

***Call for Papers: The well-being of children. Theory, Practice and Policy
MANCEPT Workshops in Political Theory, 4-6 September 2013, Manchester***

The last years have seen an increasing interest in the topic of well-being across different disciplines. Questions of measurement and such regarding the normative value of well-being for theories of justice have been widely discussed. Furthermore, it has been acknowledged that these theoretical considerations interlink with questions of policy design and political practice. There seems to be a shift that well-being might become one of the main indicators to measure the success of policies on all different levels, from the local to the national up to the international, and in many different policy areas. These developments have neither gone uncriticized – for example that the use of well-being as an indicator for development disguises economic injustices – nor is there a shared understanding how well-being should be conceptualized, measured and how it can be enhanced or secured.

Against this general background, we want to explore questions related to the theory, practice and policy of the well-being of children. Children are special in many aspects: it is a widely shared understanding that children are not able to fully understand their situation, that they are limited in their ability to make reasonable decisions about themselves and their actions, that they do not always act in their best interests, that they need the help and guidance of adults or that they need special protection from various harms and from making wrong choices. It is further well studied that the well-being during childhood has a significant influence on the whole future life course and adulthood. These factors make the well-being of children a topic of importance but also one that is confronted with many conceptual, normative and methodological difficulties that need to be addressed from different disciplines.

Topics:

The proposed workshop will deal with questions such as:

- What is special about being a child and how is childhood to be demarcated from adulthood?
- What is the difficulty in conceptualizing the well-being of children compared to the well-being of adults?
- How can and should we measure the well-being of children?
- What is the significance of cultural factors in conceptualizing the well-being of children?
- How can the well-being of children become a matter of policy and political practice?
- What is the relation of poverty, inequality and well-being in regard to children?
- Should children have a voice in determining their well-being?
- Is the concept of well-being ideologically misguided?
- What is the relationship between the well-being of children and the role of the family?
- What are the sources of our knowledge about the well-being of children?
- What is the relationship between subjective and objective measures of well-being?

Submission:

Papers are welcome from graduate students, and both early career and senior researchers, that address any of these and related issues. Please prepare a 300-500 word abstract suitable for a 30 minutes presentation and send it to both conveners by 15 May 2013. In order to achieve a high quality workshop, we highly encourage the selected participants to send their full papers (ca. 5000 words) to the conveners by 20 August 2013 so that they can be shared with the group. We especially welcome papers that aim to combine normative reasoning and empirical knowledge and come from an interdisciplinary background.

Conveners:

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