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2.1 Introduction

The well-being of children has historically been associated with a number of different social and political issues: participation in the labor force; the character, nature, and extent of schooling; notions of parenting; and the evaluation of the quality of family life. These issues have, in the past, involved evaluation by societal agents representing different kinds of “normal” childhood expectations and the environmental and structural conditions of the life of children, but largely without the use of concepts associated with well-being. This chapter will point out aspects of historical change in the well-being of children when their lives have been subjected to political attention. It will also demonstrate how and when children have been made visible as political issues and thus labeled and characterized in terms that might be recognized today as aspects of well-being or the lack thereof. Fulfillment of human biological needs necessary for survival interacts with culturally defined, subjective, and collective evaluations of quality of life for children. Aspirations on the part of children, parents, and societal agencies reflect specific historical experiences: for example, work, schooling, and family.

Issues that today are important in the definitions of well-being have, in the past, often not been deemed important or have simply been conceptualized in terms hardly identifiable today. Consequently, well-being is also dependent on the definitions of childhood as shaped by gender, class, age definitions, and ethnicity, as well as on how care for children has been organized in different societies. It is intimately associated with how welfare surrounding children is historically understood, which, in turn, is also dependent on, among others, the definitions of the rights and social status of children and the legal role of the family. The interdependence of these issues has been expressed in different ways due to specific

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cultural traditions and political cultures. Measures and definitions of well-being are closely connected to systems of political governance and to the scholarly and intellectual traditions for which the life of children is, or has been, an important scholarly quest. This chapter will focus on general trends of change in the West concerning children's well-being. Such trends are composed of a multitude of complex substructures embedded within different national or regional changes and developments. It is therefore important to acknowledge the differences between ways of understanding children, childhood, and well-being as they have evolved throughout Western history.

The West is, in many ways, a cultural unit but is also very much defined by the differences among nations, regions, and cultures and, indeed, includes nations in the Eastern hemisphere. It is particularly interesting in the context of the changing understanding of children's rights and its basis in different political regimes in different countries. The histories involved – of the family and children, of institutions of care and schooling, of work, of international cooperation, of imperialism and globalization – create a complex web of experiences that shape understandings of well-being that are both unique and different from that of one's neighbors and yet a part of a common Western experience. It is in many ways both a story of the long-, medium-, and short-term changes and the limits of the possible (Braudel 1985, 2001). The longevity of institutions of child care and the permanent need for regulation of the life of children is staggering, as is the cultural permanence of certain aspects of notions of childhood and children. The influences of extrafamilial child caring institutions, such as orphanages, homes for foundlings, placing out, and so on, were formed during the Renaissance and have continued into the present day. The regulation of children's lives within families and issues such as child labor are permanent features both in a global and a Western context. Even when these institutions have been abandoned in certain countries and contexts as inappropriate forms of care, they form the undercurrent of examples from which newer forms of care and well-being are defined. Indeed, war or other crises re-actualize forms of care that in other contexts are deemed less appropriate. Such events are at the same time isolated and limited in time and space and yet are almost permanent or recurrent features in the history of childhood. Given the nature of the vast topic covered the references in this article are of three types: one type refers to an example of the type of research or issues mentioned, a second consists of a reference to a specific arguments in earlier research, while the third type contains references to surveys on the topic or bibliographies with more extensive references to stimulate further reading. I have not been able to reference all the important work and most certainly neglected important studies and aspects of this complex history due to the limits of this article, but also as a result of my ambition to create a consistent narrative. Recently published histories of childhood can serve to fill the gaps in my presentation. (Fass 2004, 2012; Hindman 2009; Foyster and Marten 2010)

The narrative in this chapter forms a story about a series of different, but sometimes parallel, regimes of governance of children's well-being influenced by basic demographic and social conditions, systems of political governance and professional responsibilities, and understandings of the nature of social

relationships of children and childhood in culture and science/scholarship. As such, they incorporate understandings of the rights of children as defined by the relationships between states/governance, family, and children (Foucault 1976/1978, 1979; Trägårdh and Berggren 2010). Regimes of well-being also represent norms and value structures of how the lives of children are best construed in different societies, thereby also defining the normal and the abnormal. Based in both international and national or regional experiences, the different understandings of well-being will inevitably come to be a part of conflicting political cultures and conflicting interpretations of the world of children, as well as expressions of general and global and long-, medium-, and short-term trends of change.

2.2 Children's Well-Being, Family, and Institutions in Transition

There are specific instances in history when the well-being of children becomes visible in the eyes of government at local and central levels and thus in historical sources. In the historical contexts, when children's lives were shaped within households or on farms, there were, for the most part, no comments from religious and secular authorities. Clearly, however, this lack of attention should not be understood as being unproblematic in terms that today are associated with well-being. Both high mortality rates and the general living conditions indicate that children must have suffered both severe physical and mental hardships. There are many indications that parents cared about the well-being of their offspring. Artifacts such as toys, cradles, balls, and dolls are also evidence of age-specific stages of child development that point toward periods of childhood play. Such emotional commitment can be inferred from stories of religious miracles and the recording of childhood accidents. Such records indicate that the well-being of children did matter to both secular and religious authorities (Hanawalt 1993, 1986; Pollock 1983; Ferraro 2013).

The life of children was also a matter for the larger society. In the Nordic countries, the introduction of Christianity involved the incorporation of children into the responsibility of the church. The inclusion of children conveyed the ambition of the church to reach populations as a whole and was expressed in, for example, burial practices, which included burying children in the churchyards (Mejsholm 2009; Lewis-Simpson 2008). In classical antiquity, children occupied an important role as cultural symbols and important bearers of the future, although even immature and powerless children were visible in images and documents. Children's well-being was not a separate cultural or political issue, but was naturally integrated into a society that was aware of their importance to reproduction of the family and society (Vuolanto 2002; Bradley 2013; Ferraro 2013; Harlow and Laurence 2010). The world of most children was primarily shaped by the context of the family.

Histories of the family reveal that the consequences of high mortality among adults, and the effects of war, famine, and poverty, made changing family constellations

necessary and, indeed, a constant phenomenon. The high mortality of the young made permanent and stable sibling relations at times rare. Lasting relationships with the parental generation and the older generation might also be endangered by harsh economic and social situations as well as lower longevity in both upper and lower social strata (Anderson 1980). A majority of children grew up in household constellations and families, but these may have been reshaped several times during the life course of the children. At the same time, large households with servants and kin networks gave children a social context. Family research has demonstrated not only how the Western European family was characterized by nuclear units but also how these were transformed during the life course of the family and interacted with different forms of household construction. Family history research has pointed out how families also represented continuity and stability during periods of dramatic social transformations in spite of harsh conditions, during rapid industrialization and even earlier (Hareven 2000; Laslett 1973, 1977a; Anderson 1971).

Although families may have been the *de facto* source of stability and identity for children during industrialization and in poverty, such transformations were the source of worries about children's well-being from other points of view (Sandin 1986; Ferraro 2013). Both religious and secular authorities expressed anxieties about children's moral and emotional well-being in families, sometimes in reference to concrete social problems, but also as an expression of general concerns about the family as a unit of socialization in matters of civic and religious morals. Such concerns can be identified in writings from different historical epochs and show variations in attitudes to child-rearing in Catholic and Protestant traditions. In the Protestant tradition care of children's physical and mental needs formed the basis for the building of civil virtues and values of society that underwrote the need for education. The use of education in the care of the young was also marked by differences in the evaluation of original sin and natural evil, and they reflect the role of the parents in different national or regional cultures (Ozment 1983; Ferraro 2013; Delap et al. 2009).

Moral and civic standing as defined by both religious and secular governments was an expression of an aspect of well-being for which the parents and/or the household were regarded as responsible. The role of such engagement in the well-being of the young during the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation had political overtones (Ferraro 2013). It also reflected the emergence of secular political contract theories, such as those of Hobbes and Locke that reconceptualized the role of children in society. The distinction between religious and civic morals was not at all times an important one, as they were based on one another, particularly when applied to the young. Moral standing was not only reflected in behavior of the young. Poverty and illnesses could indicate not only moral flaws but also signify a lack of moral well-being in children as well as in adults (Cunningham 1995).

Problematic social situations could also lead to child abandonment, which gained the attention of different religious, civil, and secular authorities, depending on political regimes. It is in these contexts that orphanages, foundling homes, and workhouses for children were established. The development of such institutions expressed a concern for children's well-being in terms of their physical and moral

status and reflected an ambition to protect society from the consequences of vagrant and criminal children (Cunningham 1991, 2006). These institutions represented an ambition to artificially replace the family and household.

In other cases and historic periods, authorities strove to take care of children by placing them out in families or creating legal forms such as foster children and/or adoptions. Such measures show an interest in artificially engineering environments for children, but they also demonstrate that the understanding of what was beneficial for children varied, as did the understanding and definition of parenting/family (Cunningham 1991; Lindgren 2006; Carp 1998, 2002; Keating 2009).

The character of institutions differed both in theory and practice in terms of the aims of the support given children. In some contexts, work was the most important tool for improvement and was closely associated with the economic needs of either the government or local economic interests; in others, the emphasis was on moral education or even secular education. Institutions tended to aim at being self-supporting in economic terms when possible (Cunningham 1991; Ransel 1988; Sandin 1986). The care of children was also associated with an evaluation of whether the children and families deserved support and, if so, which ones. It was at times of central importance for governments and welfare agencies to make distinctions between legitimate and non-legitimate needs. Civil society associations or philanthropic groups organized institutions or were instrumental in shaping legislation (Laslett 1977b; Sandin 1986; Cunningham 1991; Weiner 1995; Ipsen 2006; Keating 2009).

The well-being of children and the ambitions to offer support were clearly negotiable in these terms. At the same time, the capacity to give help in practice was limited and subservient to varying national political economic agendas. The production of clothes for the army or for local manufacturers made the care of orphans less expensive for governments. The relationships between the families and government were also cast differently in the varying legal systems in the West, which could also influence the care of children.

A rough distinction can be made between four “families according to the law”: the common law family, the family under Roman law, the Germanic family, and the Nordic family (Therborn 1993; 240). In the parts of Europe that were dominated by Roman legal patriarchy, the authority of the household head defined children as wards of the patriarch only as long as the child did nothing criminal. The ability of the state to intervene against abusive parenting was limited. Children that were taken care of by the state were strictly defined in legal terms as foundlings or orphans by the courts. In the UK, the common-law system gave judges greater leeway to interpret in which situation a child needed protection. This influenced custody cases, as well as the vague descriptive nomenclature used to describe children in the streets as gutter snipes, street Arabs, and so on (Jablonka 2013; Cunningham 1991; Gilfoyle 2013). Differences also defined the relationship to children born out of wedlock. The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children was important in all countries, but the nature of the treatment and status of such children was different and indicated variances in the commitment to the well-being of different categories of children and definitions of family (Therborn 1993; Grossberg 1988; Fuchs 1984).

The role and character of institutions that provided help consequently differed throughout Europe. In Catholic areas, the role of foundlings tended to be important, while orphanages for homeless and neglected children of different kinds played a larger role in Germany and the Scandinavian countries (Cunningham 1995; Jablonka 2013; Kertzer 1991; Ipsen 2006). In England, the placement of children in foster homes by poor law authorities and later the transportation of children to the colonies were important (Cunningham 1995). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a newly awakened interest in the care of foundlings to supplement national population growth can be noted in many of the European nations (Ransel 1988). The greater role of educational facilities such as work schools and other schools and institutions of mass education characterized development. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a parallel development with the rise of disciplinary institutions, asylums, training ships, and reformatories established to address the problems of wayward children and children who did not adapt to the regulation of educational facilities. Some educational institutions continued to combine begging for support in the streets or choir singing with the education of children (Sandin 1986, 2009; Jablonka 2013; Cunningham 1995).

It must be noted that distinctions between different kinds of institutions and the nomenclature used were, in reality, often blurred and changed over time. The difference between children defined as orphans, delinquents, or different variations of street children was not always distinct. Educational institutions also played a role for parents, who could send children to schools knowing that they would participate in street begging and choir singing during school hours – and be remunerated for these efforts. Daily life in such institutions also made room for activities – work, disciplining, or schooling – that in a different context may have led to a redefinition of the institution. Orphanages gave way to educational activities for middle-class children living outside the institution or to schools that were opened up for street children (Sandin 1986; Laslett 1977b; Jablonka 2013; Gilfoyle 2013).

Worry and concerns about children suffering from social or moral deprivation and the threats to society deriving from such shortcomings have historically been central forces in creating institutions for the care, education, and control of children and the young. These institutions ranged from establishments oriented toward replacing the family and households to a mere emphasis on keeping children at work and self-supported in educational facilities or religious institutions. Definitions of the dangers arising from such sources were, to a great extent, informed by a critique of the lower-class family and household or the lack of families and households.

The nation-building process, with the creation of new nations in parts of Europe, most likely also influenced an interest in the well-being of children living in the streets (Miller 1998; Sandin 1986; Cunningham 1995; Jablonka 2013; Ipsen 2006; Safley 2005). Such worries gained prominence in the emerging market economy, when the living conditions of working children became observable; at the same time, the changing class structure formed alternative notions of what the well-being of children entailed.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the number of children and young outside the established parameters of a largely paternalistic social structure

gave impetus to a discussion about disciplining institutions before the Industrial Revolution. In the long term, middle-class families became a norm for both the nature of family life and the appropriate understanding of childhood (Miller 1998; Stearns 2013; Grant 2013; Jablonka 2013), which also fed a critique of how poor working and deprived children fared. Such normative foundations were also the core of the critique against institutions such as orphanages and the basis for arguments for the placement of parentless or destitute children in families.

Non-family-based institutions have had problems living up to the organizational norms of family life. Family placement or adoptions became an alternative in environments where state and local government agencies could administer such complex social responsibilities. The importance of family placement was also dependent on the definitions of religious and state responsibility and were clearly more important in Protestant countries than in Catholic. The sanctity of family made the placing out of illegitimate children a problem in Catholic countries (Kertzer 1991; Ipsen 2006; Cunningham 1991; Sköld 2006, 2012).

2.3 Industrious Children: Child Labor and the Configuration of Well-Being

When child labor in the mines, on the streets, and in the factories and sweatshops expanded during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, children's work was transformed from a fact of life in the framework of the household into something that was defined as a social problem. The effect of labor on children's well-being became an issue when the number and concentration of children working under hazardous conditions became observable. The emergence of the issue was consequently also tied to a historic period when government or civil society defined its responsibilities to include children, although for a variety of reasons. Discussions included both deliberations about the consequences for children's bodies and souls: for example, short- and long-term health hazards and the moral dangers of working conditions in the factories and mines. The latter also had implications for children's current well-being and their futures as adult workers and/or raisers of families, as well as for the global position of the nation (Bolin 1989; Heywood 2007, 2013; Hindman 2002, 2009; Olsson 1980; Rahikainen 2004; Hendrick 1997, 2003).

The discussion was consequently not only about children's work, per se, but about how the welfare of children was organized in relationship to the family and other ways of caring for the welfare of children. The family's inability to care for the physical and moral well-being of their offspring worried reformers and philanthropists. Families dependent on child labor displayed traits that deviated from the norms for family life that were being established in nineteenth century Europe. Generational and gender roles might be overturned when adults were unemployed, while the labor of children could be bought at a cheaper price. Children's work came into conflict with both the economic interest of adults and the understanding of the family or the household as the unit for care and the creator of welfare for children. Debates of this kind first surfaced in the most developed economies in Europe but also shaped the character of

the discussion elsewhere. Reform movements were fed by a critique of the economic system that made child labor possible, both from the politically conservative and the politically radical (Heywood 2013; Hindman 2002).

Child labor in rural areas attracted less attention, although it was certainly as common and widespread. Rural and family-oriented settings offered a context for the moral upbringing of children that made the use of children as workers appear less morally problematic (Heywood 2001, 2007, 2010; Sjöberg 1996; Sandin 1997).

Children had traditionally participated in work on family farms, and the breakthrough of agricultural capitalism in the eighteenth century made the work of children an asset to the laboring family. The early stages of the Industrial Revolution also made children's labor valuable in the labor market, and child labor grew in value during the late eighteenth century with the expansion of household industries.

The education that reformers demanded for children was clearly aimed at improving the moral aspects of the care of children, as well as their physical health. It was feared that, when they became adults, working children would lack the necessary education and would be intellectually and morally hampered, thus becoming a menace to society even as youngsters. It was argued that working children might grow up in danger of becoming criminal and morally depraved. These notions also ran through the arguments about the meaning of childhood as it appeared around the late nineteenth century. Working children came into conflict with the understanding of how a good childhood was to be construed as a period of emotional and physical growth under the protection of a family. Their independence and use of money and public arenas did not match the notions of an appropriate childhood (Cunningham 1991; Zelizer 1985; Heywood 2001, 2007, 2010; Sjöberg 1996; Sandin 1997). The existence of such children also indicated a failure on the part of the parents. Children working in family settings, in small-scale craft work, or in manufacturing industries under adult supervision were for that reason sometimes acceptable, but excessive use of children in the labor force became an upsetting phenomenon.

Opinions were not unanimous, however, as child labor also provided income for families and kept children off the streets. The effort to abolish child labor extended over many decades. This delay reflected not only opposition from employers, who exploited low-wage child laborers, but also from working-class parents, whose children's earnings helped make the crucial difference in the family's income, even if these earnings at the same time suppressed adult wages. It also reflected a deep-seated ambivalence among many parents about the cultural value of work for children's development into adults. Working-class culture encompassed the notion that becoming an adult involved the formative experience of labor. Experience regarded by others as negative for the well-being of children was in the eyes of parents an important aspect of this same well-being. Legal conflicts around child labor also shaped the cultural construct of children's labor in the working classes in some places. The understanding of the well-being of children was most likely in parts contradictory and complex (Schmidt 2010; Heywood 2001, 2010, 2013; Levene 2012). The prohibition of child labor also came into conflict with important economic interests, and exceptions had at times to be made for economic sectors

dependent on child workers, for example, the agricultural sector and industries such as glassworks or sawmills (Olsson 1980). Prohibiting the labor of children also reflects the role and organization of state power. In some nations with weak national regulatory power, prohibition of child labor came late in spite of broad criticism of the practices and even, in some places, successful local regulation (Hindman 2002; Lindenmeyer 1997, 2013).

In some cases, the possibility of legislating against child labor was dependent on the technological level of industry that had already made the use of child labor redundant. In Western Europe and the United States, the decline of child labor was less due to enactment of statutes banning the practice than to technological change, which drastically reduced the need for bobbin girls and boys. The system of industrial management also had an important role in the development of child labor (Bolin 1989).

The extent and the ways in which child labor was deemed a problem for children's well-being also reflected different national positions in the processes of industrialization. In the UK, the regulation of excessive use of child labor focused on health and developed during the 1830s, prior to any real involvement of compulsory education. In France, the legislation against child labor came soon after and was influenced by the English example. In both France and the UK, regulation was directed toward industry rather than intervention in families. In the German states such as Prussia and in the Scandinavian nations, regulation occurred later, a consequence of later industrialization, but it also had a different focus, on the morals and schooling of children. In this region the educational provisions for children predated any real industrialization, and the regulation of laboring children was associated with the maintenance and development of educational provisions. Here the criticism of child labor also involved an extensive discussion of the negative moral consequences of a failed education and the need to support the family as a moral entity. In southern Europe both the development of industry and the development of educational provisions came later (Heywood 2013; Sandin 1997; Rahikainen 2004).

Consequently, debates on the effects of child labor on the well-being of children paralleled that of the need for educational provisions in many countries as did the concerns about the health status of children. The development, however, was uneven. Ambitions sought to bring children's schooling in line with protective legislation against child labor, the age of confirmation, and regulations in the penal code. These developments can be noted as well as important international interaction between social reformers all over the Western world (Jablonka 2013). Their arguments were based on a combination of educational, political, and practical considerations and the evaluation of the family as an institution of moral and civil upbringing. Industrial labor and work as street vendors or newsboys signaled moral danger.

Working outside the confinement of the family and in public spheres could jeopardize the morals and behavior of children. It was not compatible with the kind of normative understanding of childhood that became engrained in the Western European experience during the late nineteenth century. The child's place was within the family or in an educational setting. This change was the product of several factors, including a shift in the nature and location of the work

children performed; a romanticization of childhood innocence and a horror over juvenile precocity; a heightened emphasis on formal schooling; fears for children's health and physical and mental well-being; and the struggle to create a family wage (Zelizer 1985; Miller 1998).

Education could be motivated by different purposes: sometimes by the developmental needs of children, sometimes by ambitions to control the urban environment and to keep children off the streets. The civic or national identity of children also became an aspect of well-being and combined the needs described as appropriate for children with the needs of the emerging nation states. The construction of a national identity was of central importance in the educational systems and reflected the establishment of imperialist nation-states and, for that matter, the manifest destiny of white supremacy over the world and other nations. This reflects the ambition to shape childhood that at the same time expressed the exceptional and specific destiny of each nation, be it the United States or England, France, the emerging German nation, or small countries like Sweden.

Mass-schooling ironically made visible the poor physical quality of the laboring poor and consequently implicitly also their mental condition, which prompted initiatives to improve the stock of children to support national endeavors. Different national trajectories are largely associated with the timing and phases of industrialization, mass-schooling, and systems of governance. It is significant that a federal structure delayed national legislation in the United States and that factory inspections in the UK filled a different role than did the factory and school inspections in the Scandinavian countries (Davín 1996; Sandin 1997, 2010; Schrupf 1997; Hendrick 1997; Lindenmeyer 1997; Coninck-Smith 2000). Education had in no way the same implications for children of all social classes, but rather indicated different regimes of well-being and the varied responsibility of Western states for children of different backgrounds.

2.4 Education, Well-Being, Intersectionality

Enrollment in institutions that provided mass-schooling improved towards the end of the nineteenth century, but with large national and regional variations. Different waves of introduction of compulsory schooling can be identified that also reflect differences in the understanding of the role of education in the lives of children. The pattern corresponds, on the one hand, to the early introduction of schools as a result of state initiatives in the northern German and Scandinavian states and, on the other hand, to the initiative of states to create educational provisions that took advantage of existing religious and civil organizations. In parts of Southern Europe, the legislation for compulsory education expressed state-building processes but lagged after the development in Northern Europe (Green 1990; Miller 1998: 143–248; Soysal and Strang 1989: 277–288; Maynes 1985; Sandin 2010).

The educational system developed dramatically during the nineteenth century, but only slowly did it become important in the lives of children. Their well-being was defined by the family and by participation in the labor force. However, by the

end of the nineteenth century educational institutions had a dominant influence over the lives of children and the character of childhood in many parts of Europe and created a model of the ideal childhood. This model was also important in the shaping of childhood in the most industrialized areas and influenced social policy and politics concerning children. Educational institutions created and inspired an understanding of the normal childhood and the basic standard of definitions of well-being (Sandin 2010).

This model was not the same for all children. Girls, as future mothers, were central to educational efforts for the lower classes, but the education of girls remained a private matter in other social classes. Such an attitude reflected a negative evaluation of the moral character of the working-class family, and, at the same time, a lack of commitment on the part of the state to the education of women, which had a bearing on the evaluation of well-being. Intellectual activities were looked upon as a threat to a girl's well-being and were thought to undermine her health. The inference was that the social role of women was a nonpublic one. The reflections of gender and class divisions in the schools reinforced the economic and social background of children and the class- and gender-specific definitions of well-being. It was assumed natural that children of the laboring poor would be able to do physical work and have a shorter period of education, while it was not reasonable for middle- and upper-class children (Davin 1989; Miller 1998: 221–273; Maynes 1985: 83–102; Sandin 2010: 105–110). The same can be assumed for children with ethnic backgrounds that judged them according to other standards of well-being in the eyes of the educational reformers (Bernstein 2011; Ramey 2012).

This Western model of childhood was also very ambiguous in its application in the territories of Western empires. On the one hand, it was used to criticize the ways of the colonized people, but colonizers were also hesitant to apply the same norm of childhood and educational standards to all children in the colonies (Pomfret 2004, 2010). Such an application would no doubt run contrary to both economic interests and the system of governance applied at that time in the majority world.

In most countries, the teaching of girls at the secondary level was not accepted as a responsibility of the state. During the second half of the century, however, an increased interest arose, closely associated both with the feminist movement and the changing cultural values of the middle-class family. The differences between children and between the different types of childhood were reflected in the structure of education and defined the parameters of well-being applied for children of different social backgrounds. At the secondary level, an educational system that was created was distinctly gendered and marked by class in France, Britain, Scandinavia, and the German states, while in the United States the public high school was formally designed to include children from different layers of society, though in reality it also reflected varying strategies marked by class and the cultural backgrounds of immigrant groups (Tyack 1974; Fass 1989; Green 1990; Kaestle 1973; Kaestle and Vinovskis 1980).

The different understandings of well-being are also played out in the differences between the family and the educational system. Immigrant families in the United

States who had toiled as farm-hands or factory workers looked at schooling with suspicion, as working-class parents tended to do elsewhere in the West, but this attitude was aggravated by their status as newcomers with a foreign cultural background. Such conflicts are not unique to the United States, but can also be seen in other countries where mass migration and urbanization were central aspects of modernization. Doubt was cast upon the usefulness of skills acquired in schools, as it also was on the attitudes to life and the future that children might pick up in schools. Schools also imparted routines and values that were grounded in conceptions of time associated with a factory-like time control foreign to the rhythm of the agricultural background of the parents. Such debates focused on urban centers but had consequences for the organization of rural education as well. Rural schooling became increasingly valued after the establishment of a national framework by large school bureaucracies and departments of education (Fass 1989; Tyack 1974; Sjöberg 1996; Lassonde 2005; Davin 1996; Maynes 1985; Mintz 2004).

It was possible for new citizens to appreciate an education that could lead to a profession or degree and serve the family interest, even if it was in conflict with the background of the parental generation. To immigrant groups like the Irish, Polish, and Italians, schooling beyond the minimum was not foreign by the beginning of the twentieth century. However, there were consequences for the identity of the young adolescents. The detachment of the cognitive, emotional, and social growth of the youths from these families was worrisome to immigrant families. A separate cultural space for young people, distanced from the loyalty and demands of the family, threatened the core of the values immigrant parents had taught their children. Education also produced cultural distance to the family, and new patterns of peer culture and notions of development that were nourished by the extended schooling may have had consequences for experiences of well-being among children (Lassonde 2005).

An important legacy for the future produced by these institutions of mass education was the establishment of an idea, and in some locations a reality, that national educational institutions as a whole should include children from different social backgrounds and reflect a government responsibility to provide similar opportunities for all children. Educational systems tended to visualize national commitments to the younger generation as a whole. The appropriateness of a comprehensive school for all classes of society influenced the discussion in countries with parallel school systems – different schools for different social classes – as well in the United States. The apparent democratization of education, with working-class children in the education system and with more middle-class children in public education, made the relationship between public and private educational facilities problematic in some countries for those children who aspired to longer education, as the curricula and educational norms differed. The cost of the investment in children and the demographic transition, with the fall in the birth rate and the emergence of smaller families, may have influenced increased educational investment. Childhood had a definite price for these parents. Schools institutionalized different childhoods that reflected class and gender divisions, as well as the division between urban and rural environments (Fass 1989; Lassonde 2005; Maynes 1985; Miller 1998; Sandin 2010; Ipsen 2010).

The universalistic ambition had consequences for the categorization of children who did not meet the demands that these educational institutions entailed. The consequences of a broader recruitment of children also created problems, as the inclusion of all children contributed to the formation of notions of normality (closely associated to education for national citizenship) that were to be introduced. It also made it necessary to sort out children who did not match the criteria of a normal childhood. In this historical context it became necessary to separate out the physically and intellectually handicapped. The ability to keep pace with teaching in ordinary schools also became a criterion of normality: a way of defining difference and a way of defining citizenship.

Children living under moral and material deprivation had to be weeded out from the public schools and placed in other institutions, as were children with cognitive problems. Children of the poor became visible, not only from the pulpit and as an item in the registers, but in overt contrast to all other children. In this project, the teachers, physicians, and philanthropists began to try to transform the children of the poor – as all children – into children of the nation, subjects of the new nations. Deviation from normality – or normal behavior – created by compliance with the demands of education could be observed and noted in the registers of the educational system. It was also described and measured with instruments such as intelligence testing and tables of normal development (Sandin 2010; Turmel 2008; Hendrick 1997; Løkke 1990; Sundkvist 1994; Axelsson 2007; Beatty et al. 2006).

The enormous expansion of school construction that took place in urban centers in the Western world during the latter half of the nineteenth century reflected the expansion of elementary educational institutions (Coninck-Smith 2000, 2011). These impressive buildings also signified an ambition to shape children's healthy bodies in spacious classrooms that had appropriate air circulation. These ambitions for schools covered a wide and complex array of aspects of well-being, from the protection of children's bodies and health to education, morals, and behavior. Historically, these are intertwined with, for example, the moral content of behavior, cognitive abilities, physical posture, and educational participation. The significance of childhood also changed in this process. Working gave children of the working classes social status and a role in the family. Children's earnings could be interpreted as a sign of adulthood and may have been expressed in what was considered inappropriate independence when the children disposed of these resources. In societies where children in the upper classes were dependent for a long period of their lives, images of street peddlers and independent laboring children became problematic. This had a different meaning relative to children in the colonies, where the otherness of native children reinforced the uniqueness of the Western understanding of child protection. Children – in the ideal childhood – should not work, but should rather be dependent on adults for their welfare for a long time during their upbringing. In the discourse, children's work in the streets and elsewhere was associated with loitering and idleness. To a certain extent, work in the countryside could be associated with play and sound physical and intellectual development. The establishment of universal education provisions hampered the use of children as laborers, even though many rural areas also found a way around

the compulsory school attendance regulations. It must be noted that compulsory schooling did not put an end to children's work. Some school systems were constructed to make possible children's participation in the workforce, while others intentionally tried to hinder such work. Success varied depending on the social context. Children have nevertheless continued to combine schooling with domestic work done within the family (Miller 1998; Sandin 2010; Cunningham 1991, 2006; Heywood 1988, 2001, 2013; Sjöberg 1996; The dynamics of child poverty 2001).

2.5 Well-Being, Nation-Building, Child Saving, and the Study of Children

The moral coherence and identity of the nations around the beginning of the twentieth century put special emphasis on the meaning of childhood. Children were not only a matter for the family but also for the survival of the nation, both morally and physically. Special focus was put on both the physical and moral environment of the working classes. This developed differently in various national contexts, depending on the character of the demands for national cohesion, social responsibility, and the democratization of education.

Children in schools and summer camps arranged for poor children began to be described and measured in different ways with the aid of the newly emerging medical and psychological sciences. The Child Study Movement became an international intellectual movement. It made important contributions to the development of social and behavioral sciences and expanded the knowledge of children's developmental needs. With an impressive start in "the child study era" in the early twentieth century, studies on children were for many years mainly conducted within education, medicine, and psychology with the focus on child development, normalcy, and delinquency. Child saving created a legacy that defined the academic interests in the role of children in schools and in the family (Platt 1969; Platt and Chávez-García 2009; Lindenmeyer 1997; Beatty et al. 2006; Münger 2000; Richardsson 1989; Smuts 2006). Children were conceptualized in terms of normal and abnormal development, both cognitive and emotional, and studies were often conducted in experimental settings. An underlying notion was the importance of early childhood for the future of adult life, identity, status, and competencies. From these foundations, research in psychology, sociology, and education developed these child-focused disciplines and made important advances in understanding children's development and their social interactions (Beatty et al. 2006; Axelsson 2007; Fass 2004; Turmel 2008; Lawrence and Starkey 2001).

The educational system provided a channel for politicizing many of these initiatives. We can note the development of programs to feed hungry school children, to improve hygiene, to provide school baths on Saturday afternoons, and to campaign for mass vaccination. Afternoon leisure activities or holiday camps for the poor were initiated to keep children off the streets during the long summer vacations. Classes were introduced and curricula developed in the urban schools to fill the spare time of otherwise idle children. Social programs were

developed around the educational system or in proximity to it. The playground movement took initiatives in the cities for the benefit of the children of the urban poor (Cavallo 1981; Münger 2000; Paris 2001, 2008; Fass 2004).

The new demands on children to participate in education also involved demands on families. It was important to create a childhood of a certain standard, as defined by the criteria of well-being. Mothers were expected to be able to send clean, healthy children to school on time. Fathers were expected to provide for the whole family, non-working wife and children alike. The ideal of motherhood, which was so strongly emphasized in national sentiment at the turn of the century, complemented such a childhood: a non-useful child and a school child, dependent on a breadwinning father and a caring mother. The emotional dimension of family life – the caring element – was also consistent with this kind of change and helped shape the notions of well-being. A childhood of universal validity had been established as a norm, based on the demands of educational systems and with consequences for the universalistic definitions of male and female parenting. It was certainly not a childhood that always matched up with the social reality of children in the West, but it could at least be used to measure and define deviance from the norms and motivate social reform to improve children's well-being (Davin 1989, 1996, 1997; Sandin 1997, 2010; Coninck-Smith, Sandin and Schrupf 1997; Coninck-Smith 2000; Hendrick 1997; Lawrence and Starkey 2001).

The development of education not only provided the basis for the analyses of the “normal” childhood, it also produced a division between school time and “free time.” This tended to underpin the creation of a youth culture in the twentieth century. Youth culture and its expression created new sources of worries centered on films, literature, music, and drinking, that is, about the well-being of children and the young. Moral panics over children's consumption and its detrimental effects for the well-being of children were expressed in the early twentieth century. Discussions about dime novels and films also led to the restriction of the use of such literature and film censorship. Similar discussions form the undercurrent of debates about reading comic strips and cartoons, watching videos, and participating on the Internet during the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The icon of a child in need of protection from exploitation intermingled with fear over children's use of spare time combined to provide the underpinnings for the development of organizations to keep children busy and their energies directed toward appropriate goals. Youth organizations – from scouts to *wanderfögel* – expressed ambitions to form a healthy and sturdy youth who exhibited well-being (Mechling 2013; Springhall 1977, 1998; Cohen 2002; Sparrman et al. 2012; Strandgaard 2013; Welch et al. 2002).

As a consequence, a number of political issues emerged that had a bearing on children's well-being: the upbringing of children in working-class families, the behavior of children on the streets of urban centers, the effects of new media such as cheap dime novels and films, the plight of foster children, and single mothers. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, nations in the West initiated legislation to address such issues as fostering, adoption, and delinquency.

Such legislation paralleled developments in Western nations during the era of the child-saving movements.

Laws concerning children laid down the framework for the protection of those deemed valuable and also the punishment and correction of those who deviated from the norms. Protection of the well-being of children involved the protection of society and thus also established the fine line between protection and punishment. Normality was influenced by what the educational system required of both parents and children and also by the norms of normal family life as established by behavioral sciences and the child studies movement. The emotionally valuable child was entrenched in the norms of the educational system and protective legislation of different kinds, such as banning the auctioning of children in need of care to the lowest bidder and legislation on adoption and fostering (Zelizer 1985; Sundkvist 1994; Hendrick 1990; Platt 1969; Lindgren 2006; Keating 2009; Sandin 2012; Lawrence and Starkey 2001; Gleason 2010).

The development of systems of protection for children empathizes their special status as children and signifies a way of looking at children's needs as different from those of adults. This comes to the fore, not only in the creation of educational systems and systems of protection but also in the development of special penal and correctional institutions for children. During the early nineteenth century, such correctional institutions were established in France, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries. It was clear to the reformers that the correction of young criminals demanded other means than those used for adults. Neither in the short nor the long run could young offenders be kept in the same institutions as adults.

The development of special institutions for children was closely tied to mutual study visits to other countries in Europe and the United States (Jablonka 2013). These institutions form the background for the development of special legal institutions for young offenders during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The juvenile court system in the United States made it possible to try underage offenders in separate and not very court-like proceedings. Children were sentenced to correction and education rather than prison. At the same time, this court functioned within relatively poorly defined legal parameters. The juvenile court had its parallel in the development of similar institutions in Europe. The first such institutions were established in Norway and in Illinois (Tanenhaus and Schlossman 2009; Tanenhaus 2011; Jablonka 2013).

There was interaction between child reformers with different backgrounds concerning how such institutions should be set up, but we can also note that the legal character of the institutions was not so distinct. In Scandinavia, the task of taking delinquent children away from their parents and sending them to reform schools of different kinds was originally entrusted to the local school board (1902) and, a decade later, to a child welfare board. This board could also intervene in cases where the children were considered to be in moral danger, as defined by the behavior of the children and the caring capacity of the parents. The ways of treating children clearly reflected the moral values of the middle-class family that were confronted with the working-class norms and values (Sundkvist 1994; Ericsson 1996, 2002).

The rights and well-being of children formed one perspective on the parents' ability to live up to such normative standards. Juvenile courts spread as a phenomenon, but in practice they may have reflected different systems of defining the well-being of children at risk in different countries. Together they expressed the idea that children who deviated from the norms were to be dealt with differently from adult norm-breakers. As a consequence, the institutions that dealt with children gave less leeway for children to complain and make appeals. Punishments were meted out that were not limited in time (Sundkvist 1994; Tanenhaus 2011; Runcis 2007; Ipsen 2006; Bush 2010). The implications of this aspect of well-being were that children became wards of society rather than autonomous right-bearing individuals.

The protection of children and of childhood involved philanthropic, central, and local government agencies and evolved in some places into state or central government ventures. This also entailed the need to define the social commitments of the welfare obligations in Western nations, including the role of professionals in child care, particularly in relation to the children of the working classes where the children seemed most endangered. The interest in children led to a huge number of new publications, journals, and professional societies. It also brought a need for clearer definitions of the roles of different professionals in child care. Medical specialties such as pediatrics and areas such as education and psychology gained strength and later began to make claims about the nature of children's well-being. These professional groups also had influence outside governments and their organizations. States throughout the West created the basis for welfare schemes through legislation and institutionalization of government agencies, but they varied in the extent to which support was given and how it was distributed. This was dependent on the political culture and role of central and local government (Beatty et al. 2006; Dickinson 1996; Hendrick 1997).

The very existence of such initiatives, however, served to underwrite the understanding of the value of all children for society, counting them as a cost for the nation and, implicitly, for taxpayers. In some countries, the state stepped in in lieu of the parents or provided simple support to parents, while in others, the family was not questioned as the only caring agents in spite of the formation of ambitious professional societies. National experiences of the urgency cover a wide range. There was concern in some countries about the consequences of the imminent population decline due to falling birth rates, while others worried about strong population growth and migration or the social consequences of the depression (Hatje 1974; Lindenmeyer 1997; Lindenmeyer and Sandin 2008; Ohlander 1980; Hirdman 1989; Marshall 2006; Ipsen 2006).

Philanthropic welfare organizations traditionally had their social base in the upper classes, but during the first part of the twentieth century it shifted to professional groups. They also started to look for financial support from the local taxpaying communities and to influence national politics. Steps were taken within civic society to tie its ambitions to the creation of welfare systems in parts of Europe, while in the United States, the White House conferences demonstrate how such initiatives usually fell short of establishing national (i.e., federal)

interventions. Non-governmental organizations, advanced, internationalized, and partly financed the child study movement and supported organizations for child guidance in Europe. Such initiatives influenced both philanthropic and government projects in Europe (Weiner 1995; Hendrick 1997; Lindenmeyer 1997; Beatty et al. 2006; Schmidt 2013; Gullberg 2004).

Child guidance, specifically, and, in more general terms, child saving were part of the beginning of an internationalization of relief help and social work that targeted children (Horn 1989; Richardsson 1989; Thom 1992; Jönson 1997; Jones 1999; Stewart 2006, 2009). The atrocities during the First World War and international awareness of the vulnerability of children during the period that followed stimulated the internationalization of philanthropic work for children, as well as the ambitions to form international conventions. The internationalization went hand in hand with the development of philanthropy over borders and mobilized financial support from states as well as civil society organizations (Birn 1996, 2012; Marshall 2013; Janfelt 1998; Nehlin 2009). Non-governmental organizations made it possible to do social work in other nations' territories.

At the same time, different ways of approaching the issue of responsibility for the well-being of children came to the fore in these processes in Western welfare societies. The distinction between the legal patriarchy dominant in countries that inherited the rule of Roman law, such as France, and the approach that stems from the countries whose systems are grounded in common law, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, also marked the development of social policy and politics. In France, the government could not intervene and prevent the abuse of children as long as family authority was upheld and maintained. But in cases where the household (the patriarch) failed, the government could completely take over responsibility for the upbringing of children as wards of the state (Jablonka 2013; Schmidt 2013).

Welfare support of families to stimulate population growth was at the same time directed towards the family rather than individuals in the family. The care of children was the responsibility of the family. The uniform French system of government also underlined the strict application of the same system in all parts of the nation as defined by the law, allowing little room for interpretation (Jablonka 2013; Fuchs 1984; Tilly and Scott 1978). In the common law system in the United Kingdom and the United States, the moral quality and aptitude of fathers and mothers, as well as their ability to care for their offspring and their health and education could be evaluated by the court and lead to the separation of unfit parents and children. The English system was sensitive to parental rights and particularly their responsibilities to maintain care and economic support of the children (Schmidt 2013).

In the United States, intervention by the state to protect children against maltreatment and abuse in families did not supersede parental rights and implied a distinct distrust of the federal government's right to intervene in the protection of children. This characterizes the early twentieth century efforts in the United States to develop involvement in the well-being of children, while, for example, the Scandinavians took a different route. However, Scandinavian countries also differ in regard to the situations when governments can legitimately intervene in family

life to support children's well-being. Social work in the various Scandinavian countries has, for example, used placement of children differently (Lindenmeyer and Sandin 2008; Downs 2002; Sealander 2003, 2004; Sandin 2012a; Runcis 1998, 2007; Marshall 2006; Andresen et al. 2011; Rutherford 2013).

In this way, the meaning of childhood and well-being was intimately associated with the way welfare was organized in different countries, but it was also formed by responses to other important social and political issues. The worldwide depression stimulated large-scale programs to survey and come to terms with issues such as child labor, failing educational provisions, and migration in the United States. It also indicated, for a time, a larger role for the federal government (Lindenmeyer 2013; Schmidt 2013).

In Europe the depression heightened the awareness of the consequences of declining birth rates and stimulated the development of welfare programs that would also lead to more stable population bases in the Scandinavian countries and France. Maternity welfare programs, family (community) housing programs, and different kinds of labor legislation were created to entice families to have more children. In some countries, day care for children of working mothers and free meals in public schools were provided.

Awareness of the declining population gave a specific urgency to the need for "more children of better quality." The population quality issue was accompanied by ambitions to stimulate interest in children's normality and normal development. Tendencies to hinder unfit mothers and fathers from reproducing were also supported with the ambition of shaping the future well-being of children. Such tendencies were expressed differently in the countries of the Western world, but it certainly shaped the need to define both family and mothering (Hirdman 1989; Runcis 1998; Ohlander 1980; Lind 2000; Sandin 2013; Dickinson 1996; Jones 1999; Schafer 1997, 1992; Ladd-Taylor 1986, 1994; Ladd-Taylor and Hageman 1997).

2.6 Well-Being, Welfare, and Children's Rights

Protection of children was initially directed at assuring children had access to education and health care, and creating and normalizing a standard understanding of children. Socialization of children aimed, ideally, at the formation of habits and behavior and the establishment of norms of familial behavior. During the 1930s, signs of a growing focus on children's individual, child-centered outlook pointed to the importance of parents not only as trainers of children but as care-takers of an egalitarian family culture. The criticism of authoritarian political regimes during and after World War II linked a behavioral-oriented system of childrearing to fascism, authoritarian personality traits, and collectivist group behavior. Arnold Gesell, Francis L. Ilg and Louise Bates Ames 1943 book, *Infant and Child Care in the Culture of Today*, supported a developmental ideology based on the individual child in a democratic family and a democratic society. Dr. Benjamin Spock's book, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1948), popularized parental

advice based in a developmental understanding of the child and the common sense of mothers. The recurrent conferences on children in the White House in Washington brought up a new topic. The happiness of children replaced more socially oriented topics from before the war, a change that ran parallel to an interest in and discovery of children as emotional beings (Grant 2013; Beatty et al. 2006; Stearns 2013; Hendrick 1997).

The importance of the biological and nuclear family was also stressed in the discourses on the well-being of children. During the 1950s and 1960s, these ideas formed the undercurrent of questions raised about the care of children in orphanages and similar institutions. Policies concerning adoption and foster care that were developed during the 1950s also emphasized the engineering of situations for children that were as much like the biological family as possible. Academic and psychological scholarship also emphasized the need for a close attachment between mother and child. Attachment theory was influenced by the experiences of the children evacuated during and after World War II and could point to a number of negative consequences of the break-up of families resulting from government policies that removed children to the countryside. Fresh air and country living could not compensate for the emotional bonds within the family. Thus, during the 1950s, an understanding of children's well-being developed that stressed the emotional side of family life rather than the importance of habit formation.

Such modes of understanding also provided the backdrop for the ambitions of professions to reach and support children in the postwar period. The professions that represented the new era, such as the partly transformed child psychology and child psychiatry, supplemented institutions of child guidance and social services for children. These experts had a strong ideological commitment to provide better social conditions for children and young people by better accommodating children in society. Psychoanalytic thinking was also emerging that challenged the ideas of authoritarian education and child rearing that had as goals habit formation and moral adjustment in childhood. Instead, children were seen as emotional beings with strong bonds to the adults in their surroundings, be it parents, other family members, teachers, or other important adults (Grant 2013; Beatty et al. 2006; Stearns 2003, 2013; Hendrick 1997; Zetterqvist 2009; Zetterqvist and Sandin 2013; Qvarsebo 2006; Stewarts 2006; Moeller 1998, 1993).

In the years to come, psychiatry would also define psychiatric disorders and treatment specific to children, which meant that child psychiatry came to be looked upon as a medical specialty. At the same time, child welfare services, social services, and school health services treated children and youths with psychological and social problems by means of practices that had been formed in the development of social work in different national contexts (Horn 1989; Richardsson 1989; Thom 1992; Jönson 1997; Jones 1999; Fishman 2002; Ludvigsen and Elvbakken 2005; Ludvigsen and Seip 2009; Evans et al. 2008; Rous and Clark 2009; Weinstein 2002). Such support involved institutions for children with problems, as well as the placement of children in families that often lacked the capacity to consider the well-being and needs of children. We can assume the existence of an everyday pragmatic way of treating children and understanding well-being that was dictated

by national and local cultures as well as international cooperation. Many professionals, including the child psychiatrists themselves, maintained a critical distance from the use of a stricter application of psychiatric diagnostic classifications (Zetterqvist and Sandin 2013; Ludvigsen 2010; Eysenck 1985; Geissman and Geissman 1993).

National cultures created divergent understandings of definitions of children's well-being and the preconditions necessary for its existence. For example, from the 1950s the Anglo-Saxon emphasis on the attachment between children and parents as the central aspect of good child rearing did not have the same strong position in Sweden until the late 1990s, in spite of a strong emphasis on the nuclear family. Swedish psychologists and psychiatrists resisted this stress on the attachment between mother and children, arguing instead for more modern, institutional solutions, such as educational and child care facilities, to support the adjustment of families to modernization (Zetterqvist 2009, 2011, 2012; Lundqvist 2007, 2008).

The educational systems that developed after World War II in European countries faced the challenges posed by the war in another way that affected the understanding of children's well-being. In Germany, the treatment of handicapped children before and during the war led to the establishment of a special school system for such children to compensate for their disabilities. In other European countries, educational systems struggled with how to deal with children with special needs in educational systems that were increasingly designed to include all children. In countries such as Sweden and the United Kingdom, this led to the development of a variety of special educational provisions within the schools and a classification of the needs of such children for extra support. The necessity to solve the problem was universal, but the solutions for dealing with the well-being of children were marked by national cultures (Altstaedt 1977; Sander 1969; Richardsson 2002; Riddell 2002; Riddell et al. 1994; Meyer 1983).

Such legacies are in part reactions to World War II, as in the case of the emphasis British scholars placed on attachment. Development in the Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom, and the United States represents very specific experiences shaped by World War II. Equally important is the way the well-being of children was subsumed during the war. Children were affected by the absence of parents, the need to participate in the war efforts as workers or soldiers, and as the casualties due to bombings of civilian populations on both sides and to the Holocaust. Children from occupied provinces were also put to work in the war industries in Germany and during the many years of reconstruction in the postwar period. The large numbers of displaced children in search of families and kin after the war illustrate that notions of the dependency of children's well-being on a close attachment to mothers were far from reality for many European children. The number of children repatriated to their former homelands also made the use of orphanages common in many parts of Europe. Such placements were seen as environments with potential to shape ideal future citizens in accordance with an understanding of the well-being of parentless children. Such institutions remained important and defined the role of governments in Eastern Europe up until the fall of the Iron Curtain, and after, which illustrates conflicting and parallel understanding of well-being

(Zahra 2008, 2011; Holian 2011; Röger 2011; Venken 2011; Mayall and Morrow 2011; Schuman 2013; Marten 2002; Mann 2005).

Expansion of elementary and compulsory schooling in the post-war period clarified the central role of the teaching profession as the transmitter of democratic values in many countries. The development of the understanding of well-being in the Sweden took a specific turn as a consequence of the traditional character of the educational system. Innovative national legislation concerning school discipline created a legacy that linked well-being and rights, which in due time also became a foundation for the evaluation of well-being in the family.

Respectful child rearing was not compatible with of the right of teachers to discipline children physically, as was the case in Swedish elementary schools. The grammar school and the elementary school in Sweden (*folkskola*) had permitted different ways of disciplining children, which also reflected the social make-up of the school. In elementary schools corporal punishment was allowed, but in grammar schools it was banned. During the 1950s, the merging of the two school systems to create a comprehensive school for all social classes led to a re-evaluation of which system of discipline should be used. The discussion ended with a blanket ban on corporal punishment as early as 1957. Psychology – the new science of childhood – was to fill the gap and help the socialization processes in schools and families. This also established a notion of children's integrity and rights as separate individuals (Qvarsebo 2006; Sandin 2012a). Education as a bastion of democracy was differently understood in Germany. German, American, and British reconstructors was wary about the collective education of children outside their families as something that had nurtured fascism and, later, communism. In both Britain and Germany, the making of a democratic citizen was in the aftermath of war and fascism closely associated to family upbringing rather than institutional and collective solutions (Moeller 1993).

The important issue in Sweden, in perspective, was that children in the process were given the right to the integrity of their bodies, the same right that adults had, thus transcending, in a manner of speaking, the traditional limits of childhood that had accorded them special protection and access to social rights such as physical (or mental) integrity. This was the beginning of a discussion of children's integrity in terms that were taken further in the late 1960s. This led to a ban on the parents' right to physically discipline their children that was implemented in 1979 and included in the family law code (Schiratzki 2000b; Singer 2000; Ewerlöf et al. 2004; Sandin 2012a). In doing so, the state displayed its ambition to protect the individual child and also to educate the parents. The law was largely perceived as an educational instrument and was intended to run parallel with efforts to educate, primarily, parents of foreign extraction. The well-being of children was built on notions of the individuality of children and related to a strong welfare state and an egalitarian, comprehensive educational system. We see here an indication of an emerging link between well-being and rights with relevance for the Scandinavian welfare models (Sandin 2012a).

This indicates how understanding of the role of the state and its agencies versus the family in the provisions for children is expressed both in common traits and in

specific national and culturally bound characteristics. Common traits included the expansion of schools and, in some countries, preschool care and the influence of professional groups on children's everyday lives. Family life was increasingly organized in collaboration with the welfare system in a way that, from an international comparative perspective, to varying degrees included and accepted state regulation of family life and care/well-being of children.

International conventions have also marked the global commitment to an understanding that conflicts with children's work in industrial and agricultural sectors throughout the world, as well as their participation in an adult labor market. This is a part of processes whereby children are granted rights that transcend mere access to social services. Children's rights to social care form the essence of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) but also their physical and intellectual integrity as individuals. Children may be interpreted as bearers of special rights rather than the universal human rights expressed in the Conventions of Human Rights (Schmidt 2013). An alternative way of understanding this development is that the emphasis on the UNCRC extension of the right to physical and intellectual integrity to children and the right to be listened to places them on equal footing with adults in these respects. It is clear, however, that as international conventions are given meaning in national and regional contexts, they will determine how children's rights gain significance and influence welfare policy and policies regarding children's well-being. In that respect, the Scandinavian welfare states represent a contrast to, for example, the United States (Archard 1993, 2003, 2004; Archard and Macleod 2002; Eekelaar 1992; Ewerlöf et al. 2004; MacCormick 1979; Schmidt 2013; Sealander 2003; Grossberg 2012; Sandin 2012; Fass 2012).

2.7 Welfare in Transition, Child Studies, and New Notions of Childhood

In different national political contexts, even the concept and practices of welfare have come to represent entirely different things. In the United States, it is limited to the support of the destitute and pension schemes, while in Europe the context is broader and refers to a more fundamental set of institutions in a general infrastructure of institutions. The different welfare models define the understanding of the responsibility of the state for the well-being of children (Sealander 2003; Esping-Andersen 1990, 1996; Meyer 1983; Kamerman and Kahn 1981; Kahn and Kamerman 1981).

The late twentieth century brought a focus on children's individual rights just as the states in Europe abandoned some of their ambitions in shaping living conditions for children. With market-oriented solutions, the influence of local government on the welfare policies was strengthened and the responsibility of parents was emphasized. At the same time, the late twentieth century was a period during which criticism of the welfare state's ability to provide for all children also illustrates its shortcomings in dealing with aspects of children's well-being that are now in focus (Immervoll et al. 2001; Wintersberger et al. 2007; Qvortrup 2007; Bradshaw and Hatland 2006; SOU 2001: 55). Such critical analyses have pointed to remaining

inequalities in health, but perhaps most importantly to the aspects of children's well-being that include emotional and psychological well-being. Interest in children's emotional and psychological well-being is an expression of the evolving understanding of childhood that also involves the development of a new type of scholarship concerning children and childhood.

This transformation of the scholarship surrounding children and childhood historically parallels the changes and advances in the child studies movement of the early twentieth century. During the 1960s and 1970s, research in the humanities and social sciences opened up such research fields as new family and children's history, history from below, and women's studies, all of which served to pave the intellectual path for child studies as a field (Wintersberger et al. 2007; Speier 1976). In the 1980s, there was increasing concern that the study of actual children, if not absent, was a worryingly rare subject. Researchers with different backgrounds criticized the way children's voices and opinions were muted in research and how there was dependence on perceptions defined by institutional perspectives, by adults and by professional interests. Knowledge about children reflected, it was claimed, an adult-centered, paternalistic, and institutional-centered outlook (Goode 1986; Waksler 1986; Sandin 1986).

In its infancy the social study of children also criticized traditional developmental psychology as it had evolved during the twentieth century, because the child was construed as a universal category. Models of development inherent in socialization theory were opposed as being "adultist" in character, with an emphasis on what children should become rather than taking an interest in what they were (Ambert 1986; Halldén 1991; Wintersberger et al. 2007). The new social study of children was based on an ambition to advance the need for a new research agenda, and it was indeed important in the creation of a new field of research, though there are reasons to critically question the novelty of some of the perspectives (James and James 2004; James et al. 1998; Wintersberger et al. 2007; Ryan 2008).

Scholarship in sociology, and also in disciplines such as history, literature, and psychology, began to focus on children's own activities, experiences, skills, and knowledge, and not merely on their interaction and negotiation with the adult world. The strongest professional identity in this newborn "child study movement" was created by a largely British group that proclaimed the birth of the sociology of children, the new social studies. One early research trend was a strongly social-constructivist position, which also made the critical analysis of the actors and agents behind certain constructions of childhood an important part of its scholarship. At the same time there existed a structural sociology of childhood that regarded children as social facts, structuring society in much the same way as "class," "gender," and "race" (Qvortrup 1994, 2005).

The starting point of child studies as a field was that both childhood and the child are socially constructed and defined categories, which are multiple and dependent on time and place (James and James 2004; Jenks 2005; James et al. 1998; Wintersberger et al. 2007; Halldén 1991). Child studies engendered knowledge, not only about children and childhood, but also about the society that children and

adults inhabit – the restrictions and opportunities that form everyday life, and how changes and conflicts affect identities, goals, values, and actions. The “adulthood” of political and social institutions is an underlying premise in the search for a children’s perspective. In this regard, claims have been made that it is essential that researchers develop dialogic practices that encourage children to take part and that may involve engaging with children’s own “cultures of communication” in everyday life. The implications are to develop research around the systems of communication that children use with their peers and with their parents (Roberts 2000/2008; Christensen and James 2000; Sparrman et al. 2012; Harrison 1997; Harris and Holms 2003).

Much research in this broader field of child studies has been based firmly on disciplinary traditions, although it has also been attentive to common intellectual frameworks. The new sociology of childhood has been challenged from within to broaden its perspective and to be more interdisciplinary and more empirically focused (Prout 2005). Children and childhood have also become a part of a wider on-going discussion of approaches such as sociological standpoint theory, linguistic/anthropological discourse theory, visual research methodology, the bottom-up perspectives in the social sciences, and social and narrative history – all of which have been applied to children and childhood, both separately and in close interaction. Sociological, anthropological, and psychological researchers have influenced one another in the study of children’s conditions and the construction of childhood, as have historical and sociological scholars (Hendrick 2003; Turmel 2008). Other edited volumes on child studies illustrate the breadth of alternatives in defining the field. We can therefore note many different ways of carrying out child studies, influenced by various theoretical and methodological frameworks and by combining different scholarly traditions (Kehily 2004; James and James 2008; Christensen 2008).

A view of children as a social group – a structural perspective (Alanen and Mayall 2001; Qvortrup 1994; Wintersberger et al. 2007) – has also enabled scholars to break down the sectorially defined perception of children and to cast new light on the meaning and consequences of age structuring in modern societies (Qvortrup 1994; Närvänen and Näsman 2007). Childhood is a constant social phenomenon but is created by different generations of children. Childhood therefore always exists, but it is given different meanings as a consequence of political and social changes. Children’s lives can be understood as a whole, and research about school and the private and public spheres must be interlinked. Children’s experiences of childhood are composite – influenced by age, gender, class, and ethnicity — and are dependent on variable temporal and spatial contexts, but at the same time they are permanent social phenomena.

As childhood emerged as a contested category in scholarship and in current European society, it underscored how different professional groups and institutional agents claim to know “what is best for the child” and what constitutes an auspicious childhoods as has been discussed by a long series of scholars. This supports the need for scholarship that is critically oriented to combine the study of children’s interactions with that of welfare systems and politics (Prout 2005;

Turmel 2008; Alanen 2007; Sandin 2012a, b). Others have stressed the importance of joining the traditions of childhood sociology with welfare studies in a more coherent and integrated approach. Such discussions about the interrelationship between the welfare system, families, and children and between the political and the lived experiences are also deeply rooted in historical perspectives that combine studies of children, childhood, and policy (Therborn 1993; Hendrick 2003; Cunningham 1995; Lasseonde 2005; Fass 2007; Sundkvist 1994; Sandin and Halldén 2003). A number of studies also amount to support for political claims, for example, the idea that children have the right to compensation for schooling (Qvortrup 2005).

The significance of this newborn and redirected interest in child studies is found not only in the parallels to the child studies movement around the turn of the nineteenth century, but also its participation in shaping institutions and policies for children. It is the very intellectual underpinning of an understanding of children as agents and of a governance of society that includes listening to children's needs. The best interest of children is not only a directive in an international convention but also an instrument of governance in modern welfare societies.

2.8 Dilemmas of Childhood and Change: The UNCRC, Well-Being of Children, and Children's Rights' Regimes

The well-being of children in today's Europe (16 % of Europe's population is fifteen years old or younger (EUROSTAT 2008)) comprises new challenges in the dilemmas that confront the new generations. The members of this group are to be seen not only as individuals soon to enter adulthood and enjoying citizenship, but also as current members of society with a given status that includes the right to have their own voice heard and their present lives and interests elucidated. In a manner of speaking, children are granted a sort of citizenship in limbo at the same time as current social, material, and cultural changes are creating new challenges for children and their families in their everyday lives (Changing childhood in a changing Europe 2009; Sandin 2012a,b; Schmidt 2013; Kamerman and Kahn 1981; Näsman 1998).

Children are experiencing the effects of changed patterns of household formation and dissolution, transnational migration, religious and civil tensions and conflicts, increasing economic inequality, and more socially differentiated spatial patterns in cities. This means that the experience and contexts of the lives of children are becoming – or at least are understood to be – more diverse but also more influenced by factors that create greater similarity. Children experience the parental strains of work and family obligations and are part of the complex daily routines that households and communities set in place in response to the activities and needs of their different members. At the same time, concerns about children's deviant and antisocial behavior and increased levels of youth violence form part of on-going debates and stimulate the launch of stricter legislations and policies in relation to children.

Social and cultural spaces for children are being transformed and illustrate new demands and dilemmas. Across the Western world, children spend much of their everyday life in institutions such as schools, day care centers, and after-school clubs, as well as a significant amount of time moving between these places and their other activities. Within these different locations children interact in friendship and peer groups that are important for the ideas, values, and practices they develop. Children have access to many sources of information and values, which further broaden their socialization. The mass media, consumerism, and public services constitute children as individuals who then have to construct their personal and social identities from a diversity of ideas, beliefs and products (Bradshaw and Hatland 2006; Frønes 1995, 2006; Näsman 1992; Zeiher 2007; Närvänen and Näsman 2007; Sparman et al. 2012; Cook 2013).

Children's individuality and independence are also encouraged through discourses of child participation in decision-making at both central and local levels. Different national political and legislative traditions that define family and generational relations come to the fore in increased European cooperation, and they illustrate dependency on different cultural, historical, economic, and political traditions.

At the same time, and partly as a consequence, conflicting notions and ideals of everyday life have been highlighted in contemporary Europe and North America. For many, life is characterized by uncertainty and anxiety, the change of recognized social institutions, and the development of new forms of social networks and relationships, combined with a greater personal responsibility for the shaping of one's own individual biography. Such are the arguments of sociologists such as Giddens and Beck (Giddens 1993; Beck 1997; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

These conflicting notions, uncertainties, and practices also shape understandings of childhood in society and the situation of children and young people. They affect relationships between children and adults in different settings or the strategies children and young people use to cope with the ambiguities that these opposing ideals produce (Thorne 1993; Lee 2001; Frønes 2003; Danby and Theobald 2012; Goodwin et al. 2012; Tuit 2000; Turkoski 2005; Näsman 1992). The claims of modern sociology in the portrayal of an increasingly individualistic society also shape the way the family and children are addressed by welfare systems. These claims also create an understanding of modern children as vulnerable and of childhood in the classic sense as a period of innocence and growth that is threatened.

While globalization has formed new identities, the role of the state has changed and given professionals new and different positions. Professionals have to assert their knowledge in a market of consultants in competition with an array of experts, rather than being the mere agents of the state. Welfare is defined in new ways and "the best interests of the child" – whether formulated as rights or protection – is at the core of these formulations (An-Naim 1994; Lundqvist and Petersen 2010; Sandin and Halldén 2003; Zeiher 2007; Bennet 2006). Participants are expected to take children's rights and "the best interests of the child" into consideration, which again supports an understanding of well-being voiced by children and its institutional and familial contexts (Bluebond-Langner 1975, 1980, 1996; Harris and Holms 2003, Harrison 1997, Gillies 2005b, 2012).

UNCRC forms the undercurrent of the distinct set of international norms that support the need to listen to the voice of children. In this process, “the best interests of the child” and “quality of life for children” have been held up as the goals of social policy interventions and of private institutions within the welfare system, and they involve an imperative to listen to the views of children. “The best interests of the child” are expressed in partly new modes: as children’s rights in legal and pedagogical terms, as a right to be an informed and empowered citizen, and as an individual right. Citizenship takes on a meaning for the younger generation. Moreover, it is formulated as a right to gain access to information channels and media technologies. These rights are made means and goals in many forms of welfare distribution, social-policy interventions, private institutions, and the global market (Ericsson 1996, 2002; Stang 2007; Sandin and Halldén 2003; Sandin 2013; Sparrman et al. 2012; Mayall 1994, 2002; Aarsand 2007; Lindgren and Halldén 2001; Brembeck et al. 2004; Buckingham 2000).

Important aspects with consequences for the understanding of children are the focus on children’s need for protection, the responsibilities of society, and the idea that children have rights of their own that are not subordinated to the family. Children’s own voices should be heard and respected, and they should have access to independent information. Children are described as competent and autonomous. This way of presenting children as both dependent and competent is also important and reflects the reorganization of welfare systems with a long historical legacy in the Scandinavian countries (Lindgren and Halldén 2001; Sandin and Halldén 2003; Therborn 1993; Theunissen et al. 1998). This runs contrary to the understanding and development of children’s right as conceived in the United States, where the Supreme Court has had difficulty accepting legal doctrines defined by international agencies such as the UN. Nor can it readily accept the rights of children surpassing those of the family (Grossberg 1983, 1988; Alaimo and Klug 2002; Guggenheim 2005; Popenoe 1988, 2009).

The UNCRC upholds a notion of childhood as a period where children’s lives are organized differently than lives in the adult world; they are dependent, growing and cared for, while they are also competent agents. In such an ideological framework children should not work as adults. In some Western societies, the understanding of children’s work has been re-evaluated and reconceptualized to include a large variety of work (Samuelsson 2008, 2012b; Söderlind and Engwall 2008). Large numbers of teenage girls and boys have entered the workforce, balancing school with paid employment. Some scholars also claim that children’s schooling must be regarded as work and properly rewarded as such. Children’s acquisition and production of knowledge in schools constitute productive work as much as any work done in knowledge-based industries and should receive reasonable pay (Qvortrup 2007). Looking at children’s work in this manner undermines the notion of difference between children and adults and gives certain legitimacy to the participation of young people in the workforce with the same kind of welfare protective measures as for the adult world.

The role of the family and parenting vis-à-vis children is still crucial in a society that stresses the relative autonomy of children and the dependency of children on

actors outside the family. But more importantly, the concept “the best interests of the child” and the voice of children have become links between the individual and the state; between children’s everyday lives and international norms; and between norm formation and politics (Sandin and Halldén 2003; Kilkelly 2001; Alston 1994; Eldén 2012). Children’s lives are subsumed in the expectation that they relate to the same human arenas in which adults interact. There is no self-evident, separate space for children, and they must share conceptual spaces with adults in terms of the arenas that shape children’s lives. At the same time and as a consequence of young people’s difficulties of representing themselves politically, a significant aspect of the struggle over the well-being of children is the establishment of organizations for children and young people with the purpose of representing their rights in society. The relationship between such organizations and governments vary and reflect the character of the welfare systems (for examples, see [Children’s Helplines](#)).

This does not necessarily mean that adults define all such spaces. Quite the contrary, children are exposed to the global commercial market in new ways. New media and media technologies are made part of children’s everyday lives (Aarsand 2007; Buckingham 1998, 2000; Deakin 2006). Preschools, schools, private homes, and public spaces are saturated with images from an international popular culture that portrays life in novel ways. Children are expected to interact with these images and use them as they construct an identity. By stressing children’s rights to information channels and access to media, the UNCRC denotes the idea that media technologies are important, empowering tools for children. However, such rights underpin the risk that the consequent media consumption also can be understood to represent a significant risk for their health and well-being (Sparman 2006; Vallberg Roth 2002; Sparman et al. 2012; Holland 1992; James and Prout 1990).

The evolving understanding of the individuality of children and the rights of children in relationship to the state and governments has other consequences. Children that grew up and were maltreated in orphanages or in foster care now demand compensation or an apology for being wronged in the past. A certain standard of childhood is presented as an inalienable individual right that can be reclaimed – or compensated – as an adult. The voices of adults also become important as sources of information about well-being during their lives as children. This politics of apology has marked the political debates in Western countries and ranges from the apology for maltreatment of children of German fathers in Norway in the aftermath of World War II to foster children in Sweden and the children of ethnic minorities in Australia. There is renewed interest of the psychological effects of World War II experiences (Röger 2011; Andersson 2011; Swain and Musgrave 2012; Sköld et al. 2012; Sköld 2013; Pesonen and Räikkönen 2012) that represents both a common trend and very specific modes of dealing with issues resulting from actual historical events. This development is also shaped by the culture of gender, class, and ethnic relationships, as well as the role of government. In this context, the evolution of Western governance becomes an important issue in the shaping of an understanding of children’s well-being.

The position of children has also evolved from the point of view of government, according to Esping-Andersen (1990, 1996, 1999, 2002). The welfare states of Europe are identified with essential features of today's societies, from the importance of children to the social investment state. He demonstrates that Europe is moving away from primarily securing the distribution or redistribution of wealth. Rather, welfare spending has become an investment in future economic growth, and children are important targets for such investment. The social investment state sees children as a form of human capital at the same time as children's participation is set in focus. Children are (and are encouraged to be) important in constructing their own futures and in acquiring the skills and competencies for work and citizenship. This perspective has encouraged the integration of education, health, and social services for children in different ways (for example, in Children's Services) which presuppose an investment in the child as a whole. Esping-Andersen's understanding and definition of welfare is based on the notion that children and young people are understood to become something different, to grow out of the childish state and become productive adults. Such an understanding of the organization of the modern welfare system can be described as adult in character, disregarding the social agency of children and adding that it is incompatible with a sociological understanding of children as being and not simply becoming (Alanen 2001; Lee 2001; Halldén 1991; Lister 2006, 2008).

It is certainly difficult to reconcile this view with the focus on children's agency as it is presented in much current research on childhood in the welfare state. Childhood in the late welfare state has been increasingly viewed as a period when the child's competence is stressed through the state's less normative and regulatory role, and children's rights are defined on the basis of international conventions. The formation of concepts such as "the best interests of the child" and "a child perspective" mobilizes children as citizens and legal subjects and emphasizes children's autonomy from the family. Simultaneously, children's rights are no longer the basis for only administrative decisions in the welfare state, but are instead negotiated in different contexts in terms of the norms established in the UNCRC, although applied differently in various European countries. However, it is the parents who are responsible for realizing the true potential in the investments in children. Such expectations are complicated as research shows that different modes of parenting/marriage patterns have definite consequences. Marriage patterns go hand-in-hand with the character of the birth-rates and investments in children's welfare. These differ when broken down on national and regional levels in the Western world, and they indicate the important role of parents as agents in interaction with welfare systems (Qvortrup 2007).

Esping-Andersen points to the differences between the different welfare regimes. A neo-liberal regime, also defined as an Anglo-Saxon model, minimizes state involvement, targeting social risk groups and high levels of need with a sector of private welfare providers. The social democratic model is built on universal state-run models of welfare, while a conservative model is found in countries such as France, Italy, and Germany. In reality these ideal types are blurred and have changed (Arts and Gelissen 2002) but they have shaped the development of policy towards children and families and confirm patterns that can

be identified from earlier centuries. However, a new aspect is the fact that European cooperation establishes a new arena for negotiation of the standards of well-being for children.

The implementation of the UNCRC has made children's lives and well-being an increasingly important part of politics in Europe. In the last decade, various EU institutions have taken an increasing interest in child law (Towards an EU Strategy 2006). The European Court of Justice (ECJ) renders verdicts on child law issues on a regular basis. There are several reasons for this development, such as the impact of the EU's social and rights-based agenda, the delineation of domestic and EU competence, children's rights campaigns that transcend national borders, and the increasing perception of children as key investments in securing the prosperity of the aging, as touched on above (Stalford and Drywood 2009).

The importance of parents in the realization of welfare schemes, the evolution of a social investment model of welfare, and interest in children's experiences and voices cast light on the understanding of children and childhood. Children's agency and competence are certainly central aspects that provide the rationale and spur an interest in how children define their understanding of the world and life situation. It is these initiatives by government agencies and civil society organizations as well as by scholars and research funding agencies that will decode the well-being of children that has become such an important aspect of welfare systems. Such new knowledge also redefines notions of the normal and gives substance to an expansion of diagnoses and a debate between competing professionals about the substance of such diagnoses. Consequently, new children's maladies or scenarios of risk are being described, much within territory earlier disregarded as less important to the development of society, that is, children's emotional and mental well-being, and particularly the difference in the measures of well-being between girls and boys.

Social and welfare policy also expect such knowledge to be shaped so that it can be of use in social planning. This points to the need for so-called evidence-based social science, but it also raises critical objections and questions about how it redefines social policy (Furedi 2001; Kamerman et al. 2010; Sandin 2011, 2012b; Bremberg 2004; Bergnéhr 2012; Barn 2012; Dekker 2009; Erchak and Rosenfelt 1989; Petersson et al. 2004; SOU 2008:131, 2001:55; Dahlstedt 2012; Wissö 2012; Frosh et al. 2002; Changing childhood in a changing Europe 2009). In this context, we can also identify novel arenas in which the well-being of children is seen as a common problem with different outcomes in different countries. The relationship between peers in schools and in media has led to attention being paid to bullying and children's understanding of such interaction, which actualizes the many different ways bullying can be interpreted culturally (Coloroso 2003; Li et al. 2012; Hinduja and Patchin 2009; Osvaldsson 2011; Cromdal and Osvaldson 2012; Horton 2011; Watson et al. 2012).

International adoption has, during the last decades, been discussed in terms of the psychological and mental well-being of adopted children. In the Scandinavian countries such interest has focused largely on the racialized identities construed for children with foreign backgrounds in relationship to the mainstream society. Similar concerns over the well-being and culture of adoptees are also voiced in

other countries as, for example, the United States, but with very different discursive patterns, which reflect both the differences of the ethnic character of social work and politics of identity in the United States (Gill and Jackson 1983; Haslanger and Witt 2005, Hübinette and Andersson 2012; Andersson 2012; Lind 2012).

The migration of children with and without families, escaping from oppression, war, and natural disasters has also put focus on the well-being of migrant children in Europe. This includes their reception, caring facilities, and interpretation of the best interests of the children as well as the grounds on which some children are extradited. In some cases, it has also caused an intensive debate on what psychiatric diagnoses can be used to describe mental conditions of apathy in children, which brings to the fore both the character of the reception children receive and the cultural biases of psychiatric diagnoses, and the on-going political negotiation of the meaning of childhood in Europe, where notions of childhood are shaped by the interaction with politics in a post-colonial majority world (Lundberg 2009; Andersson et al. 2010; Andersson 2005; Hansen 2008; Eastmond 2007; Gold and Nawyn 2012; Ingelby 2005; Watters 2008; Schiratzki 2000a, b, 2003, 2005, 2009; Tamas 2009; Bodegård 2006; Brekke 2004a, b; Hacking 2002; Halligan et al. 2003; Bhabha and Young 1999; Keselman 2009; McAdam 2006).

The focus in policy debates about mental well-being and parenting have shaped the background of new aspects of the welfare policies in European countries and at the European level. Educating parents to care for children has become a central aspect of the transformation of welfare, but it also reflects the interdependence of notions of children and parents. Competent children require a notion of competent parents. At a central European social policy level, and also in the United States, such ambitions point toward common trends in the models of support of parents to further the well-being of children (Gillis 2005a, b, 2008, 2012; Oelkers 2012; Rutherford 2013; Changing childhood in a changing Europe 2009; ESO 1996; Ellingasaeter and Leira 2006; Edwards and Gillis 2004; Fashimpar 2000; Gustavsson 2010; Halldén 2010; Johansson 2012; Kutscher 2012; Lerner 2000; Lansdown 2005).

In some nations, such as Sweden, policies for developing a system of comprehensive parental programs form the backbone of social conservative welfare that is set on protecting the rights of children within the families by further educating the parents. The ambition to shape a comprehensive system of support demonstrates at the same time the dependence on the traditional Swedish social welfare model. It also demonstrates the problems associated with importing support programs developed in cultural contexts where parenting and rights of children are set according to different cultural norms in, for example, the Anglo Saxon countries, but are ironically used to reach groups of immigrants to Sweden from majority world countries (Gleichmann 2004; Sandin 2011, 2012a, b; Barn 2012; SOU 2008:131). In parts of Europe, the ambitions are less systematic and based on initiatives from certain sections of government or welfare agencies. A divide exists between Northern and Southern Europe that may reflect different understandings of the integrity of the family and the role of government (Boddy 2009).

It is therefore not surprising that the common cultural values as expressed in the UNCRC disintegrate into different national or regional ways of defining childhood

and norms for the lives lived by children. The evolution of internationalization creates the need for comparative data on children's well-being in different countries and regions. This, in turn, also necessitates the conceptualization of the terms in which children's lives are understood – in terms of not only poverty levels but of health, education, income, and subjective well-being (Kamerman et al. 2010; Richter and Andresen 2012; Webb 2010; Bradshaw 1993; Bradshaw and Hatland 2006; Bradbury et al. 2000).

Comparative data reveal dramatic differences, not only between rich and poor countries, but also between and within rich countries (UNICEF 2007; Bradshaw and Hatland 2006). Analyses show that children's de facto well-being varies quite dramatically even among rich countries that do not lack the financial resources to promote children's rights and protect their well-being. Reports from UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre reveal major differences between Northern European countries, including Sweden, and Anglophone countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, when it comes to indicators measuring a variety of dimensions of well-being. For example, while child poverty remains above 15 % in the Anglophone countries, it has fallen to below 5 % in the Nordic countries. Similarly, looking at data measuring infant mortality rates, Sweden has a rate lower than 3 deaths per 1,000 births, whereas the rate in the United States is more than double (7 %). Similarly stark differences apply if we look at data on low birth weight rates and other dimensions of well-being such as education, accidents, childhood death rates, and housing (UNICEF 2007).

While careful analysis of each dimension and the indicators that are used to measure these suggest a degree of complexity, no one country performs satisfactorily in all aspects. It is nonetheless clear that certain patterns do emerge. Among the 21 OECD countries, at the aggregate level UNICEF ranks a cluster of countries that score well (Netherlands and the Nordic countries) as well as a few countries (the United Kingdom and the United States) that score poorly, while other countries, including France, occupy a middling position. Furthermore, it appears that no correlation exists between sheer economic wealth and levels of well-being, suggesting the need for a more subtle approach in analyzing these differences.

A similar pattern emerges when we turn from well-being to rights, laws, and policies, which indicate interdependence. While the broad support for the United Nation's Convention on Children's Rights of 1989 suggests a general agreement on what such rights entail, differences of interpretation, in fact, run deep, widely reflecting varying norms regarding childhood, family values, and the proper relations between the state and family. In the case of the United States, we also have to assume that the resistance to the convention is based on a reluctance to accept international conventions as formative for US law. Differences can be understood as reflecting the differences between rights' regimes that can be understood to steer the relations between individual, family, and state (Berggren and Trägårdh 2009; Trägårdh and Berggren 2010; Alston and Tobin 2005). These political orders will produce distinctly different ways of defining well-being.

Variations in children's well-being are related to variations in the way in which children's rights are institutionalized and rooted in fundamentally distinct

conceptions of the proper relationship between state, family, the individual, and civil society. While protection of the child has historically been the most compelling argument in favor of statist intervention, the state's claims to authority in the domestic realm have challenged the sovereignty and privacy of the family and have therefore not gone uncontested. The nature of these conflicts and the ways that boundaries between state and family have been redrawn were, however, shaped by particular national, cultural, and religious contexts. We have seen how the Western nations represent different models and very different examples of typical regimes of children's rights and well-being that express an historical legacy with deep cultural roots. With respect to well-being rates, according to the latest UNICEF review of "Child Well-being in Rich Countries," Sweden ranks very high, the United States very low, and France in-between (UNICEF 2007). Secondly, they represent radically divergent models in terms of how relations between the state, the family, civil society, and the individual are institutionalized (Berggren and Trägårdh 2009).

In the United States, political culture has been characterized by a tension between progressive elements oriented towards social engineering and an anti-statist tradition committed to individual liberty and the autonomy of civil society. Whereas in the early twentieth century progressivism held sway, later in the century socially conservative "family values" have often superseded children's rights by giving primacy to the integrity and privacy of the family in its relationship to the state. The federalist structure also makes it difficult to create coherent policies concerning children and children's rights (Sealander 2003; Grossberg 1983, 2012; Fass and Grossberg 2012).

By contrast, in Sweden the child has served as both the imaginative and political linchpin of the incipient welfare state, and children's rights have therefore played a central role. The Swedish welfare state or *folkhemmet* ("the people's home") has represented itself not only as a metaphorical home for its citizens, but also as the emancipator of the autonomous individual seeking refuge from the authority of the patriarchal family and, by extension, other hierarchical and patriarchal institutions of civil society. The state's role herein has been a dual one: to preserve the autonomy and integrity of each individual, including the child, and to promote a far-ranging conception of social equality across gender, age, and class lines. The effect of this alliance between state and individual with respect to the family has been complex. It has made individual members of each family, including children, less dependent on one another, while it has also made the family as a whole less dependent on the institutions of civil society and the vagaries of the market (Berggren and Trägårdh 2009; Trägårdh 1997, 1999; Sandin 2012a; Bradshaw and Hatland 2006; Popenoe 1988, 2009; Duvander and Andersson 2006; Ferrarini 2006; Hernes 1987; Hinnfors 1992; Johansson 2004, 2009; Klinth 1999, 2002; Lundqvist 2008; Forsberg 2009).

In France, one also sees a strong statist approach to children. However, in contrast to Sweden, the state has been less concerned with the emancipation of individuals; rather its chief concern has been to preserve the integrity of the traditional family. Until the last couple of decades, the agenda of the French state with respect to the family has primarily been that of promoting population growth

through the creation of conditions under which families can live healthy, productive lives. France has shared with Sweden a decommodified approach to the family, and to children in particular, seeing them more as a link to state policy as opposed to autonomous actors in a market society. Thus, the French historical experience and sociopolitical model contrasts in crucial ways with both those of Sweden and the United States (Downs 2002; Meyer 1983; Schafer 1997; Kamerman and Kahn 1981; Tilly and Scott 1978; Fuchs 1984; Fishman 2002; Rosanvallon 2007; Bermeo and Nord 2000).

Such differences in normative ideals that are hard to quantify and measure are expressed in the variation found in concrete laws, rights, and policies, which are easier to analyze. While there is a relative paucity of systematic, comparative data on laws and policies, another recent report from UNICEF, which seeks to rate the early childhood services of 25 OECD countries in terms of 10 legislative benchmarks, has produced a list remarkably similar – though not identical – to the well-being rankings discussed above. Again, Nordic countries occupy the top tier, while Anglophone countries (Ireland, Canada, Australia, United States) are found at the very bottom (UNICEF 2007).

2.9 Summary

The narrative in this chapter demonstrates both international and national or regional understandings of well-being that express general and global and long-, medium-, and short-term trends of change. It also points out that the understanding of children in history is shaped by local, regional, and national developments and international changes. Such trends are made by different political or religious cultures in various nations that shape how specific childhoods were formed and consequently how well-being was to be understood. The understanding of well-being is expressed both through the institutions of education and care created for children and through discussions about what is good for children that are voiced by the professional groups that claim precedence in the defining of well-being. Different political and academic cultures will ultimately have significance for what roles these professionals play in defining the life and role of children. The struggle over the meaning of childhood derives from the parallel existence of different institutional arrangements and various understandings of childhood. In a given historical context, progressive reform has existed side-by-side with traditional systems of care. The understanding of children's well-being is consequently never homogenous.

Family history research demonstrates how the resilience of families in periods of rapid transformation created a continuity between rural and urban areas, between agrarian and industrial regions, and between old countries and new, but its shortcomings in terms of ability to provide necessities for children were reflected in restructuring of decimated families and in high rates of child mortality and child abandonment. It is from that perspective religion, secular government, and civil society regulated, controlled and supported families. Throughout history such support has involved moral preaching, spreading knowledge, and providing

material assistance to families defined as inadequate to guarantee the well-being of children. The well-being of children has been of importance to families and households given the material and cultural frameworks. Consequently, households also demonstrate different ambitions and abilities to care for and to meet the needs of children, both in terms of past definitions and in terms used in present societies. A struggle of definitions of need and well-being between classes, regions, and cultures can be traced over the centuries. Such needs are constantly redefined and the government and religious and civil society organizations have evaluated which needs were to be deemed legitimate for support – thereby setting standards for well-being. Such standards have also always had a moral and political side and included an interest in how parents managed the moral upbringing of their children. Different religious communities and legal traditions define the family as a spiritual and moral unit. Its relationship to the state has shaped the character and extent of institutions such as foundling homes, orphanages, and schools differently in different parts of the West. Physical and mental care have also had a moral side.

Child welfare became an issue during the eighteenth century and earlier, partly due to criticism of children's participation in the labor force, but also a result of extreme poverty and child abandonment. The discussions also had implications for children's moral, psychological, and mental states, which connected evaluations of the working conditions with family care and the living conditions of street children, abandoned children, and children of single parents. The establishment of foundling hospitals and orphanages for children reflects concerns over the well-being of children. Sensitivity to children's social and material well-being included concerns about their moral and civic roles and the social consequences of a failed up-bringing for society at large. Political discussions during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries combined these matters with a focus on criteria for the deserving and undeserving poor. Poverty at a young age and the failure of the older generation to provide transformed the child's status among the lower classes to a risk criteria that in no way guaranteed support from society.

The mid- and late nineteenth century saw an emerging interest from governments to survey and discuss the conditions under which young people lived. These focused on child labor, health, emigration, and housing conditions. Such engagement was an expression of fear that children's detrimental social conditions hindered national efforts to develop industries or uphold overseas dominions and wage war. It also involved extensive charting and description of the conditions under which children lived. These efforts were also closely linked to moralizing over the life choices of children and women and the connection between poverty and poor morals. The development of mass education reflected to a great extent such worries in the Western world. The well-being of children also had a moral educational side and a relationship to children's civic roles as future adults and citizens. In the educational systems that were developed from the late nineteenth century, different criteria of well-being were applied to children of different social classes, genders, and ethnic groups. Well-being was also understood differently given the perspectives of the school reformers and those of parents. The objectives of having children go to schools were fundamentally different.

The development of education also had other effects. It went hand-in-hand with increased interest in children's health, and mass education opened an avenue to inspect children in terms of development and health. By means of school medical inspections and the work of other health organizations, medical professions were able to increasingly observe the detrimental effects of children's social conditions and family life: attempts to combine schooling and labor; social, physical, and emotional deviance; abnormality; and disease. In some countries these institutions became an integrated part of the health commitments made by central governments. Common features are a joint Western intellectual interest in the study of children and young people in the early twentieth century.

The Child Study Movement thrived on the large numbers of children assembled in the educational system and initiated discussions about the qualities that made for a good upbringing. This led to the creation of social and institutional arrangements that normalized the child through a wide variety of instruments. These ranged from testing in schools, organized play, and summer schools to institutions for children at risk. These processes also indicate the relationship between the visibility of children on the streets of the towns and in factories, on the one hand, and an urge among political elites to regulate the life of children of the lower classes, on the other. Well-being was accordingly contextualized in relationship to the nature of children's activities but also to their location or place. Work within the context of the family was preferred to work outside the household. Hazardous work conditions for children could be accepted on the family farm and have been up until the present day in some national contexts. But children's independent activities as breadwinners were not condoned as appropriate and could also easily be labeled as idling. The well-being of children was closely associated with dependence on adult providers, a certain quality of family life, and certain kinds of activities such as play and education.

At the turn of the twentieth century and during its first half, childhood took on its shape as a special period in a person's life, and children were described as having distinctive features and possessing special rights. Childhood was also defined as a period of limited capacities and growth – a period to get through as soon as possible – but not before attaining an appropriate level of maturity. Childhood became a period of development under the eyes and support of parents and professionals and, as such, an important arena of research for the emerging professions. An important aspect of the sanctification of children was their vulnerability and need for protection. As a consequence of the social and cultural perils, it became a state of being where one should not linger too long, for to be a child was to be incompetent, half, and incomplete. It could be a dangerous period if in the care of incompetent adults; problems with children were at times sought in the underperformance of families, or, more specifically, of mothers. The well-being of children was clearly closely associated to upbringing in families and to female care.

The construction of welfare meant that children's welfare was evaluated vis-à-vis the welfare and role of parents. This has meant that different bodies of legislation have defined the meaning of childhood and the responsibilities of the state in

relation to the family and children. Many initiatives and social services for children were implemented by nongovernment organizations. Philanthropic organizations increasingly engaged not only the philanthropic upper and middle classes but also professionals to a greater extent. Their ambitions, combined with those of the public child care professionals and politicians, led them to seek full-scale state support and backing by national legislation. This was the case with child care, child guidance clinics, maternity clinics, and compulsory school lunches in the most ambitious welfare systems, while in other Western nations the state was less ambitious in the shaping of coherent systems. All these different schemes indicate ways of problematizing children's well-being and the need to shape the behavior of parents or simply support children.

General welfare schemes balanced against more selective measures, and the role of national governments sought its place in relationship to the role of local governments (regional authorities) in the support of children's well-being. Depending on the national context, the role of the family and professionals varied in importance and in its designated political role. State actions in *loco parentis* to protect children were arbitrated in relation to the role of institutional and professional influence and in relation to the integrity of the family. Such interventions to protect the well-being of children were shaped differently depending on legal traditions and the relationship between the family and the state. It was also different when applied in different sectors, whether it was distribution of milk to babies, examinations of newborn babies, or juvenile crimes and breaking norms. A thin and negotiable line was drawn between disciplining, punishments, and support in regard to mothers, children, and the young. These changes were also shaped by different national trajectories before and after World War II. In countries hard hit by depression, the policies for children and the understanding of childhood looked different than in nations that worried about a declining population or the disastrous effects of World War II on families and children.

It is in such a light that the history of children's well-being during the second half of the twentieth century can be understood and can explain the variations in the guises that provisions for children have taken. It also explains some of the conflicts concerning the well-being of children. The emergence of child welfare committees, child health care, educational policy, and legislation on adoption, fostering, delinquency, and the family can all be understood as examples of the way that children were viewed as politically important objects of welfare by governments or other agencies. Exactly what that interest has entailed has varied enormously, and has obviously been interpreted in different ways by the various agents involved and in different countries. Some may have subordinated it to other political priorities, such as the need to solve poor relief problems, population growth, housing shortages, or, for that matter, in some countries, a priority to create democratic citizens.

Children's rights have primarily been an issue of social rights rather than civic rights. Throughout the twentieth century, the child's best interests in cases of adoption have, for example, been clearly overwhelmed by the sheer number of

children in need of adoption and definitions of the nature of a family as a legal, psychological, social, or biological unit. Clearly the best interests of the child were evoked in situations when children were subject to problematic social situations, and when the "normal" living conditions afforded by the protection of a biological family were wanting. By the late twentieth century, children's rights became central in addressing children's issues and shaped the context for defining well-being. The rights of adults to parenthood or children's rights to parents and the ranking of the rights of the family over the rights of the child are examples of issues that needed to be arbitrated in a context where well-being was an issue.

The emphasis on children's autonomy, competence, and independent agency also opened the doors for civil society and professional organizations to offer children support, protection, or legal advice in lieu of the guarantees previously afforded by the state. The phrase "the child's best interests" became connected to children as competent individuals. The emphasis shifted to the judicial system's responsibility to define children's rights in relationship to the UNCRC. The child's best interests became a unifying concept that is enlisted by partially rival agents – government authorities, voluntary organizations, lawyers, professional organizations and scholars – who view themselves as mediators of children's rights and thus children's best interests. They are prepared to listen to the voices of children, while at the same time representing and voicing their professional interests.

A long-term shift involves a movement away from the idea of children that emphasizes their vulnerability and fragility toward a view of children that emphasizes the similarity of children's needs as individuals to those of adults. Simultaneously, children's voices also become important as sources of information about the well-being of children, and children are described as competent informers. The notion of children as having separate rights is consequently eroded; the social and citizens' rights attributed to children in the UNCRC are largely identical to those of adults. This creates an issue in today's society concerning how children's rights should be negotiated between, on the one hand, care and dependence and, on the other, adult-like independence and rights as individuals but with very different outcomes in different countries.

The trends also reflect a renewed interest in the study of children that accounts for children as social agents. The significance of this newborn and redirected interest in child studies is not only that it parallels the child studies movement around the turn of the century, but that it also participates in shaping institutions and policy for children. It is the very intellectual underpinning of an understanding of children as agents and of a governance of society that includes listening to children's needs and definitions of well-being. The best interests of children are not only a directive in an international convention but also an instrument of governance in modern welfare societies. In essential respects, conditions have thus changed for interaction between the state, professionals, nonprofessionals, and children. But the debate concerning children's well-being has been fundamentally altered from an issue of national concern, albeit based on international cooperation, to a basically international issue.

During both the late twentieth and early nineteenth centuries the politics of children became an increasingly important part of politics in general, not least as reflected by the work of implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also because of the creation of welfare institutions for children, changing gender relations, and an aging population in the industrialized Western world. The UN General Assembly accepted the convention in 1989 and all countries (except the United States and Somalia) ratified it. Even if different countries have varied interpretations of its meaning, the support surrounding UN's children's convention is unique in the context of international law.

The signing was the culmination of a heritage dating back to the First World War and the confirmation of the Geneva Convention of 1924, which formulated rules for protecting children. It thus represents a set of principles that have developed on an international level but illustrates a shift in the meaning of childhood and the understanding of well-being. At the same time, these principles are clearly founded in national agencies and NGOs focusing on child protection, child guidance, education, psychology, and social work. They reflect efforts on the national level and, more importantly, extensive international cooperation between professionals and scholars, thus building a cultural identity around the protection of children. One can also argue that it is a long-term consequence of international cooperation on different aspects of children's well-being that has shaped the institutions for children from the eighteenth century onward. Children's rights and understandings of well-being are clearly export products that reflect international power relations and dominance and consequently also ambitions to resist such hegemonic processes.

Changing notions of well-being are simultaneously dependent on international and global changes, systems of evaluation, notions of rights, scholarship, national cultures, and the individual voices of children. In addition, it indicates recognizing and meeting children's developmental and emotional needs. In the late twentieth century, the promotion of children's rights indicated a shift from an emphasis on social rights and access to welfare provisions to *individual participatory rights*. One symbol of these changes was the emergence of the concept of the "best interests of the child," which also influenced legal doctrines. It is in this context that we can also see the emergence of a discussion about the well-being of children also an issue of comparison between nations. As the best interest of the child was closely associated with the UN convention recognition of children, it also spurred an interest in comparative aspects of children's lives. Comparisons demanded clear criteria for the measure of well-being to motivate and legitimize social support. Sensitivity about the consequences for the life of children with new family patterns, extensive schooling, unemployment, and migration also created an awareness of how such changes influenced children's quality of life. At the same time, children are understood as increasingly important investments in the welfare state. As governments are reluctant to uphold traditional welfare systems, this development has stimulated interest in the education of parents, equipping them both to fend for the well-being of children and to take part in the task of redeeming past inadequacies in the care of children in institutions.

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