporating an intersectionality framework (e.g., Collins and Bilge, 2020) could have provided different data concerning the role of broader structural factors, such as those regarding gender, race, and sexuality, in shaping young people's experiences of well-being.

Regarding methodological decisions, one fundamental limitation inherent in qualitative studies is the difficulty of comparing findings across different international contexts (Fattore et al., 2019). Consequently, within the confines of this methodological approach, generalisations cannot be made. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that the definition of well-being provided in this study may not universally apply to all aspects of well-being among Chileans. This limitation underscores the need for caution in extrapolating the findings to broader populations and contexts beyond the scope of this study.

Another significant limitation arises from the practical constraints of implementing a participatory design within the confines of developing a doctoral thesis. In this context, the project's objectives and design were primarily determined by me, potentially hindering the genuine participation of young people. While the study successfully engaged young Chileans in constructing, analysing, and disseminating data about their well-being, certain methodological decisions, such as determining the central theme to be

studied, the research design, and the selection of tools, were made without the direct involvement of young participants. This limitation stems from the project's specific time frame and limited resources, which constrained the extent to which young people could contribute to methodological decisions.

From a sampling strategy perspective, not including students from subsidised private schools and other regions of the country is a critical limitation that should be addressed in further studies to address the centralisation of research concerning the study of young Chileans' well-being. Additionally, while this study employed place of living, type of school, and age as objective indicators of well-being to guide the sampling strategy, it did not consider other sociodemographic factors, such as gender and race, which could significantly influence young people's perceptions of well-being.

Within this discussion, a clear limitation concerning the recruitment process arose. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the inability to directly communicate with all students within the age groups during recruitment emerged as a significant limitation of this study. Initially, the project was presented by the schools' gatekeepers, who then provided a list of potential participants for the first session of each focus group. Consequently, since these gatekeepers were not directly involved in the project's topic and methodology, it is possible that some students did not fully understand the study's purpose and were limited in their ability to participate. Therefore, this critical aspect of recruitment should be considered in future projects to ensure that the invitation to participate in the research process is as open as possible to all individuals within the study's sampling criteria.

Moreover, a limitation worth considering in future research relates to the individualistic nature of the data collected. While this project embraces a participatory standpoint where knowledge and meaning are created collaboratively, most of the visual data were individual constructions, and discussions among participants were limited. In this context, I had to constantly moderate the discussion and promote reflection. This limitation can be attributed predominantly to the research design, the resources available, and the time allocated for conducting the fieldwork.

For instance, in its original design (see Appendix F, Section C.3), Activity 5 had a second part that involved, in addition to the individual construction of a Lego model representing the three most valuable dimensions of well-being. In this second part, the co-researchers were to be asked to choose one of those aspects each, to build a shared model that integrated each other's viewpoints. The aim of this activity was to start from an individual perception of the dimensions of a valued life and then connect each participant's perceptions with one another. The objective was to construct a collective narrative about the aspects of the participants' lives that are important to them as a group, integrating all their perspectives into a common voice.

Nevertheless, due to time limitations and the reduced space available to conduct the sessions, the first part of the activity (representing the three dimensions of well-being) lasted longer than expected. Hence, to work properly, this second part would have needed to be a session on its own, which was problematic as another session was not included in the original plan. Furthermore, for the groups where the sessions were carried out on different days, it would have been problematic to disassemble their Lego constructions and then rebuild them in the following session.

Therefore, given the challenges experienced with the first group, I decided to eliminate that part of the activity, as it was the most challenging in terms of time, use of available resources, and space to build a collective model. This design issue should be considered in future studies to strengthen the collective analysis of the data and the discussion among the co-researchers. In this context, this problem could be addressed in the future by conducting pilot sessions to test and plan accordingly.

However, it is important to mention that not all the data produced was entirely individualistic. In this context, Activity 4, which involved the creation of a 'snakes and ladders' board game in small groups, emerged as an interesting example. While I moderated the discussion by asking each group about their snakes and ladders, some degree of discussion among the young co-researchers was evident, as they needed to decide collectively which snakes and ladders were the most representative of their well-being. Hence, in this particular activity, a group voice can be found.[1] This example demonstrates that group-based tasks enhance the discussion among participants. Consequently, balancing the ratio of individual and group activities, where young co-researchers need to produce something collaboratively, should be considered in future studies.

A final limitation of this study is the separate analysis conducted on the roles of SES concerning security and life projects and SCC in community and recognition. Although both conversion factors are interrelated, the decision to analyse them separately was based on the data, which revealed a closer association between security and life project and socioeconomic factors, particularly segregation. Additionally, agency and participation were found to be more closely associated with community and recognition. However, this analytical approach may overlook the complex interactions between these factors. This limitation suggests a need for further research to explore the intricate interplay between these variables in greater depth.

[1] Refer to Appendix G for an extract of this activity's discussion that illustrates the conversation generated by the students.

8.3 Future research

This study examined the perceptions of well-being among young Chileans from two regions of the country. However, future research should encompass additional regions within Chile for a more comprehensive understanding. Moreover, extending the scope to include young people from diverse regions across other Latin American countries is crucial, contributing to efforts to decolonise prevailing conceptualisations of well-being worldwide. By incorporating diverse voices and perspectives, research endeavours can foster more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to understanding and promoting well-being among youth.

Furthermore, as previously introduced, adopting an intersectionality lens becomes crucial for advancing research on young people's well-being. Integrating such an approach within the capabilities-participatory framework could provide novel insights into the complex interplay of various factors and multi-layered perspectives that influence young people's opportunities to live the lives they have reason to value. By considering intersecting social identities and structural factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and others, future research can provide a more nuanced understanding of young individuals' diverse experiences and challenges. This nuanced perspective is essential for developing more inclusive and effective strategies to promote well-being and address disparities among youth populations.

Lastly, this thesis argues that well-being could be addressed as a social justice problem in future studies. In this context, embracing well-being as a social justice discussion through Fraser's recognition approach (Fraser, 2000; Fraser and Honneth, 2003) offers valuable insights into understanding and addressing inequalities. Such a conceptual framework highlights the importance of recognising and rectifying cultural misrecognition and socioeconomic disparities as essential components of social justice. Hence, by considering well-being through this lens, researchers can delve into the multifaceted dimensions of young people's experiences, acknowledging the significance of material conditions and the social and cultural contexts that shape individuals' sense of worth and belonging. This approach fosters a more holistic understanding of well-being, emphasising the importance of equitable recognition and participation, ultimately contributing to efforts to promote social justice and foster inclusive societies.

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Appendix A
Participant Information Sheet

(English version)

What is the life we value?

A vision of well-being from a variety of young people's viewpoints: a Chilean perspective

This research is about well-being. I would like to explore with you the things that you and other young people of your age need to feel good and happy. I want to learn about the aspects of your daily lives that are important for you, and how things could change to make improvements.

Invitation

Please read this information carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, let me know, and I will answer all of them before you decide to participate. It is very important that you understand what the project is about and what I will ask you to do. You can talk about this with your family before you decide. This information sheet will tell you what the research is about, what I will ask from you and what I will do with the information that to share with me. I will also share my contact details so you can get in touch with me to ask any questions about your participation in the project.

After you read this, take some time to think whether you would like to participate or not. Remember that it is very important that you understand this information before you decide.

Thank you very much for thinking about taking part in this research!

Who is the researcher, and why am I doing this?

My name is Pablo Cheyre, and I am a PhD student from the University of Leeds in the UK. Before coming to study in the UK, I worked for six years as children and young people therapist and school counsellor. During this experience, I realised that some things could be done differently to improve Chilean young people's lives. But to do these changes, I understood that it is really important to include young people's opinions in the conversations, as you are the ones who know the most about your lives. Unfortunately, your voice is not always heard. Through this project, I want to help you to share your opinions and give adults some ideas of what could be done differently, so all Chilean young people can have the same opportunities to have the life they want.

If you have any questions, you can contact me through:

⇒ My mobile number: +44(0)7916363678*

*Before I start the fieldwork, I will get a Chilean number

⇒ My email address: ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk

What is the purpose of the project?

I know that our experience in life could be very different for all of us. But I also believe that we share some of the things that we all value, so the idea is to explore with you what are the issues that are important for young people to feel good and happy, and what makes it difficult. Politicians and other adult-experts say a lot about what is best for you, but less often you have the space to give your opinions about this. I would also like to talk about some ideas that you might have to improve your lives and what could be done differently. By the end of the project, I will help you to create a list with the most important aspects of young people's lives, including propositions of what are the things that policymakers and experts could do differently. This way, I will help you, so your voice can be heard!

What will happen if I take part?

Please, take time to think if you want to participate or not. You do not need to decide right now. I will wait at least a day to know whether you wish to participate or not. If you do want to take part, I will ask you to join one Saturday morning at your Youth Club. In this meeting, there will be nine people in total: eight students from different classes between 5th and 8th of your club, and me. During the session, we will do different activities and reflections about what are the most important issues of young people's lives. You don't need to refer to your own life if you don't want to, you can talk more in general, imagining the lives of other Chilean students of your similar same age. By the end of the project, we will write together, as a group, a list with the most important issues that affect young people in their lives, and some suggestions of what could be done differently by adult experts. It is important for you to know, that your name will not be included in the report, because I will present your thoughts and opinions as a group, and in the case of using direct quotes, I will not use your name.

If you decide to take part, but throughout the meeting, you don't feel comfortable and don't want to participate anymore, this is fine. Also, if during the group's discussions, you don't want to share your thoughts with the group, this is fine as well. The idea is that you feel comfortable and happy by participating in this research!

Do I have to take part?

Of course not! Taking part in this project it is voluntary. You don't need to participate if you don't want to. If you don't want to participate, I will not be angry nor disappointed. For me, it is important to know that you are happy to take part, that you understand what the project is about and what I am inviting you to do. If you want to participate, I will ask your parents or tutors to check they agree that you want to come to the meetings.

Participating will be good or bad for me?

Participating from this project will take some of your time, as the meeting will last one morning (around three hours). In addition, I will invite you to join one last online meeting in which we will discuss with the group the main issues that we would like to include in the report.

Throughout the project, we will discuss the issues that affect young people during their daily lives. Some of these issues are positive, but some of them could make you feel uncomfortable. If you don't want to give your opinion in specific discussions, this is absolutely fine. Also, I am at your disposition if there is anything that you would like to discuss or any concerns you might have. Don´t worry that I will refer you to the proper help in the case that you need it.

Once the research finishes, I will present our work in my thesis. This will give us the chance to show your opinions regarding the aspects that affect your lives and to show that it is important to include those opinions in adult conversations. This may help to improve young people's lives in the long term.

How will you use my answers?

The group meetings will be audio recorded, and I will do a transcription of the discussions after they happen. I also will take some pictures about our work (not from you). Once the project ends, all the group members and I will write a final report with the main topics that we discussed along with the different sessions. This report will be a summary of what we talked which will represent the voice of the group rather than focusing on the members individually. All this information, the audio recordings, the pictures, the transcriptions and the final report, will be stored in a password protected and encrypted laptop, and these will be destroyed three years after the project finishes.

What will happen to my personal information?

By the end of the project, I will summarise our discussions and opinions to create a "group voice". The purpose of this research is to construct together and share your ideas with

others as a group. It is very important that you understand that I will not link your name with any comment and response that you make. Your personal information will be confidential, and I will not tell anyone that you are taking part in this project. Also, your personal details will be anonymous; this means that no one outside the group can identify you or your comments. I will encourage all the participants to keep your participation confidential and to avoid sharing our discussions with people outside the groups.

It is very important that we agree that the only time that I will break confidentiality is if you or any other participant is in danger of suffering any harm. In this case, I will talk with the school authorities so we can help you and protect you.

If you have any questions about this, let me know I will explain why I need to do this.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Once the project finishes and all of us agree with the themes that will be included in the final report, I will give to all of the participants a copy of it. Additionally, these findings will be published in my research thesis and in other impact-related publications. Remember that all of your personal information will be kept confidential and anonymous.

What happens next?

I will get in touch with you to check if you want to participate. If you say yes, I will ask you to sign a form, and I get your contact details to invite you to our first meeting.

Thank you for your time and for reading this document!

Contact for further information

Responsible researcher: Pablo Cheyre Triat

My mobile number: +44(0)7916363678*

*Before I start the fieldwork, I will get a Chilean number

My email address: ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk

Leeds University Supervisor: Dr Gill Main

Telephone: +44(0)113 343 0237

Email address: g.main@leeds.ac.uk

(Versión en español)

¿Cuál es la vida que valoramos?

Una visión del bienestar desde la mirada distintos grupos de jóvenes: una perspectiva Chilena

Esta investigación trata sobre el bienestar. El objetivo es explorar en conjunto las cosas que tú y otros/as jóvenes de tu edad necesitan para sentirse bien y felices. Quiero aprender sobre los aspectos de su vida diaria que son importantes para ti y cómo ciertas cosas podrían cambiar para mejor.

Invitación

Por favor, lee esta información detenidamente. Si tienes alguna pregunta o inquietud, házmelo saber y las responderé todas antes de que decidas participar. Es muy importante que comprenda de qué se trata el proyecto y qué es lo que te pediré que hagas. Puedes hablar de esto con tu familia antes de tomar una decisión. Esta hoja de información te dirá de qué se trata la investigación, qué te pediré y qué haré con la información compartirás conmigo. También te daré mis datos de contacto para que puedas ponerte en contacto conmigo y hacerme cualquier pregunta sobre tu participación en el proyecto.

Después de leer esto, tómate un tiempo para pensar si te gustaría participar o no. Recuerdas que es muy importante que comprendas bien esta información antes de tomar una decisión.

¡Muchas gracias por pensar en participar en este proyecto!

¿Quién es el investigador y por qué estoy haciendo esto?

Mi nombre es Pablo Cheyre, soy chileno, y actualmente estoy estudiando un Doctorado en la Universidad de Leeds, en Inglaterra. Antes de ir a estudiar, trabajé por seis años como terapeuta infanto-juvenil y cómo psicólogo escolar. De esta experiencia, me di cuenta de había cosas que se podían hacer distinto para mejorar la calidad de vida de los/las jóvenes chilenos/as. Pero para hacer estos cambios, entendí de que es muy importante incluir las opiniones de los/las jóvenes en las conversaciones, ya que ustedes son los/las que mas saben de sus vidas. Desafortunadamente, sus voces no siempre son escuchadas. Por eso es que a través de este proyecto la idea es ayudarlos para que compartan sus opiniones y les den los adultos algunas ideas de cosas que se podrían hacer distinto. Y así todos los/las jóvenes chilenos/as puedan tener las mismas oportunidades y conseguir la vida que quieren tener.

Si tienes cualquier pregunta, puedes contactarme a través de:

Mí número de teléfono: +44(0)7916363678

Mi correo electrónico: ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk

¿Cuál es el objetivo de este proyecto?

Sé que nuestra experiencia en la vida puede ser muy diferente para todos nosotros. Pero también creo que compartimos algunas de las cosas que todos valoramos, por lo que la idea es explorar con ustedes cuáles son los temas que son importantes para que los/las jóvenes se sientan bien y felices, y qué lo dificulta. Los políticos y otros expertos dicen mucho sobre lo que es mejor para ti, y no siempre tienes el espacio para dar tus opiniones al respecto. También me gustaría hablar sobre algunas ideas que podrían tener para mejorar sus vidas y qué se podría hacer de manera diferente. Al final del proyecto, te ayudaré a crear una lista con los aspectos más importantes de la vida de los jóvenes, incluyendo propuestas de cuáles son las cosas que los adultos expertos y las instituciones podrían hacer diferente. ¡De esta manera te ayudaré para que se escuche tu voz!

¿Qué pasará si acepto participar?

Por favor, tómate un tiempo para pensar si quieres participar o no. No es necesario que decidas ahora mismo. Esperaré al menos un día para saber si quieres participar o no. Si deseas participar, te pediré que me acompañes a una mañana de conversación y juego. En esta reunión, habrá nueve personas en total: ocho estudiantes de entre 5to y 8vo básico de tu colegio y yo. Durante el encuentro, realizaremos diferentes actividades y reflexiones sobre cuáles son los temas más importantes de la vida de los jóvenes. No es necesario que te refieras a tu propia vida si no quieres, puedes hablar más en general, imaginando la vida de otros estudiantes chilenos de tu misma edad. Al final de la actividad, escribiremos juntos, como grupo, una lista con los temas más importantes que afectan a los/las jóvenes en sus vidas, y algunas sugerencias de lo que los adultos expertos podrían hacer de manera diferente. Es muy importante que sepas que tu nombre no será incluido en el reporte final, porque presentaré tus pensamientos y opiniones como grupo y no me referiré a comentarios personales.

Si decides participar, pero a lo largo de las reuniones no te sientes cómodo y no quieres venir más, está bien. Además, si durante las discusiones del grupo no deseas compartir tus pensamientos con el grupo, también está bien. ¡La idea es que te sientas cómodo/a y feliz al participar en esta investigación!

¿Es obligación participar?

¡Por supuesto que no! Participar en este proyecto es voluntario, no es necesario participar si no lo deseas. Si no quieres participar, no me enojaré ni decepcionaré. Para mí es importante saber que estás feliz de participar, que entiendes de qué se trata el proyecto y qué te invito a hacer. Si quieres participar, les pediré a tus padres o tutores que comprueben si están de acuerdo en que quieres asistir a las reuniones.

¿Será bueno o malo para mi participar?

Participar tomará algo de tu tiempo, ya que la jornada en total durará una mañana. Además, te invitaré a una última reunión online (una hora como máximo), en la que discutiremos con el grupo los principales temas que nos gustaría incluir en el informe final.

A lo largo del proyecto, discutiremos los problemas que afectan a los jóvenes durante su vida diaria. Algunos de estos problemas son positivos, pero algunos de ellos pueden hacer que te sientas incómodo/a. Si no quieres dar tu opinión en alguna de las discusiones, no hay ningún problema. Recuerda que estoy a su disposición si hay algo que te gustaría discutir o cualquier inquietud que puedas tener. Y no te preocupes, que en case de que lo necesites, te voy a derivar con la ayuda adecuada para ti.

Una vez finalizada la investigación, presentaré nuestro trabajo en mi tesis. Esto nos dará la oportunidad de mostrar sus opiniones sobre los aspectos que afectan sus vidas y demostrar que es importante incluir esas opiniones en las conversaciones de adultos. Esto puede ayudar a mejorar la vida de los/as jóvenes chilenos/as a largo plazo.

¿Cómo serán usadas mis respuestas?

Las reuniones grupo las grabarán en audio y haré una transcripción de las discusiones después de que ocurran. Una vez finalizado el proyecto, todos los miembros del grupo y yo redactaremos un informe final con los principales temas que discutimos en las diferentes sesiones. Este informe será un resumen de lo que hablamos y no se hará referencia a comentarios personales, y representará la voz del grupo en lugar de centrarse en los miembros individualmente. Toda esta información, las grabaciones de audio, las transcripciones y el informe final, serán almacenados en un computador protegido con contraseña y encriptado, y todos los datos serán destruidos tres años después de finalizado el proyecto.

¿Qué pasará con mi información personal?

Al final del proyecto, resumiré nuestras discusiones y opiniones para crear una “voz de grupo”. El propósito de esta investigación es construir juntos y compartir sus ideas como grupo con otros. Es muy importante que comprendas que no vincularé su nombre con ningún comentario y respuesta que hagas. Tu información personal será confidencial y no le diré a nadie que estás participando en este proyecto. Además, tus datos personales serán anónimos; esto significa que nadie fuera del grupo puede identificarte a ti ni a sus comentarios. Animaré a todos los participantes a mantener la confidencialidad de su participación y evitar compartir nuestras discusiones con personas fuera de los grupos.

Es muy importante que estemos de acuerdo en que la única vez que romperé la confidencialidad es si tu o cualquier otro participante está en peligro de sufrir algún daño. En este caso, hablaré con las autoridades escolares para que podamos ayudarte y protegerte.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre esto, avíseme y te explicaré por qué necesito hacer esto.

¿Qué pasará con los resultados de este proyecto de investigación?

Una vez finalizado el proyecto y todos estemos de acuerdo con los temas que se incluirán en el informe final, entregaré una copia de este a todos los participantes. Además, estos hallazgos se publicarán en mi tesis de investigación y en otras publicaciones de impacto. Recuerda que toda tu información personal se mantendrá confidencial y anónima.

¿Qué pasará luego?

Me pondré en contacto contigo para comprobar si quieres participar. Si me dices que sí, te pediré que firmes un formulario y tus datos de contacto para invitarte a nuestra primera reunión.

¡Gracias por tu tiempo y por leer este documento!

Investigador responsable: Pablo Cheyre Triat

Mi número de teléfono: +44(0)7916363678*

*Antes de comenzar el trabajo de campo, conseguiré un número Chileno

Mi email: ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk

Supervisora de la Universidad de Leeds: Dr Gill Main

Teléfono: +44(0)113 343 0237

E-mail: g.main@leeds.ac.uk

Appendix B

Informed Consent

(English Version) **Consent to take part in "A vision of well-being and the role of inequality from a young people´s viewpoint: a Chilean perspective"**	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated December 2020 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. If I do not wish to continue, I can ask for part, or all of my information to be deleted. Contact details of researcher: Pablo Cheyre. +44(0)7916363678 ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk	
I understand that only the lead researcher may have access to my contributions during the focus groups, and these will be anonymised. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, unless there my integrity is at risk, in which case the proper protocols will be followed.	
I agree for my contributions to be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form, in a password protected University of Leeds computer. In the case of providing my details contact information	

to keep up to date with the project, these will be kept separately from my contributions from the focus groups in a locked and protected file.	
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Pablo Cheyre
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

(Versión en Español) **Consentimiento para participar en "Una visión de bienestar y el rol de la desigualdad de la mirada de los jóvenes: una perspectiva Chilena"**	Agregue sus iniciales al lado de la declaración si está de acuerdo
Confirmo que he leído y comprendido la hoja de información de fecha Diciembre 2020, explicando el proyecto de investigación anterior y he tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre el proyecto.	
Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria y que soy libre de retirarme en cualquier momento sin dar ningún motivo y sin que haya consecuencias negativas. Además, si no deseo responder a ninguna pregunta en particular, soy libre de rechazarla. Si no deseo continuar, puedo solicitar que se elimine parte o toda mi información. Datos de contacto del investigador: Pablo Cheyre. +44(0)7916363678 ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk	
Entiendo que solo el investigador principal puede tener acceso a mis contribuciones durante los grupos focales, y estos serán anonimizados. Entiendo que mi nombre no se vinculará con los materiales de investigación y no seré identificado ni identificable en el informe o informes que resulten de la investigación. Entiendo que mis respuestas se mantendrán estrictamente confidenciales, a menos que mi integridad esté en riesgo, en cuyo caso se seguirán los protocolos adecuados.	
Acepto que mis contribuciones se almacenen y utilicen en investigaciones futuras relevantes de forma anónima, en una computadora de la Universidad de Leeds protegida con contraseña. En el caso de proporcionar mis datos de contacto para estar al día con el proyecto, estos se mantendrán separados de mis contribuciones de los grupos focales en un archivo cerrado y protegido.	
Entiendo que las secciones relevantes de los datos recopilados durante el estudio pueden ser revisadas por personas de la Universidad de Leeds o	

de las autoridades reguladoras cuando sea relevante para mi participación en esta investigación.	
Estoy de acuerdo en participar en el proyecto de investigación anterior e informaré al investigador principal si mis datos de contacto cambian.	

Nombre de la/el participante	
Firma de la/el participante	
Fecha	
Nombre del investigador ppal.	Pablo Cheyre
Firma	
Fecha*	

*Firmar y fechar en presencia del participante.

Una vez que esto ha sido firmado por todas las partes, el participante debe recibir una copia del formulario de consentimiento del participante firmado y fechado, la carta / guión preescrito / hoja de información y cualquier otra información escrita proporcionada a los participantes. Se debe guardar una copia del formulario de consentimiento firmado y fechado con los documentos principales del proyecto, que deben guardarse en un lugar seguro.

Appendix C
Letter for Parents

Letter requested by one of the schools to inform the parents about the project.

Invitación a participar del proyecto:

¿Cuál es la vida que valoramos?
Una visión del bienestar desde la mirada de distintos grupos de jóvenes: una perspectiva Chilena

Mi nombre Pablo Cheyre, soy psicólogo de profesión y cuento con experiencia profesional en el ámbito de la psicología educacional y como terapeuta infanto-juvenil. El presente proyecto se enmarca en el programa de Doctorado en Educación de la Universidad de Leeds (UK) el cual me encuentro cursando en mi tercer año. Este proyecto trata sobre el bienestar infanto-juvenil en Chile desde un enfoque participativo, donde el objetivo principal es incluir las voces de distintos grupos de niños y niñas en las discusiones teóricas, metodológicas y de política pública en cuanto su bienestar. Es una tesis de naturaleza cualitativa, donde los resultados serán coproducidos por medio de entrevistas grupales (focus groups) con niños y niñas chilenas de distintas realidades socioeconómicas. Una vez identificadas las visiones que tienen los participantes sobre lo que significa el bienestar, el objetivo es contrastarlas con las políticas públicas actuales de niñez y adolescencia (buscar concordancias y disonancias) promoviendo la participación activa de niños y niñas como elemento fundamental para la construcción del conocimiento, tanto en la investigación académica, como en el proceso de diseño de política pública. Por lo tanto, esta tesis busca promover la discusión sobre lo que significa el bienestar para jóvenes chilenos, promoviendo la voz y agencia de estos como parte central de dicha discusión, que generalmente esta dominada por adultos expertos que provienen de contextos socioculturales distintos al chileno.

En términos prácticos, la propuesta es invitar a estudiantes de cuatro colegios de distintas realidades socioeconómicas (se trabajará con cada grupo por separado). Cada uno de estos grupos será conformado por estudiantes de 5to a 8vo básico (de entre 6 a 8 participantes), donde se discutirá didácticamente sobre el bienestar, calidad de vida, felicidad, etc. Para

finalmente, construir en conjunto una definición de lo que significa el bienestar, que luego permitirá ser contrastada con la visión de las políticas públicas actuales. Un elemento fundamental de este proyecto es discutir la relevancia que tiene la voz y participación de los jóvenes en la construcción de este tipo de conceptos, como lo es el bienestar. Como también revisar el grado de participación que tienen los jóvenes respecto a las decisiones de políticas en cuanto a su bienestar, lo cual es un derecho fundamental según la Convención de los Derechos del Niño y donde no existe suficiente evidencia de cómo se da esta participación en Chile y cuan sistemática es.

La invitación para este grupo de jóvenes a una jornada de trabajo de medio día (10:00 a 14:00) en donde por medio de distintas actividades tales como dibujo, juegos y construcción de Lego, conversaremos sobre lo que significa el bienestar y cómo podríamos definir este importante concepto tan importante para nuestras vidas.

Es de suma importancia mencionar que la participación es voluntaria y se seguirán estrictos protocolos de confidencialidad, la cuál se romperá sólo en caso de que exista sospecha de vulneración de los derechos de alguno de los participantes, donde se seguirán los protocolos pertinentes de acuerdo a la legislación chilena.

Agradezco desde ya el tiempo empleado, y estaría encantado de sostener una reunión con los interesado donde poder presentar con mayor profundidad la estructura del proyecto, la justificación de este y resolver cualquier duda que pudiese surgir.

Se despide atentamente,
Pablo Cheyre Triat PhD (c)

Contacto:
ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk
pcheyre@gmail.com
+447916363678
+56979838778

Appendix D
Framework Analysis

Example of the *Indexing* stage, which entails the application of the thematic framework identified in the previous stages of analysis into the data, using direct quotes from the transcripts.

	Theme		
School	*Money*	*Neighbourhood*	*Being Heard*
Low SES urban school	And I need a lot of money to buy 'gamer' stuff and all that to do 'gameplays' and all that. In the future, I want to graduate from 8th grade, then after 12th grade. Then study veterinary medicine. Then work hard, save money, and then buy a house and have lots of cats. Having lots of cats, having money, having traveled a lot, having money. Because without money I can't buy a house, I can't take care of cats. I can't travel. Without money, I can't do anything.	Because sometimes there's bad people around, like they start shooting and that's bad in itself, they start setting off fireworks. Yeah, there are also bad things, because sometimes people do drugs and stuff around, and a thousand and one things that would take me a day to tell you. Like they help each other among neighbors. In my neighborhood, before they turn ten or in the last ten years on Christmas Day they give you toys, things like that, and it's something positive. Personally, I would change if I could, the cables that are lying around up there. Because it looks bad and they could also have electricity and electrocute someone.	I would have liked to participate a bit more. It's fun. And we talk about a lot of things. Yeah, it's one of the only places where we talk about this. Unfair because it's my opinion that counts. They're speaking for us.
High SES urban school	Obviously, having a lot of money.For the family, to build a good family I have to have a lot of money to be able to go to Miami, to Miami with my friends, and since I'm Latina, buy a lot of clothes, have photos for memories.	It's the school square, where there's a bike park. And it has games, dog centers, and everything. Here's my house. And it's close to the school. One of the things I like least about the neighborhood is that people just let their dogs roam free.	It's important that they listen to us, and give an opportunity. My mum never listens to me.
Low SES rural school	Money is very important. There are many people who can't study at university because of financial issues. Because without money you can't live. We would be in a bad situation, we wouldn't be comfortable. Not having money. Yeah. You can't live without money. Yeah, my second thing would be to earn a lot of money.	In front of me is the kid I don't like. I don't like him because he's rude. Here, this is a business. And as I heard, they charge a lot. It's not worth it. There's a girl here I don't like. But here, there's like a huge one-acre space filled with grass. There's also a river. She's a terribly annoying old lady.	I believe it's important because generally young people, especially of our age, aren't taken into account much for our opinion. I mean, it's like when we're adults, more so. It's like they take things for granted regarding the things they experience
High SES rural school	Economic stability is impor	And I don't know, like, I don't know if it's bad, but wherever I've lived, I've always had neighbours, like friends. Yeah, kids my age. And I could go out and play. Here, for example, like, the few people my age are on their phones all day, and I don't know, like, I would go out and there was no one around, I don't know, like, that could be like something negative, but I don't know.	I think so, although anyway, it's still the case that a person with more years still has more, more wisdom. But that doesn't mean, that doesn't mean they can cancel you out. Well, yes, but I think they've still been on earth longer and may have learned more. But that doesn't mean their opinion is worthless.

Appendix E
Framework Analysis

Example of the *Charting* stage, which entails the re-organisation of the themes and sub-themes and rephrasing their meanings.

	Security				Life Project	
	Safety	*Tranquility/being comfortable*	*Health*	*Money*	*Education*	*Freedom of choice*
Low SES urban school	There are some things in our environment that affect our safety, such as streetlights that don't work properly or loose cables, which can be dangerous because we might trip and also affect the surroundings. Gunshots, fireworks, and fights between neighbours affect our well-being and disrupt our peace. Even though many times we feel like we're used to these noises, it's something that negatively affects our quality of life, as we cannot sleep well. The noises also affect our pets. Our neighbours play an important role in the community. They are the ones who help us when there is a problem, and in some cases, they collect money to buy gifts for the children in the neighbourhood. However, there are also people in our neighbourhood who have a negative influence on us, such as when they consume drugs on the street or when there are fights.	Having money to meet basic needs such as food and housing is fundamental for our well-being.	Having good health is very important for well-being. When someone has health problems, it affects the whole family because they cannot work, and there is less money. It is essential to have money to be able to go to the hospital and buy the medicines we need.	Having money is fundamental for our well-being; it allows us to buy the things we like and everything we need to pursue our dreams.	School is very important as it is the first step towards being able to later enter university and have a job that we like and that pays well. Having good grades is very important to be able to obtain scholarships and study what we want.	Being able to choose the university and career is fundamental to have the job we want. For that, we need money, so we don't have to depend on scholarships.
High SES urban school	In general, we feel that our neighbourhood is safe, except for loose dogs and cars that pass by very quickly. The dogs in our neighbourhood are relevant to our quality of life. Some of them are aggressive and bark a lot, which scares us. Moreover, there are dogs that could fight with our dogs, which is a concern. Sometimes we have problems with our neighbours, especially due to noise issues when they play music very loudly.	Holidays are very important to us. Being able to travel, visit new places, spend time with our friends, and not having to think about school is a break. Being able to practice the sports we like.	The COVID-19 pandemic was something that negatively impacted us. Mainly because we couldn't go to school.	It's important to have money to be able to achieve our goals, like traveling and buying things we like, and also to be able to build a good family.	School is very important because that's where we see our friends. For us, it's very important and valuable that the school is close to where we live. A big part of our neighbourhood life revolves around the school, our classmates, and the schoolyard.	Sometimes our families don't let us freely choose what we want to study.
Low SES rural school	The places where we live are peaceful. In some cases, there are issues with neighbors, but overall, we feel safe. It's important for us to maintain a good relationship with our neighbours, but this isn't always the case as we feel they are very different from us, or they are not friendly with us.	It's important for us to feel peaceful in the places where we live. For that, we need money. The people who came up with the saying that money doesn't make you happy probably have money.	Health is very important for living. We need money to be able to have good health.	Money is the most important thing for living well. Without money, it's difficult to live, or even impossible. Paying for water, food, housing, clothing, household items, internet, and phone bills.	School is very important for later being able to study at university and to be able to work. School is fundamental for learning and then earning money. School is very important for being able to go to university	Being able to achieve our dreams and choose a career that we are passionate about is very important.
High SES rural school	Security is a very important issue for us and for our quality of life. Although we haven't directly experienced anything ourselves, it has happened to neighbours or acquaintances. Many times we live with a sense of insecurity, that someone could break in, and that fear affects us negatively. Many of us live in gated communities where there are guards, and overall security is good. Another security issue is speeding cars, which is dangerous. The issue of dogs is also a problem. Some belong to neighbors who let them loose, and others are stray. The problem is that some dogs are aggressive and attack, so it's a concern and something that negatively affects our quality of life	Some of us live in gated communities where access is quite easy and there are paved roads. However, others live in rural areas where access is more complicated and the roads are dirt. This is not a problem and doesn't negatively affect us.	Issues related to mental health, such as stress and depression, are very important for living well.	Economic stability is important for well-being and for doing the things we want, such as traveling and having a safe home with a beautiful view.	School is where we go to be with our friends. For most people, having a professional career is very important.	Being free to choose our life path is fundamental. For example, some of us would like to travel.

	Community			Recognition	
	Family	*Friends*	*Pets*	*Being heard*	*Support*
Low SES urban school	Our family is very important to us because they teach us and support us. Furthermore, they are important because if our family is well, we are well.	We value having our friends live nearby, as spending time with them is important to us. With them, we have fun. The relationship with our peers is very important to us. Lately, there have been many fights, especially after the pandemic. Most of us don't like fights, and this is something we would change as it affects our well-being.	They are very important to us. They give us love, companionship, and happiness when we are sad. They are part of our family and an important part of our present and future well-being. Earning enough money to be able to take care of our pets is very important.	Being able to express an opinion without being bothered or told that because you are young, you don't know anything, bothers us a lot. Sometimes we feel like adults speak for us.	The support of our families is fundamental to achieving our dreams. They teach us everything we don't know.
High SES urban school	Family is very important to us because they support us and give us company.	Our friends are fundamental to us. We enjoy school largely because we are with them there. Additionally, our school friends are also our neighbours.	Pets are very important; they're part of our family. They're like siblings, but less bothersome. They're a distraction in case something bad happens. They provide emotional support.	Being recognised and listened to is something fundamental for us and it affects us greatly. We need them to believe in us, to support us in our decisions, as this greatly impacts our ability to achieve our goals. Sometimes we feel that our parents don't listen to us much.	It is very important for us to feel supported because we need a lot of support from our family, friends, and the people we care about in general. They are essential for us to achieve our dreams and goals in life. Believing in us and supporting us in what we want is crucial. It's important to distinguish support from pressure. We need them to support us based on our needs and not what adults think we need.
Low SES rural school	Family is fundamental for us, as they are the people who love and support us. There are different types of family; there are those related by blood, but they can also be friends. However, family can also be our worst enemy. In that sense, sometimes they don't do us good. They don't always love us and they don't always support us. Sometimes they are more of an obstacle than a help.	Friends can be part of the family, which is why they are so important. Especially when one has family problems.	They are very important to us, they provide us with company and affection. They brighten our day, they offer unconditional love. The downside is that they are not forever. We need money to be able to take care of our pets.	Being repressed and not being able to express ourselves freely makes us feel very bad. Recognition, such as being heard, having our opinion taken into account, is important. Sometimes adults decide things based on their experiences, but that can be very different from our lives. That's why our opinion should be taken into account	We need support to achieve our goals and for our opinion to be heard. Many times, adults make decisions for us based on their own life experience, but that experience can be very different from ours. That's why our opinion should be taken into account.
High SES rural school	It's important for our family to live well. They are the people we don't choose. Sometimes we have problems with our relatives, and this affects us negatively.	They are people we choose and they become our family. Some become very significant people in our lives.	Animals are fundamental to us. Many of us want to study a career related to animals, such as veterinary medicine.	Something negative is that we have to do what the teachers say, and they never ask how we feel or our opinion about something. It feels bad when they don't ask for our opinion on something. The opinion of adults is important, as they have more experience. But it doesn't mean that our opinion is worthless.	It's important for us to have a support network in case something bad happens

Appendix F

Ethical Review Form

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPLICATION FORM [1]

Please read each question carefully, taking note of instructions and completing all parts. If a question is not applicable please indicate so. The superscripted numbers (eg[8]) refer to sections of the guidance notes, available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/UoLEthicsApplication. Where a question asks for information which you have previously provided in answer to another question, please just refer to your earlier answer rather than repeating information.

Information about research ethics training courses: http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsTraining.

To help us process your application enter the following reference numbers, if known and if applicable:

Ethics reference number:	**AREA 20-067**
Student number and/ or grant reference:	**201271598**
PART A: Summary	
A.1 Which Faculty Research Ethics Committee would you like to consider this application?[2] ○ Arts, Humanities and Cultures (AHC) ○ Biological Sciences (BIOSCI) ◉ Business, Environment and Social Sciences (AREA) ○ FS&N, Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) ○ Medicine and Health (Please specify a subcommittee): ○ School of Dentistry (DREC) ○ School of Healthcare (SHREC) ○ School of Medicine (SoMREC) ○ School of Psychology (SoPREC)	

A.2 Title of the research[3]
What is the life we value? A vision of well-being from a variety of young people´s viewpoints: a Chilean perspective

A.3 Principal investigator's contact details[4]	
Name *(Title, first name, surname)*	Pablo Cheyre
Position	PGR Student
Department/ School/ Institute	School of Education
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
Work address *(including postcode)*	1.20 Hillary Place, LS2 3AR
Telephone number	+44(0)7916363678
University of Leeds email address	Ed18pjc@leeds.ac.uk

A.4 Purpose of the research:[5] (Tick as appropriate)

- ☐ Research
- ☑ Educational qualification: ***Please specify: PhD***
- ☐ Educational Research & Evaluation[6]
- ☐ Medical Audit or Health Service Evaluation[7]
- ☐ Other

A.5 Select from the list below to describe your research: (You may select more than one)

- [x] Research on or with human participants
- [ ] Research which has potential adverse environmental impact.[8] ***If yes, please give details:***

____

- [x] Research working with data of human participants
- [x] New data collected by qualitative methods
- [ ] New data collected by quantitative methods
- [ ] New data collected from observing individuals or populations
- [ ] Routinely collected data or secondary data
- [ ] Research working with aggregated or population data
- [ ] Research using already published data or data in the public domain
- [ ] Research working with human tissue samples (*Please inform the relevant Persons Designate if the research will involve human tissue)*[9]

A.6 Will the research involve NHS staff recruited as potential research participants (by virtue of their professional role) or NHS premises/ facilities?

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

If yes, ethical approval must be sought from the University of Leeds. Note that approval from the NHS Health Research Authority may also be needed, please contact FMHUniEthics@leeds.ac.uk for advice.

A.7 Will the research involve any of the following:[10] (You may select more than one)

If your project is classified as research rather than service evaluation or audit and involves any of the following an application must be made to the NHS Health Research Authority via IRAS www.myresearchproject.org.uk as NHS ethics approval will be required. ***There is no need to complete any more of this form****. Further information is*

available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/NHSethicalreview and at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HRAapproval.

You may also contact ***governance-ethics@leeds.ac.uk*** *for advice.*

☐ Patients and users of the NHS (including NHS patients treated in the private sector)[11]

☐ Individuals identified as potential participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS

☐ Research involving adults in Scotland, Wales or England who lack the capacity to consent for themselves[12]

☐ A prison or a young offender institution in England and Wales (and is health related)[14]

☐ Clinical trial of a medicinal product or medical device[15]

☐ Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past and present NHS patients[9]

☐ Use of human tissue (including non-NHS sources) where the collection is not covered by a Human Tissue Authority licence[9]

☐ Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients

☐ The recently deceased under NHS care

☑ None of the above

You must inform the Research Ethics Administrator of your NHS REC reference and approval date once approval has been obtained.

The HRA decision tool to help determine the type of approval required is available at http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics. If the University of Leeds is not the Lead Institution, or approval has been granted elsewhere (e.g. NHS) then you should contact the local Research Ethics Committee for guidance. The UoL Ethics Committee needs to be assured that any relevant local ethical issues have been addressed.

A.8 Will the participants be from any of the following groups? (Tick as appropriate)

- [x] Children under 16[16] ***Specify age group:*** 10-14 years old
- [ ] Adults with learning disabilities[12]
- [ ] Adults with other forms of mental incapacity or mental illness
- [ ] Adults in emergency situations
- [ ] Prisoners or young offenders[14]
- [ ] Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, eg members of staff, students[17]
- [ ] Other vulnerable groups
- [ ] No participants from any of the above groups

Please justify the inclusion of the above groups, explaining why the research cannot be conducted on non-vulnerable groups.

The present research aims at constructing knowledge about young people's well-being. The aim is to promote young people's voices regarding the domains of their lives they value as critical for their well-being. Therefore, it would not be possible to develop this project by not including young people, since they are a crucial part of the research process. Additionally, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), young people have the right to give their opinions regarding the issues which affect their lives (Article 12). Since in Chile there is no evidence of a study in which young people's voices is at the centre of the debate regarding their well-being, this project aims at filling this gap, both in terms of promoting their right of participation, and second in terms of challenging current theoretical and political understanding of well-being in the country.

It is the researcher's responsibility to check whether a DBS check (or equivalent) is required and to obtain one if it is needed. See also http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/healthandsafetyadvice and http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs.

A.9 Give a short summary of the research[18]

This section must be completed in ***language comprehensible to the lay person****. Do not simply reproduce or refer to the protocol, although the protocol can also be submitted to provide any technical information that you think the ethics committee may require. This section should cover the main parts of the proposal.*

This research is a part of a PhD which has as a primary objective to include Chilean young people's voices in the methodological, theoretical and political discussion regarding the areas of their lives that most affect their well-being according to their viewpoint. This thesis adopts a participatory framework, in which participant's voices are a crucial aspect of the methodological process and research outcomes.

In the last decades, the understanding and measurement of well-being have been a matter of interest both to scholars and policymakers. Nevertheless, most of these conceptualisations and measures have been made by "adults' experts" and come from a Global North perspective. Consequently, in Chile, children and young people's well-being is measured from understandings that are not contextualised. According to literature, this situation might have direct implications on the political outcomes regarding well-being, decreasing young people's possibilities to improve their quality of life. Therefore, this research intends to explore Chilean young people's perceptions towards the dimensions of their lives they consider relevant for their well-being. Also, as Chile is a highly unequal country, it becomes necessary to explore the perceptions of young people that have different experiences in life. The Chilean Economic Survey (CASEN), reveals that the type of education (public or private) and the place of living (rural city or urban city), are directly related to possibilities of accessing to a good quality of education, good health services, etc. Therefore, these socio-economic indicators are directly related to their well-being.

Nevertheless, there is no clarity on how effective social policies are in terms of offering all young people all young people an equal chance to fulfil their potential. Therefore, by analysing young people's views of life, in contrast with what policies are aiming at, might provide a clue to improve further measures of well-being and ultimately, improve policies that affect their quality of lives. The aim of this is to contrast the viewpoints of groups of young people that have different life experiences, and particularly to find points in common. This will go in favour of challenging the effectiveness of policies that aim at providing all children and young people the same possibilities to live well according to the life they value, regardless the type of education and where they live geographically.

The project, then, intends to challenge the current theoretical understandings of Chilean young people's well-being and policy regarding their quality of life. The thesis will also explore the extent in which adopting a participatory approach accomplishes this

challenge, and to analyse if this approach can be effective in the inclusion of young people's opinions in the decisions that affect their lives.

The research will be conducted in Chile and will consist of six focus group meetings with four different groups of young people that have different life experiences – see sections C.2 and C.7 for more details. The purpose of this is to build knowledge from various sectors of the country, by constructing dimensions of well-being that will represent a universal voice of Chilean young people, rather than focus just on one group. Through the panels, the intention is to construct a list of dimensions that most represent what young people value to live well. Therefore, this will be a democratic process in which the participant's voices will be at the centre of the analysis.

A.10 What are the main ethical issues with the research and how will these be addressed?[19]

Indicate any issues on which you would welcome advice from the ethics committee.

Purpose of the research: This research explores Chilean young people's viewpoints regarding what well-being is and what are the dimensions of their lives that affect it. The conceptualisations and instruments to measure well-being in the Chilean context come from the global north perspectives and are made by adults' experts. This situation has at least three consequences: first, the results of these instruments might not be reflecting accurately what Chilean young people understand towards their well-being and the aspects of their lives that they most value. Being Chile a highly unequal country, it is urgent to find a common voice among different life experiences. Second, young people's voices are not being considered by scholars in the construction of these instruments, which questions their possibilities to have a real agency in the matter. This phenomenon results particularly preoccupying, as according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and young people have the right to give their opinions in the matters that affect them. And lastly, as the conceptualisation of well-being is not contextualised in Chile, social policies and programs are built under misguided theoretical understandings, which affects its efficiency of impact. The aim of this research is to re-conceptualise well-being, in the Chilean context and with young people as the co-constructors of knowledge. This, to challenge current theoretical understandings in Chile and enhance policymakers to include young people in the discussion towards their well-being.

Recruitment: participants will be young people from 10-14 years old. In Chile, these are students from 5th to 8th grade (in the UK, years 6 to 9). As for this project, it is essential to cover different life experiences; students from four different educational

background will complete the sample. One will be students from public school located in a rural city. A second, students that attend a private one in a rural town. A third, students that go to a public school in an urban city, and lastly, students that attend a private school in an urban city. First, the school principals will be contacted. Once they agree to take part in this study, I will go to each one of the grades to present myself and the project and ask for two volunteers from each class. For more information, see section C.7.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria: See section C.8.

Consent: informed consent will be asked to all the participants. This will be in simple and plain language, and it will be asked to be signed before the research starts. Additionally, a verbal explanation of the study and its implications will be done. As the participants are underage, active parental consent will be sought. See section C.11 for more information regarding consent.

Risks: see section C.17.

Burdens and benefits: This research is being designed to influence on a theoretical and political level, by including young people's viewpoints regarding their well-being in the discussion. The project aims at challenging current conceptualisations of well-being in Chile, and the outputs might serve as a base to construct other instruments of measurement of young people's well-being. It also intends to influence policymakers in the inclusion of young people's voices and opinions regarding the aspect of their lives they value, therefore, it seeks to improve current methodological processes in the construction of social programs and policies that affect young people's lives.

The participants will be asked to participate in five-panel groups discussions with a length of 1 hour each, and in one last meeting to discuss the preliminary interpretation of the data. The commitment of taking part in the research will be fully explained to the participants at the beginning of the project, and it will be monitored throughout the meetings, so the participants do not feel over-burdened. Additionally, the participants will be encouraged to raise any concerns during the project and will be reminded that they can withdraw at any time without the need of explaining their decision.

Confidentiality and anonymity: Confidentiality of the participant's personal information will be assured, and their combined responses will be anonymised in all research outcomes. Additionally, as the aim of the research is to find a collective voice, the anonymity of their identities and answers will be assured, by using hybrid cases (multiple participants data will be combined) and any direct quotes used during the analysis of the data or in the communication of the results will be anonymised. Additionally, to avoid any identification of the participant's identities, their names, school's names and the names of the locations will be changed, and their gender will not be included. However, it will be made clear to the participants there will be a breach

of confidentiality under specific circumstances following the Chilean law instructions, which will be found in the information sheet and the inform consent. See section C.4 for more details about Chilean laws regarding confidentiality. These two documents will be discussed verbally at the first meeting and will be remembered to the participants throughout the project. Participants will be invited to ask any questions or concerns regarding the disclosure of information. Another important point related to confidentiality relates to the discussion topics treated in each meeting. In this sense, on the first meeting, when establishing the ground rules of the project, it will be sought an agreement with all the participants to maintain confidentiality with what is discussed during the panels, and avoid sharing any type of information with people that do not belong to research.

Payments: See section C.16.

Conflict of interest: Data produced will be co-owned by the researcher, the participants and the University of Leeds. All owners of the data will be consulted on its use for this doctoral project, publications stemming from it and other impact related activities.

Dissemination of results: Once the data produced from the focus has been analysed by the researcher, a final meeting will take place in order to discuss the different themes that emerged through the panels. The objective of this is to confirm with them if these identified themes represent their voices and to suggest any changes considered relevant. After this feedback meeting takes place, the definitive list of themes will be shared with the participants as a summary of what was discussed during the project and to show them how the information will be shared in the research output.

PART B: About the research team

B.1 To be completed by students only[20e]	
Qualification working towards (eg Masters, PhD)	PhD
Supervisor's name (Title, first name, surname)	Dr Gill Main
Department/ School/ Institute	School of Education
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences

Work address (including postcode)	G. 13 Hillary Place, LS2 3AR
Supervisor's telephone number	+44(0)113 343 0237
Supervisor's email address	G.Main@leeds.ac.uk
Module name and number (if applicable)	

B.2 Other members of the research team (eg co-investigators, co-supervisors) [21]	
Name *(Title, first name, surname)*	Dr Anne Luke
Position	Lecturer in Childhood Studies
Department/ School/ Institute	School of Education
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
Work address *(including postcode)*	2.07a Hillary Place, LS2 3AR
Telephone number	+44(0)113 343 3791
Email address	A.C.Luke@leeds.ac.uk

Part C: The research

C.1 What are the aims of the study?[22] (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

The aim of the research is to challenge the theoretical, methodological and political conceptualisations towards Chilean young people's well-being. This will be done by establishing the voice of young people, as active social actors, at the centre of the discussion. The literature reveals that there is no evidence of a study of well-being in the Chilean context in which the data was constructed with young people from a participatory perspective. The evidence shows that most of the studies are quantitative

measures of children and young people well-being, in which foreign instruments were applied. Nevertheless, not considering the socio-cultural context has direct consequences on the results of those measurements. In this sense, the evidence supports that the social context becomes essential when studying how a particular society acts, therefore, the results of the current measurements might not be reflecting what Chilean young people perceive towards their well-being.

Consequently, this research will contribute to the current understandings by exploring young people's viewpoints related to the life they value, from a qualitative and participatory perspective.

The research has the following aims and objectives:

- To promote young people voices as the core of the methodological process, as they are the experts of their lives.
- To better understand what aspects of young people's lives are the ones that they most value.
- To better understand the perceptions towards well-being of young people that have different life experiences.
- To identify potential barriers that young people perceive to pursue the life they value.
- To challenge current theoretical understandings regarding young people's well-being in the Chilean context.
- To challenge current social policies and programs relate to young people's well-being.
- To promote the participatory framework as a methodology to increase young people's participation in the decision making of policies that most affect them.

C.2 Describe the design of the research. Qualitative methods as well as quantitative methods should be included. (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

It is important that the study can provide information about the aims that it intends to address. If a study cannot answer the questions/ add to the knowledge base that it intends to, due to the way that it is designed, then wasting participants' time could be an ethical issue.

This project will be qualitative in nature and will adopt a participatory approach. Students from four schools with different socio-economic reality will be asked to participate in the project.

Each of the schools will have the following characteristics:

1. One public school in a rural area.
2. One private school in a rural area
3. One public school in urban city.
4. One private school in a urban city.

Groups of eight students between the years 6 and 9 (two from each grade) from each school will be recruited, making 32 participants in total. There are two different settings in which the study will take place. Alternative A: each panel will be invited to five focus groups sessions of one hour led by the lead researcher, to discuss and reflect on the aspects of their lives that most have an impact on their well-being. Alternative B: participants will be invited to participate from morning session of work in which the same content will be discussed, but in an extended form rather than in five different sessions. It is highly relevant to mention that rest periods will be guaranteed during this more extended session, and different kinds of snacks and drinks will be provided. At the end of the project, a sixth meeting will take place through an online platform, to ask feedback from the participants and review the list of themes that emerged after the analysis of the data.

The panel meetings will be conducted and facilitated by the lead researcher by using creative, visual and verbal techniques. These materials will inform the discussions and reflections in every session and will be the subject of analysis by the researcher. Nevertheless, as this is a participatory project, the participants will be invited to contribute by providing feedback on the techniques used and proposing other tools that might work better for the research purposes. Additionally, once the analysis is made and a list of themes is constructed, the participants will be asked to revise this list in a final meeting, in order to identify if their voices are represented effectively by that list of themes, or if some modifications should be made.

If the participants agree, each panel meeting will be audio recorded. Data constructed with the participants will be analysed by the lead researcher, and summaries reports will be provided to all the participants.

C.3 What will participants be asked to do in the study?[23] *(e.g. number of visits, time, travel required, interviews)*

Alternative A: the participants will be asked to attend to five group meetings with other students from their same school. Each session will last one hour and will take place at the student's schools.

Alternative B: the participants will be asked to attend a morning session with other students from their same youth club. This session will last between three to four hours and will take place at the student´s youth club.

At the end of the project, the participants will be asked to assist to a final meeting in order to discuss the list of dimensions that emerged after the preliminary analysis is made. Throughout the meetings, the participants will be encouraged to reflect and discuss towards what aspects of theirs, and other's young people with their similar ages most value in their lives. They will be asked to reflect and discuss the dimensions of their life they value, in order to construct a list of dimensions that will define well-being. The aim is that by the end of the fifth session, there will be enough data to generate a list of themes that each group constructed regarding the components of well-being according to their perspectives. This will be done by different creative, visual and verbal techniques, and the focus group contents will be as follows:

1. *Introduction*: participants will meet each other and will be given the background of the project. Ground rules will be discussed with the panel, which includes respect and legitimacy of different viewpoints as a core aspect of the project. Also will be discussed with them the importance of confidentiality of the meeting's contents. Once the basic rules are established, there will be an informal round of presentation with each other through an activity using Lego bricks.
2. *Session two*: panel members will be provided with materials to construct a life map timeline. This session aims to identify any relevant facts of participants life stories that have made who and where they are at present. Then, the task is to help them to visualise how they see themselves in the future. For these purposes, it will be asked to the participants to identify some key aspects that would help them to achieve the life they value. At the end of the meeting, the participants will be asked for a task for the next session, which is to bring photographs/drawings or short story of something they value in their lives (important people, places, things, etc.).
3. *Session three*: first, there will be a presentation and reflections of each other's pictures/drawings or short stories. Then, the panel members will be provided with materials to create a map of their neighbourhoods, aiming at the identification of important places regarding the participant's place of living, that to some extent affect positively or negatively their well-being.

4. *Session four:* panel members will be provided with materials to create in groups a board of the game "snakes and ladders". The main objective of this session is to identify through a game, those barriers and facilitators that affect their possibilities to achieve the life they value. The idea is to reflect on the discussions that happened in the previous sessions and to build collectively a game that might reflect participants thoughts towards barriers and facilitators in pursuing the lives they value as a group. Once the boards are ready, they will be exchanged with the groups to play each other's games.
5. *Session five*: the group will be provided with Lego bricks, to construct a model which represents three different aspects of the life they value. Then, it will be asked to the participants to choose one of those aspects each, in order to build a shared model, integrating each other's viewpoints. The aim of this session is to start from an individual perception about the dimensions of the valued life, to then connect each participant's perceptions with one another. The objective is to construct a collective narrative about the aspects of the participant's lives that are important for them as a group, integrating all their perspectives into a common voice.
6. *Final session*: after the analysis is made by the researcher; this last meeting will take place to share with each group the interpretation of data, in the form of a list of dimensions that embrace the life they value. The aim is to get feedback from the panels to assure that their voices are accurately represented in the research outputs.

*For Alternative B, the same activities will be performed in an extended session rather than in five different ones.

C.4 Does the research involve an international collaborator or research conducted overseas?[24]

☑ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe any ethical review procedures that you will need to comply with in that country:

This project will be done in Chile; therefore, Chilean laws will be followed when working with underage students, particularly in terms of data protection and confidentiality breaches. As for data protection, it will be assured anonymity to protect participant identities. Also, it will be assured confidentiality of their personal answers and comments, unless there is the suspicion that a participant might be experiencing any infringement of their rights (such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and other types of infringement). In this case, it will be followed the legal channels, which are

informing to the school, informing to participant's parents or tutors, and presenting a resource of protection to Family Courts. This institution will take the case, make the proper investigation and propose an eventual intervention.

Describe the measures you have taken to comply with these:

Informed consent will be asked to all the participants, agreeing on the terms in which there will be a breach of confidentiality according to the Chilean law.

Include copies of any ethical approval letters/ certificates with your application.

C.5 Proposed study dates and duration

Research start date (DD/MM/YY): 01/02/2020 Research end date (DD/MM/YY): 31/01/2024

Fieldwork start date (DD/MM/YY): 01/03/2022 Fieldwork end date (DD/MM/YY): 01/05/2022

C.6. Where will the research be undertaken? (i.e. in the street, on UoL premises, in schools)[25]

The focus groups meetings will be carried out on the student's schools or at their youth clubs. Nevertheless, due to COVID, this possibility it is subject to the situation of Chile at the moment of the fieldwork, and to the authority's advice. If it is not possible to develop face to face meetings at that moment, these will take place through an online platform (Skype, Zoom or similar). If this is the case, some of the activities will be changed, particularly the ones related to Lego. Nevertheless, the focus groups will be done online, respecting the essence of the project which is constructing knowledge from the participants voices.

RECRUITMENT & CONSENT PROCESSES

C.7 How will potential participants in the study be identified, approached and recruited?[26]

How will you ensure an appropriately convened sample group in order to meet the aims of the research? Give details for subgroups separately, if appropriate. How will any potential pitfalls, for example dual roles or potential for coercion, be addressed?

Alternative A: the participants will be recruited from the school in which they attend. Two private schools and two public schools will be selected to participate. The first step will be to have the authorisation from the school principals and authorities at each school. Then, I will present the project to each grade, explaining what the project is about and asking for two volunteers on each class. The goal is to have eight participants in each panel, with at least one representative from each school year. There will be a minimum of six participants and maximum of ten. If there are more volunteers, the participants will be randomly selected from the volunteers in each year group.

Alternative B: the participants will be recruited from youth club they attend. The first step will be to have the authorisation from the youth club leader. Then, I will present the project to the youth club leader and the other parents involved in its coordination, explaining what the project is about and asking for two volunteers on each year. The goal is to have eight participants in each panel, with at least one representative from each school year. There will be a minimum of six participants and maximum of ten. If there are more volunteers, the participants will be randomly selected from the volunteers in each year group.

Identified? The schools will be identified depending on the type of administration they have, which can be public and private, and also, will be identified according to their location, which will be an urban city and a rural area. For this research, it is proposed to invite two schools from the capital, Santiago, and two schools from Villarrica, a city which is located in the south of Chile and concentrates a critical number of students that live in the surrounding rural areas. One important reason behind deciding for these cities is due to the extreme opposites that they represent in terms of socio-economic differences. Santiago is the wealthiest city in the country, concentrating all the financial sector, best health services and the best schools and universities. On the other hand, the region in which is located Villarrica is the poorest of the country and concentrates a high number of people living in rural areas. Additionally, these cities are chosen because of the professional networks that the lead researcher has in some schools from these cities. In terms of school's administration, in the Chilean context, private schools are the ones that students need to pay monthly tuition and who have private owners. On the other hand, public schools are the ones owned by the state and are free to attend.

For this project, the schools identified are two private schools (one in Santiago and the other in Villarrica) and two public schools (one in Santiago and the other one in Villarrica). In the case of the public schools, these will be identified depending on the city, and it will be considered the Index of School Vulnerability (Indice de Vulneración Escolar-IVE) created in Chile with the purpose to identify those schools who have a higher vulnerable population of students. In the case of the private schools, these will be identified depending on the city and in its type of administration, that must be private and non-dependant from the state.

*The identification of the youth clubs follows the same process as the school´s identification. The youth clubs that will be contacted are private and are run by parents of those schools.

Approached? Alternative A: after identifying potential schools, the first approach will be through each school principal, who are the gatekeepers on this project. Once the principals agree to carry on with the research, this will be presented on each grade to explain the project and ask for two volunteers from each class to join the panel meetings. Alternative B: after identifying potential youth clubs, the first approach will be through each club leader, who are the gatekeepers on this project. Once the leaders agree to carry on with the research, this will be presented to the youth members to explain the project and ask for two volunteers from each class to join the panel meetings.

Recruited? Interested students to participate in the focus groups will be provided with more detailed information about the project. These information sheets will be handed out as written documents and will be explained verbally. The information sheets will also provide the researcher contact, to ask any questions they might have and to confirm their participation. When they agree to participate, they will be asked to sign a consent form.

C.8 Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so what is the rationale for that?[27]

Excluding certain groups of people, intentionally or unintentionally may be unethical in some circumstances. It may be wholly appropriate to exclude groups of people in other cases

The participants will be excluded if they do not assist formally to the selected schools or the youth clubs, and if they do not fit the school-year criteria, which is between 5th and 8th grade in Chile, equivalent to years 6-9 in the UK. Also, due to time and research capacity, as the panels will be carried out in Spanish, any participant that does not speak the language will be excluded to participate.

C.9 How many participants will be recruited and how was the number decided upon?[28]

It is important to ensure that enough participants are recruited to be able to answer the aims of the research.

32 young participants will be recruited in total. Four schools or youth clubs will be contacted, and eight participants will be invited from each school – see section C.2 for more details. Each panel group then, will be composed of eight participants, a number that facilitates the discussion and allows fluent participation of all of them, avoiding overcrowded meetings.

Remember to include all advertising material (posters, emails etc) as part of your application

C10 Will the research involve any element of deception?[29]

If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study.

No.

C.11 Will informed consent be obtained from the research participants?[30]

☑ Yes ☐ No

If yes, give details of how it will be done. Give details of any particular steps to provide information (in addition to a written information sheet) e.g. videos, interactive material. If you are not going to be obtaining informed consent you will need to justify this.

Simple written consent will be asked to all the participants at the beginning of the project. Additionally, as the participants are under 18 years old, active parental consent will be sought. Consent will be asked both to participate in the project and to any information related to the group's discussions in eventual publications. Particular emphasis needs to be made in terms of assuring anonymity. This project aims at constructing a collective voice regarding well-being in which hybrid cases will be used (multiple participants data combined). Nevertheless, when referring to direct quotes on the research outputs or in future publications, these will be anonymised. In this context,

individuals will be assured of the confidential nature of their answers, except for specific circumstances – see section A.10 and C.4 for more details about this. Consent will be discussed at the beginning of every meeting, and it will be reminded to them in different moments of the research that the participants can withdraw at any time if they do not want to be involved in the project anymore.

The copies of the signed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet.

If participants are to be recruited from any of potentially vulnerable groups, give details of extra steps taken to assure their protection. Describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.

As all the participants are underage, are considered a vulnerable group. Therefore, consent forms will be written in accessible language and will be discussed verbally. Additionally, active parental consent will be sought as the participants are under the age of 18, which, according to the Chilean law, are not yet "competent" and depend on their parents' consent.

Will research participants be provided with a copy of the Privacy Notice for Research? If not, explain why not. *Guidance is available at https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/information-for-researchers.*

☑ Yes ☐ No

Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. *The information sheet should make explicit that participants can withdraw from the research at any time, if the research design permits. Remember to use meaningful file names and version control to make it easier to keep track of your documents.*

Sample information sheets and consent forms are available from the University ethical review webpage at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/InvolvingResearchParticipants.

C.12 Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (eg if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is not possible, explain why not.

Any limits to withdrawal, eg once the results have been written up or published, should be made clear to participants in advance, preferably by specifying a date after which withdrawal would not be possible. Make sure that the information provided to participants (eg information sheets, consent forms) is consistent with the answer to C12.

Participants are volunteers and can withdraw from their participation at any point during the project, and this will be reminded at different moments throughout the group's meetings. It will be made clear at several points during the research that they can stop at any time their participations and their data will be destroyed. The participants will have one month after the final meeting to ask for their data to be deleted. After this period, it would not be possible to ask for this due to analysis purposes. All of this information will be explained in the written consent form and will also be presented verbally in an age-appropriate language.

C.13 How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?[31]

It may be appropriate to recruit participants on the spot for low risk research; however consideration is usually necessary for riskier projects.

Following the initial contact, participants will have a minimum of 24 hours to decide if they want to take part in the project. Additionally, they will have several opportunities to present their concerns, reconsider their involvement and any questions regarding the project and their participation.

C.14 What arrangements have been made for participants who might have difficulties understanding verbal explanations or written information, or who have particular communication needs that should be taken into account to facilitate their involvement in the research?[32] *Different populations will have different information needs, different communication abilities and different levels of understanding of the research topic. Reasonable efforts should be made to include potential participants who could otherwise be prevented from participating due to disabilities or language barriers.*

All project materials, information sheets and consent forms will be written in plain, accessible Spanish. Additionally, all potential participants will have a detailed, informative meeting, where the project and their participation required will be explained verbally. Also, it will be made clear that they can ask any questions during the project and present their concerns on any aspect regarding the project itself and their participation.

C.15 Will individual or group interviews/ questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study (e.g. during interviews or group discussions)?[33] *The information sheet should explain under what circumstances action may be taken.*

☑ Yes ☐ No *If yes, give details of procedures in place to deal with these issues.*

The themes discussed will be sensitive in nature, since they will discuss the aspects of their lives they most value. See section C. 17 for more information on risks and procedures.

C.16 Will individual research participants receive any payments, fees, reimbursement of expenses or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in this research?[34]

☐ Yes ☑ No

If Yes, please describe the amount, number and size of incentives and on what basis this was decided.

No. Refreshments will be provided during focus groups.

RISKS OF THE STUDY

C.17 What are the potential benefits and/ or risks for research participants in both the short and medium-term?[35]

The topic of the project might raise difficult feelings for participants, such as shame and stress. Therefore, there is a risk of upset, when discussing the aspects of their lives they most value. This risk of upset will be addressed throughout the research on different moments. At the recruitment stage, detailed information will be given to the participants in terms of what they will be asked to discuss, making clear that this might cause upsetting feelings. Once the sessions start, it will be available different instances to discuss individually with the researcher or as a group any feelings of discomfort that might emerge during the panel meetings. Even when the panel meetings are intended to be a space for research and not as space or counselling nor therapeutic intervention, some difficult feelings might emerge during the discussions. Due to my professional experience, as a trained and certified child and adolescent therapist, with seven years of experience working with young people in individual and group interventions, I am well-positioned to identify situations in which the participants might be experiencing

emotional distress. If this is the case, I will redirect the conversation and refer the participant to the proper channels of support. This issue will be addressed during the first meeting when setting the ground rules and remembered to them throughout the meetings. I will clarify to the participants that I have role in the project as a researcher and not a counsellor. Still, if I identify a situation that requires extra emotional support, I will refer the participant to get the proper help they might need.

This research aims at finding a common voice regarding young people's well-being, and the focus is put on this unifying voice rather than on personal experiences. The participants will be encouraged to reflect in terms of societal and their closest communities' experiences. Also, the focus will be in finding potential improvements rather than in the negative aspects of their lives. Nevertheless, if any of the participants do not want to participate in an activity, there will be no pressure to do so, and they can withdraw their participation at any moment. Additionally, as mentioned in section C.19 regarding confidentiality and anonymity, no personal data will be included in the research outputs and any personal comments or quotes will be anonymised, so the person cannot be identified in any way. One of the aims of this project is to co-construct knowledge between the participants and the researcher. Therefore, the final list of dimensions of well-being that will be constructed at the end of the project will be discussed through a democratic process to avoid any misinterpretations, and the participants will decide any changes that should be made to respect their accurate representations towards the subject in discussion.

C.18 Does the research involve any risks to the researchers themselves, or people not directly involved in the research? *Eg lone working*[36]

☑ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: Lone Working

Is a risk assessment necessary for this research?

If you are unsure whether a risk assessment is required visit http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HealthAndSafetyAdvice or contact your Faculty Health and Safety Manager for advice.

☑ Yes ☐ No If yes, please include a copy of your risk assessment form with your application.

RESEARCH DATA

C.19 Explain what measures will be put in place to protect personal data. E.g. anonymisation procedures, secure storage and coding of data. Any potential for re-identification should be made clear to participants in advance.[37] *Please note that research data which appears in reports or other publications is not confidential, even if it is fully anonymised. For a fuller explanation see http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation. Further guidance is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement.*

Personal data include contact details of groups panels participants, audio recording of focus groups, visual data, fieldwork notes and written transcriptions of the meetings. All data will be stored on encrypted, password-protected devices, transferred to the University's secure drive as soon as possible and deleted from any other mobile devices. All written material will not contain personal identification information and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and deleted after the transcription. All data collected will be destroyed after three years of project competition.

One of the aims of developing focus groups is to summarise a collective voice, nevertheless, when referring to personal comments and direct quotes on the analysis or on the research outputs, this will be anonymised so the participant cannot be identified.

C.20 How will you make your research data available to others in line with: the University's, funding bodies' and publishers' policies on making the results of publically funded research publically available. Explain the extent to which anonymity will be maintained. *(max 200 words)* Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement for guidance.

Data produced will be co-owned by the researcher, the participants and the University of Leeds.

The dataset will comprise transcriptions of a qualitative set of data from focus groups, photographs of the visual data constructed during the meetings and a research diary. The data collected will be used only for analysis. The research outputs can be accessed only through the research thesis and related publications. Only the participants will get a summary of the research outputs once the project is completed, and no one outside the project will have access to the data. No reference to personal information of the participants will be made on the research thesis nor in the summary of results. When referring to personal comments and direct quotes, these will be anonymised, so the participant cannot be identified. In the case of publishing the research outputs in a specialised academic journal, no reference to personal identities information of the

participants will be made. It will be made clear to the participants that the data constructed is for my PhD purposes and impact related activities/publications.

C.21 Will the research involve any of the following activities at any stage (including identification of potential research participants)? (Tick as appropriate)

- [ ] Examination of personal records by those who would not normally have access
- [ ] Access to research data on individuals by people from outside the research team
- [ ] Electronic surveys, please specify survey tool: ______________________ (further guidance)
- [x] Other electronic transfer of data
- [ ] Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers
- [x] Use of audio/ visual recording devices (NB this should usually be mentioned in the information for participants)
- [ ] FLASH memory or other portable storage devices

Storage of personal data on, or including, any of the following:

- [x] University approved cloud computing services
- [ ] Other cloud computing services
- [ ] Manual files
- [ ] Private company computers
- [x] Laptop computers
- [ ] Home or other personal computers (not recommended; data should be stored on a University of Leeds server such as your M: or N: drive where it is

secure and backed up regularly: http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement.)

Unclassified and Confidential University data must be kept on the University servers or in approved cloud services such as Office 365 (SharePoint or OneDrive). The N: Drive or Office 365 should be used for the storage of data that needs to be shared. If Highly Confidential information is kept in these shared storage areas it must be encrypted. Highly Confidential data that is not to be shared should be kept on the M: Drive. The use of non-University approved cloud services for the storage of any University data, including that which is unclassified, is forbidden without formal approval from IT. Further guidance is available via http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement.

C.22 How do you intend to share the research data? (Indicate with an 'X) *Refer to http://library.leeds.ac.uk/research-data-deposit for guidance.*

- ☐ Exporting data outside the European Union
- ☐ Sharing data with other organisations
- ☐ Publication of direct quotations from respondents
- ☐ Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals to be identified
- ☑ Submitting to a journal to support a publication
- ☐ Depositing in a self-archiving system or an institutional repository
- ☐ Dissemination via a project or institutional website
- ☐ Informal peer-to-peer exchange
- ☐ Depositing in a specialist data centre or archive
- ☐ Other, please state: ____.
- ☐ No plans to report or disseminate the data

C.23 How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? (Indicate with an 'X) Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDissemination and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/Publication for guidance.

- [x] Conference presentation
- [x] Peer reviewed journals
- [x] Publication as an eThesis in the Institutional repository
- [ ] Publication on website
- [x] Other publication or report, please state: summary of research outputs to participants, potential book chapters and/or monograhps.
- [ ] Submission to regulatory authorities
- [ ] Other, please state: ____.
- [ ] No plans to report or disseminate the results

C.24 For how long will data from the study be stored? Please explain why this length of time has been chosen.[38] Refer to the RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/info/71/good_research_practice/106/research_data_guidance/5.

Students: *It would be reasonable to retain data for at least 2 years after publication or three years after the end of data collection, whichever is longer.*

3 years, 0 months

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

C.25 Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above normal salary or the costs of undertaking the research?[39]

- [ ] **Yes**
- [x] **No**

If yes, indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided ____

C.26 Is there scope for any other conflict of interest?[40] *For example, could the research findings affect the any ongoing relationship between any of the individuals or organisations involved and the researcher(s)? Will the research funder have control of publication of research findings? Refer to http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConflictsOfInterest.*

☐ Yes ☑ No

If so, please describe this potential conflict of interest, and outline what measures will be taken to address any ethical issues that might arise from the research.

C.27 Does the research involve external funding? (Tick as appropriate)

☐ Yes ☑ No ***If yes, what is the source of this funding?*** ________________________________

NB: If this research will be financially supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services or any of its divisions, agencies or programmes please ensure the additional funder requirements are complied with. Further guidance is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/FWAcompliance and you may also contact your FRIO for advice.

PART D: Declarations

Declaration by Principal Investigators

1. The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
2. I undertake to abide by the University's ethical and health & safety guidelines, and the ethical principles underlying good practice guidelines appropriate to my discipline.
3. If the research is approved I undertake to adhere to the study protocol, the terms of this application and any conditions set out by the Research Ethics Committee (REC).
4. I undertake to seek an ethical opinion from the REC before implementing substantial amendments to the protocol.
5. I undertake to submit progress reports if required.
6. I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of patient or other personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the University's Data Protection Controller (further information available via http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement).
7. I understand that research records/ data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future.
8. I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this application will be held by the relevant RECs and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.
9. I understand that the REC may choose to audit this project at any point after approval.

Sharing information for training purposes: *Optional – please tick as appropriate:*

☐ I would be content for members of other Research Ethics Committees to have access to the information in the application in confidence for training purposes. All personal identifiers and references to researchers, funders and research units would be removed.

Principal Investigator:

Signature of Principal Investigator:

(This needs to be an actual signature rather than just typed. Electronic signatures are acceptable)

Print name: Pablo Cheyre Date: (dd/mm/yyyy): 10/03/2022

Supervisor of student research:

I have read, edited and agree with the form above.

Supervisor's signature:

(This needs to be an actual signature rather than just typed. Electronic signatures are acceptable)

Print name: Gill Main Date: (dd/mm/yyyy): 10/03/2022

Appendix G

Transcription Extract

Translated transcript of Activity 4 (Snakes and Ladders) discussion with low-urban SES students.

PC: The most important thing is to define the snakes and ladders. Because the aim of the ladder is to get to either of these two at the top. And the snake can be…

Student 5: Like obstacles.

PC: Exactly. Like obstacles. And you write it there next to it. But the important thing is that it's somewhere. And the ladders too. The things that help us. How are we doing here? And what snakes?

Student 3: We won't make it. We'll do it next class.

PC: We can't, next class we have to do something else. What matters most is that you define the snakes and ladders. At the very least, define them. Start thinking about what things might help us get to the top and what things won't.

Student 5: An obstacle that represents an obstacle, don't worry.

PC: I think we're very behind here. More than the numbers. Let's see the snakes and ladders.

Student 8: Lend me the green one? We are bandits.

Student 3: But everything is the same. It doesn't matter how straight the snake is, it's fine.

PC: And what could be a snake to live well or be happy? What do you think? Next week is the last time we'll be here and we'll play with Lego. Remember it's on Wednesday, not Monday. What could be a snake? Who can tell me?

Student 3: Depression.

Student 9: Heart attack.

PC: What could help you become a chef?

Student 3: Learning to cook.

Student 5: Scholarships, scholarships.

Student 3: Having fun.

Student 5: I missed out on a scholarship.

PC: What else comes to mind? Another snake?

Student 9: Not being able to pay for university.

PC: Not being able to pay for university could be another snake, very good.

Student 5: Debts.

Student 9: The worst reason, a heart attack.

Student 9: Not having food.

Student 3: Not having a girlfriend (laughs).

Student 9: I don't have one either and I consider myself successful.

Student 6: Not being able to pay off the CAE.

PC: That could be another snake too. What other ladder? I see a snake now. I see more snakes than ladders. Or could there be more snakes than ladders?

Student 6: There are more snakes than ladders. Literally.

Student 8: The government doesn't support us.

PC: Tell me, what snakes are there now?

Student 3: The snake of the... 1, 2, 3, 4... 6 snakes and 2 ladders.

PC: And what does each one mean?

Student 3: At another time, we've only had two, two with names. Not having a scholarship and a heart attack.

Student 9: Shoot, I put not being able to pay for university.

Student 3: But that also works, not being able to pay for university.

PC: You had told me depression before.

Student 3: Yes, that too.

Student 6: Deteriorating mental health.

PC: Is that a snake or a ladder? (deteriorating mental health)

Student 6: A snake.

Student 8: What?

Student 6: Deteriorating mental health.

Student 3: Bullying.

PC: And bullying? What would that be?

*Student 9***:** A snake.

PC: What other ladder comes to mind?

Student 3: Sir, it's just that we haven't put up the ladders.

PC: No, but to start thinking about it.

Student 5: Sin. I'm going to put sin as a ladder.

Student 9: This could be a heart operation.

Student 8: Having a girlfriend. What's the point of having a girlfriend?

Student 9: A heart operation, but I won't do it because I need a girlfriend. I don't know.

Student 8: Being able to pay for university.

Student 9: Why free? When did they put you in jail?

Student 8: That too, being free, having your rights, being able to pay for university.

Student 9: A snake called: jail.

PC: What do you think could be a ladder?

*Student 5***:** Economic balance. I could have had a scholarship at the Catholic University.

PC: At the Penta UC?

Student 5: Yes. I had to take a test, but I didn't pass.

PC: But there could be others.

Student 7: Money.

*Student 8***:** March bonus.

PC: That would help.

*Student 6***:** A job that benefits you.

PC: How are things over here? What comes to mind? Free, what does free mean?

Student 9: It's because we put jail as the snake, so the other one is free.

PC: And why could someone go to jail?

Student 3: For committing a crime or being accused of a crime you didn't commit.

Student 8: Because you cheated.

PC: And does that happen?

Student 3: Yes, it happens. It happens a lot.

Student 8: Being blamed for something you didn't do. Once I got beaten up at school.

PC: Did anyone help you?

Student 8: Yes, a teacher.

PC: But did you talk to someone at the school?

*Student 8***:** Yes.

[Parallel conversation]

Student 8: A snake could be low grades.

Student 6: Also, if you fail a subject.

Student 8: Too much CAE, some people have too much CAE.

Student 8: Studying a degree you didn't want.

Student 6: Not getting into the degree you wanted. Not getting a high enough score.

Student 3: You scribbled on me, I'm all scribbled by you. Look, sir.

Student 8: What's up with this scribble, bro?

Student 9: And I think we made a lot of snakes and a lot of ladders. Now we should all focus on making tables.

Student 2: Hey, did you realise you did it in pairs?

PC: We have 5 minutes left.

Student 3: Sir, how is it looking?

PC: It's good. Okay, let's stop for a second now. Pay attention here. We have a few minutes left. I'll ask each group to explain the board to me and if you can name the different snakes and ladders you put. Let's start over here.

Student 9: No, wait, we're not finished. Start over there.

PC: Okay, let's start here. I'll write down the snakes and ladders.

Student 8: The ladder, friends, having friends.

PC: Okay. Tell me.

Student 3: It could be fitting into society, being happy.

Student 9: Hyperactivity isn't much of a defect.

Student 3: Yes.

PC: Let's pay attention here, let's listen.

*Student 4***:** A snake could be a scam.

PC: A scam, a scam is very good.

Student 4: Losing a scholarship.

PC: Losing a scholarship, very good.

Student 8 (parallel conversation): Having friends can be something good too.

Student 4: Winning a prize (ladder).

PC: Okay, winning a money prize or something else?

Student 4: Yes, I don't know, gold.

Student 6: A snake, debts. Another snake, failing subjects. A ladder, a stable job that benefits you.

PC: That's important.

Student 9 (parallel conversation): Economic danger.

Student 8: A snake, not getting a high enough score for the degree you want. Not getting into the university you want. And a ladder, people motivating you.

PC: That's important, very good.

Student 6: Another ladder, taking care of your health and mental health.

PC: That's very important. Okay, very good. And the other group?

Student 9: A snake. There's one from 99. The second one up to 12. It's called a heart attack.

Student 3: Okay, a snake from 28 to 9 that says dying.

Student 9: Because dying is a disadvantage.

Student 3: A ladder that says free. Another, a snake that says jail.

Student 5: Snake, not having a scholarship.

Student 9: We have the ladder: economic balance.

PC: What?

Student 9: Ladder: balance. Economic balance.

Student 5: Another one called bullying, it's not a ladder, a snake.

Student 9: Ladder: gaming PC. Snake, depression. Oh, a ladder to be happy.

PC: To be happy?

Student 9: To be happy, yes.

Student 5: There's a ladder that is free.

PC: Free. Yes, I had that, but you have them written down, right? I can read them later if needed.

Student 9: What does it say there?

Student 5: Bullying.

[End of extract]

(Original version)

PC: Lo Más importante que definamos las serpientes y las escaleras. Porque el objetivo de la escalera es llegar hasta cualquiera de estos dos arriba. Y Serpiente puede ser…

Estudiante 5: Cómo los obstáculos.

PC: Claro. Como los obstáculos. Y lo escribe ahí al lado. Pero lo importante es que esté en alguna parte. Y las escaleras también. Las cosas que nos ayudan. ¿Cómo vamos por aquí?¿Y qué serpientes?

Estudiante 3: No alcanzamos. Lo hacemos la próxima clase.

PC: No podemos, la otra clase tenemos que hacer otra cosa. Lo que más importa es que definan la serpientes y las escaleras. Que las definan, por último. Vayan pensando más o menos qué cosas pueden ser que nos ayuden a llegar arriba y qué cosas no?

Estudiante 5: Un obstáculo que representen un obstáculo que no se preocupe.

PC: Que yo creo que estamos muy atrasados aquí. Más que los números. Veamos la serpientes y la escaleras.

Estudiante 8: ¿préstame el verde? Nosotros somos bandidos.

Estudiante 3 Pero todo es igual. La serpiente no importa que tan derecha, tan bueno, las serpientes no importa que estén derecha.

PC:¿ Y qué cosa puede ser una serpiente para vivir bien o va a estar feliz? ¿Que se le ocurre? La otra semana, la última vez que vamos a estar aquí y vamos a jugar con Lego, ya le digo. Acuérdense que el miércoles, no el lunes. ¿Cuál puede ser una serpiente? ¿Quién me dice?

Estudiante 3: depresión

Estudiante 9: ataque cardiaco

PC: ¿Qué cosa le puede ayudar a ser chef?

Estudiante 3: aprender a cocinar

Estudiante 5: becas, becas.

Estudiante 3: divertirse.

Estudiante 5: yo me perdí una beca.

PC: ¿Qué otra cosa se le ocurre? ¿otra serpiente?

Estudiante 9: No poder pagar la universidad.

PC: No poder pagar la universidad puede ser otra serpiente, súper bien.

Estudiante 5: deudas.

Estudiante 9: la peor razón, un ataque al corazón.

Estudiante 9: no tener comida

Estudiante 3: no tener novia (risas)

Estudiante 9: Yo tampoco tengo y me considero exitoso.

Estudiante 6: Que no me alcance para pagar el CAE

PC: Eso puede ser otra serpiente también. ¿Qué otra escalera? Veo una serpiente ahora. Veo más serpientes que escaleras. ¿O habrán mas serpientes que escaleras?

Estudiante 6: hay mas serpientes que escaleras. Literalmente.

Estudiante 8: El gobierno no da para nosotros.

PC: Cuénteme usted. ¿Cuáles serpientes llevan ella ahora?

Estudiante 3: La serpiente de la con 1, 2, 3, 4…6 serpientes y 2 escaleras.

PC:¿ Y qué significa cada una?

Estudiante 3: En otro momento sólo hemos tenido dos, dos con nombre. No tener beca, y ataque al corazón.

Estudiante 9: Chuta yo le puse no poder pagar la universidad.

Estudiante 3: pero también sirve, no poder pagar la universidad.

PC: Usted me había dicho depresión antes.

Estudiante 3: si, también.

Estudiante 6: Empeora tu salud mental.

PC: ¿Eso es una serpiente o una escalera? (empeora tu salud mental)

Estudiante 6: Una serpiente.

Estudiante 8: ¿Qué cosa?

Estudiante 6: que empeore tu salud mental.

Estudiante 3: bullying.

PC: ¿Y el bullying? ¿Que sería?

Estudiante 9: Una serpiente.

PC:¿ Qué otra escalera se le ocurre.

Estudiante 3: tio es que la escalera, no, no la hemos puesto.

PC: No, pero para ir pensando.

Estudiante 5: pecado. A una escalera le voy a poner pecado.

Estudiante 9: esta podría ser operación al corazón.

Estudiante 8: tener novia. ¿de que te sirve tener novia?

Estudiante 9: Operación al corazón como sería, pero no lo hago porque necesito novia. No sé.

Estudiante 8: Poder pagar la universidad.

Estudiante 9: ¿Por qué libre? ¿Cuando te metieron en la cárcel?

Estudiante 8: Eso también po, estar libre, tener tus derechos, poder pagar la universidad.

Estudiante 9: Una serpiente se llama: cárcel.

PC: A ustedes, ¿Qué se les ocurre que puede ser una escalera?

Estudiante 5: equilibro económico. Yo pude haber tenido una beca en la Universidad Católica.

PC: ¿En el Penta UC?

Estudiante 5: si. Tenía que hacer una prueba pero no me la saqué.

***PC: pero pueden haber otras*.**

Estudiante 7: El dinero.

Estudiante 8: bono marzo.

PC: eso ayudaría.

Estudiante 6: un trabajo que te favorece.

***PC: ¿Cómo van por acá? ¿Que una que se le ocurre? Libre, ¿qué significa libre*?**

Estudiante 9: es que la serpiente de atrás pusimos cárcel, entonces la otra es libre.

PC: ¿Y por qué se podría ir a la cárcel?

Estudiante 3: por cometer un delito o porque te inculpen de un delito que no hiciste.

Estudiante 8: porque hiciste trampa.

PC: ¿ Y eso pasa?

Estudiante 3: si pasa. Pasa muuucho.

Estudiante 8: que te culpen de algo que ni hiciste. A mi una vez me pegaron en el colegio

PC: ¿Y alguien lo ayudó?

Estudiante 8: si un profe.

PC: ¿pero hablo con alguien del colegio?

Estudiante 8: si

[Conversación paralela]

Estudiante 8: una serpiente podría ser notas bajas.

Estudiante 6: también, si te echai un ramo.

Estudiante 8: mucho CAE, hay gente que tiene mucho CAE.

Estudiante 8: estudiar la carrera que no querías

Estudiante 6: no quedaste en la carrera que no querías. Que no te alcance el puntaje.

Estudiante 3: Me rayaste, estoy todo rayado por ustedes. Mire tio.

PC: puros tatuajes

Estudiante 8: que onda este rayado hermano

Estudiante 9: Y creo que hicimos muchas serpientes y muchas escaleras. Ahora todos nos deberíamos dedicar a hacer cuadros.

Estudiante 2: Oigan, se dieron cuenta que lo hicieron de dos en dos.

Estudiante 3: tio, ¿cómo nos está quedando?

PC: esta buena. Ya, a ver. Vamos a parar un segundito ya. Pongan atención aquí. Nos queda poco tiempo. Les voy a pedir que cada grupo me explique más o menos el tablero y si me puede nombrar las distintas serpientes y escaleras que pusieron. A ver, partamos por aquí.

Estudiante 9: no espere, es que no estemos terminado. Para por allá.

PC: Bueno, partamos por acá. Yo voy a anotar aquí las serpientes y las escaleras.

Estudiante 8: la escalera amigos, tener amigos.

PC: Ya. Cuénteme.

Estudiante 3: puede ser encajar en la sociedad, ser feliz.

Estudiante 9: La hiperactividad no es tanto un defecto.

Estudiante 3: Sí.

PC: Pongamos atención aquí, escuchemos.

Estudiante 4: una serpiente puede ser una estafa.

PC: Estafa, una estafa súper bien.

Estudiante 4: Perder una beca.

PC: Perder una beca súper bien.

Estudiante 8 (conversación paralela): tener amigos puede ser algo bueno también.

Estudiante 4: ganar un premio (escalera).

PC: Bueno, ¿ganar un premio de plata o de otra cosa?

Estudiante 4: Si, no se, de oro.

Estudiante 6: una serpiente, deudas. Otra serpiente, echarse ramos. Una escalera, un trabajo estable que te favorezca.

PC: Eso es importante.

Estudiante 9 (conversación paralela): peligro económico.

Estudiante 8: una serpiente, que no le alcancen los puntos para la carrera que quiere. No quedar en la universidad que uno quiera. Y escalera, que la gente lo motive.

PC: Eso es importante, súper bien.

Estudiante 6: Otra escalera, preocuparse de su salud y su salud mental.

PC: **Eso es súper importante. Ya, a ver, super bien. ¿Y el otro grupo?**

Estudiante 9: Una serpiente. Hay una que ya del 99. El dos hasta el 12. Que se llama Ataque al corazón.

Estudiante 3: Ya, una serpiente que va del 28 al nueve que dice morir.

Estudiante 9: porque morir es una desventaja.

Estudiante 3: Una escalera que dice libre. Otra, una serpiente que dice cárcel.

Estudiante 5: Serpiente, no tener beca.

Estudiante 9: tenemos la escalera: equilibrio económico.

PC: ¿Qué cosa?

Estudiante 9: Escalera equilibrio. Equilibrio económico.

Estudiante 5: otra llamada bullying, no es una escalera serpiente.

Estudiante 9: escalera: pc gamer. Serpiente, depresión. Ah, una escalera ser feliz.

PC: ¿ser feliz?

Estudiante 9: Ser feliz, si.

Estudiante 5: Hay una escalera que es libre.

PC: es libre. Sí, esa la tenía, pero las tienen escritas igual, ¿no? Por último la puedo leer después.

Estudiante 9: ¿Qué dice ahí?

Estudiante 5: bullying.