

The “good life” in schools and other institutions: Can Pedagogy influence Child Well-being?

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The „good life“ ??

What does the “good life” mean within the research context on child well-being?

The Capability Approach is developed by the economist Amartya Sen and the philosopher Martha Nussbaum and it offers an interesting theoretical framework to conceptualize child well-being.

Topics

1. Pedagogy, child well-being and childhood studies.
2. Surveys on Children in Germany and findings on well-being and culture of learning.
3. Impact of a very important social policy oriented reform of the German school system, the reform to all-day schools.

1. The good life, child well-being and education

The good life, child well-being and education

Capabilities are more than the mere possession of certain goods, knowledge of specific cultural techniques, and so forth. They express the actual possibilities of being that individuals are able to choose from "for good reasons" (see Sen 1985).

The good life, child well-being and education

Life: Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length

Bodily health: Being able to have good health, particularly in terms of adequate nourishment, shelter, reproductive health, and mobility

Bodily integrity: Being able to avoid unnecessary pain and experience joy; to move freely from place to place; to have one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign

Senses, imagination, and thought: Being able to use one's senses to imagine, think, and reason

Emotions: Being able to have attachments to things and people, to love, to grieve, to experience longing and gratitude

Practical reason: Being able to form a conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about planning one's life

Affiliation: Being able to live with and toward others; to enter various forms of familial and social relationships and having the social bases of self-respect

Other species: Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature

Play: Being able to laugh, to play, and to enjoy recreational activities

Control over one's environment: Being able to live one's own life and not somebody else's; participation, rights, and being able to hold property in terms of real opportunity (Nussbaum 1999; 2000)

General issues on education and the concept of child well-being:

From educational point of view paternalism is a substantial factor of education often defined as “advocatory ethic”. Children experienced in their everyday life paternalistic attitudes of adults in families, schools and so on.

Education and the German term “Bildung” are close connected with ideas on perfectionism or as J.-J. Rousseau said: “perfectibilité”. Both are future oriented. Child Well-Being is focusing the present.

2. Well-Being and culture of learning: Findings from World Vision Surveys on Children in Germany

World Vision Surveys: Methods

Children in Germany

Children in Germany 2007

Quantitative, standardized survey of almost 1,600 children
aged 8-11 years;
Parents Questionnaire

Qualitative interviews with selected 6- to 11-year-old
children;

World Vision Surveys: Methods

Children in Germany

Children in Germany 2010

Quantitative, standardized survey of almost 2,500 children
aged 6-11 years;

Parents Questionnaire

Qualitative interviews with selected 6- to 11-year-old
children;

Personal oral interviews by trained interviewers at the children's home

Parents questionnaire tapping the family background and socio economic status

Qualitative Interviews:

- Time strips
- Fantasy questions
- Poor/rich pictures
- Poor/rich continuum
- Drawing on well-being

Well-Being and school culture: Findings from World Vision Surveys on Children in Germany

What is missing?

- the group of younger children and
- the transition from Kindergarten to school

I would like to argue that we should work on the relation between the quality of well-being and the quality of the arrangements of transitions.

Findings from the qualitative Part 2010

I: Good, then just tell me! And I'll write them down.

S: Food . . . drinks. What a child needs to stay alive?

I: What a child needs to feel good.

S: Freedom. Privacy when he doesn't feel good. How many is that?

I: Shall we call food and drink one? I think that food and drink is one thing, Then we've got freedom and privacy.

S: Then it's four, three. Three.

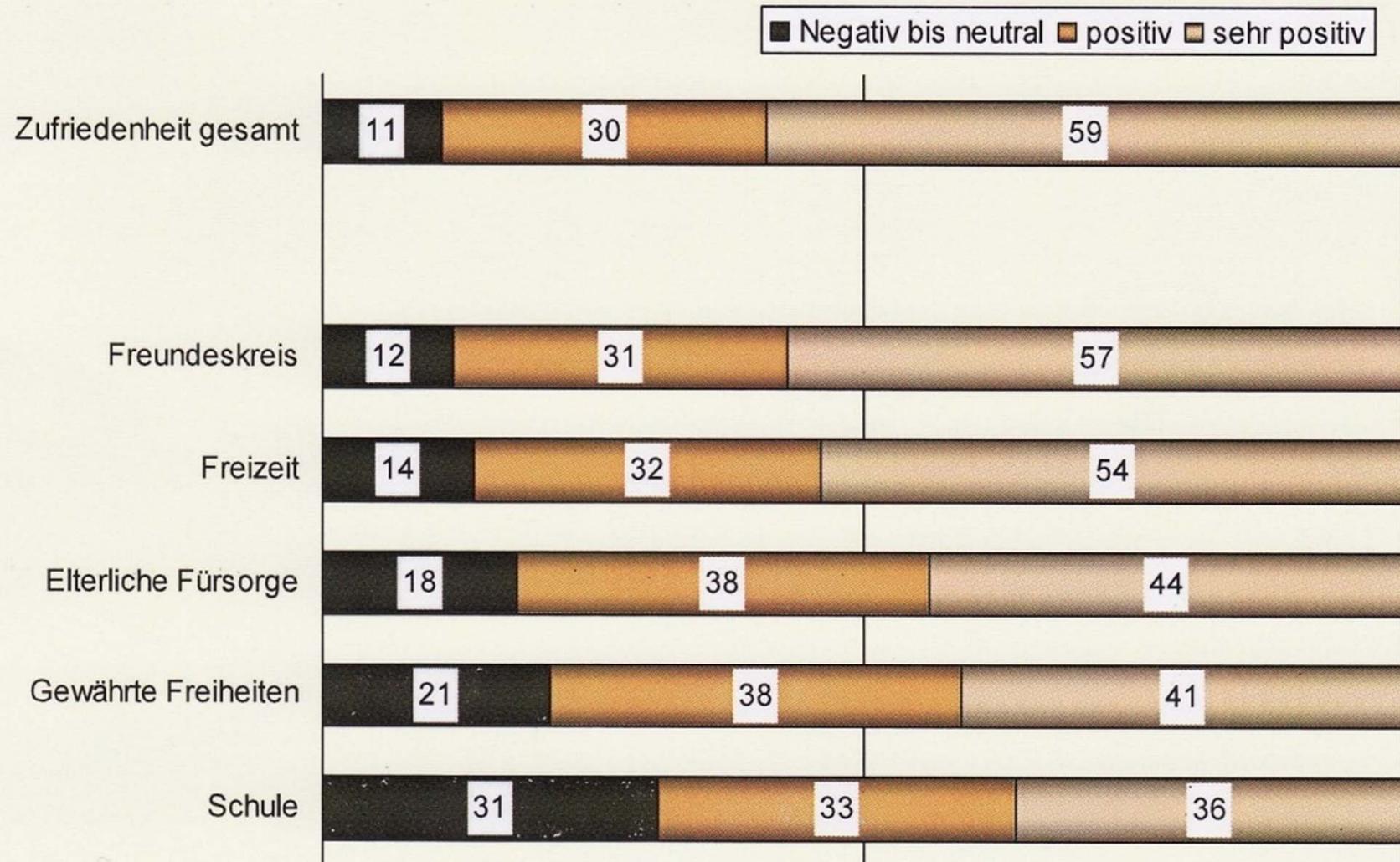
I: We've got three now.

S: A school. Even though I personally don't like it at all, never mind, but I need it in order to learn. And . . . and lots of luck in life.”

Some quantitative results on child well-being

Die Sicht der Kinder: Wohlbefinden nach Lebensbereichen

Kinder im Alter von 6 bis 11 Jahren in Deutschland (Angaben in %)



World Vision Kinderstudie 2010

TNS Infratest Sozialforschung

Culture of learning that is in our study:

respect of what children think,

parents interests on school life and children's learning
achievements,

all-day school activities like sports, creative lessons,
homework support, problem based learning.

Respect for what they think

The importance of their own opinion for mothers, fathers, friends, and class teachers

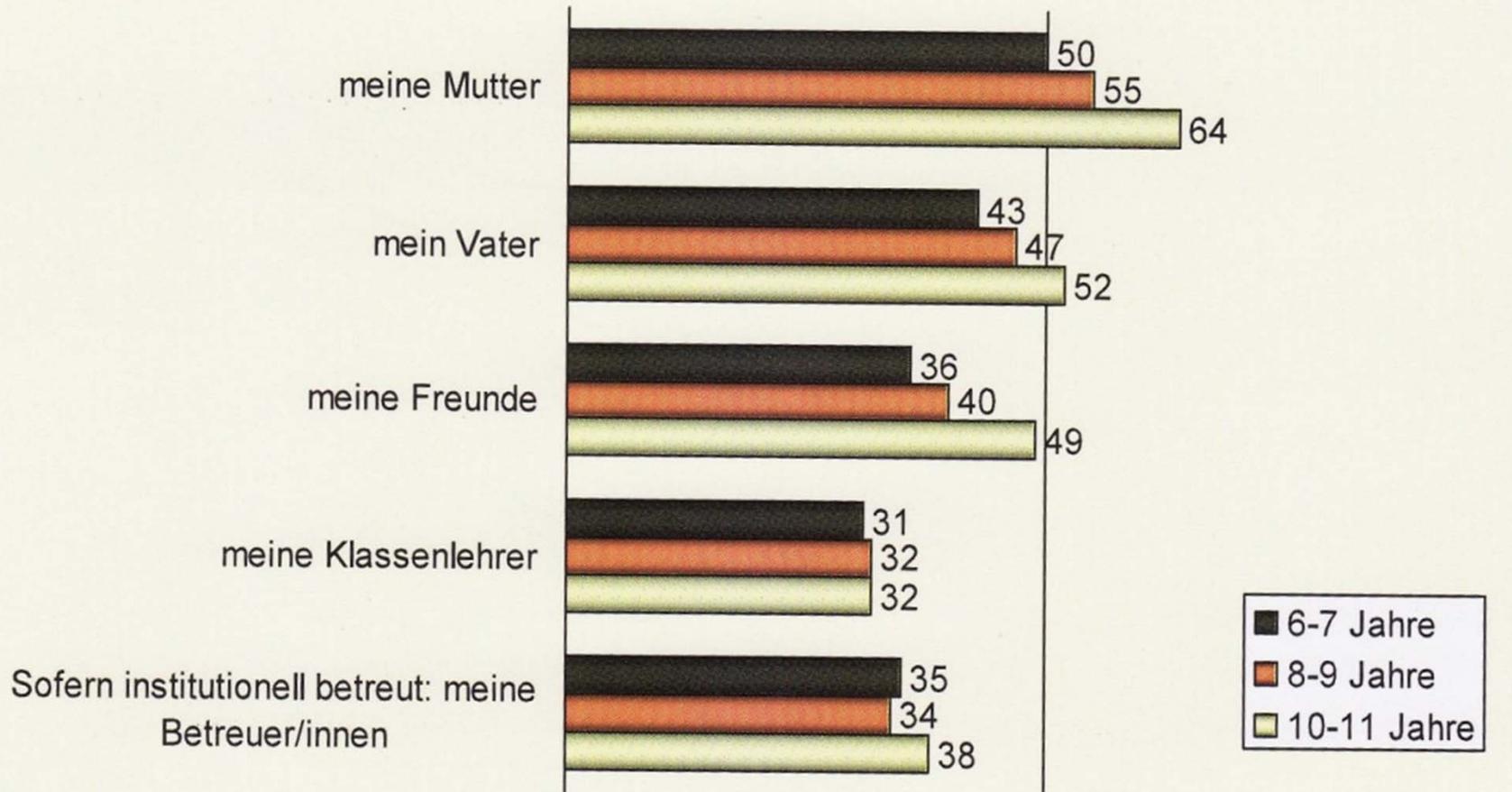
The older children are, the more they consider their own opinion to be taken seriously by mothers, fathers and friends.

Less than one-third of the children, **independent** of age, report that their class teacher and after school care givers tend to care more about what they think.

Bedeutung der eigenen Meinung

Kinder im Alter von 6 bis 11 Jahren in Deutschland (Angaben in %)

„Eher viel Wert auf meine Meinung legen“



3. Some thoughts on well-being in Germany's All-Day Schools

Some thoughts on well-being in Germany's All-Day Schools

Two political goals although providing no guarantees for their successful implementation:

Easing the work–life balance, that is, allowing women to take up employment.

Creating equal opportunities for children from families with a low socioeconomic status and poor qualifications. This group contains many families with a migration background.

Some thoughts on well-being in Germany's All-Day Schools

Findings World Vision Studies

In 2007 only **13%** of 8- to 11 years old visited an all-day school and 2010 **18%**.

We asked all children, what kind of activities they would like to have in all day schools.

Compare to 2007 we had 2010 a growing number who wish sports activities (**77%**, compare to **73%** in 2007), theater, creative (**66%**, compare to **50%** in 2007).

Some thoughts on well-being in Germany's All-Day Schools

Germany's federal system requires each single federal state to decide on the content, structure, and curriculum of its own all-day school model.

In almost every state, parents (and children) can choose to use an all-day provision at their child's school or to keep their child at home in the afternoon.

There is little coordination between the professional groups involved—teachers, childcare workers, social workers, and volunteers. The outcome for parents is that they cannot be sure about who is responsible for what.

Some thoughts on well-being in Germany's All-Day Schools

“Families as actors in all-day school.

In sum, we carried out 64 interviews with parents (particularly mothers), 24 interviews with professionals, approximately 320 hours of observation, 16 family interviews, and 4 group discussions with mixed teams

Some thoughts on well-being in Germany's All-Day Schools

Selected empirical findings:

- (1) Parents' understanding of what is meant by a family
- (2) How professionals address parents and the parents' desire for recognition
- (3) Child-oriented education arrangements
- (4) Professional self-image of teachers and childcare workers

Conclusions

Thank you for your attention!

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