

Exploring children's perspectives of well-being and safety

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Candidate Statement

I certify that the work incorporated in this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

I certify that the work in this thesis is my own work except as acknowledged in the text. Portions of this study have been presented as part of the larger international study titled “Children’s Worlds: A multi-national qualitative investigation of children’s well-being”. Including the publication of various journal articles by researchers across the globe.

Ethical and scientific approval was granted from Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) with the research proposal meeting the requirements set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Reference Number: H11446

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(see Appendix H)

A handwritten signature in black ink, which has been redacted with a solid black rectangular box. The signature appears to be "Rhea Felton".

Rhea Felton

Date: 26 September 2019

List of Abbreviations

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
LGA	Local Government Area
MRes	Master of Research
OSHC	Out of School Hours Care
SWB	Subjective Well-Being
WSU	Western Sydney University

Abstract

The concepts of well-being and safety are grounded in social policy and political frameworks influencing how children experience and ascribe meaning in their lives. Contemporary knowledge in the field of children's well-being and safety largely extends from an adult-centric perspective. From this stance, emphasis focuses on understanding children's well-being and safety from developmental outcomes. More recent research however identifies well-being and safety by the lived experiences and feelings expressed directly by children. Although these studies have highlighted the importance of safety to a child's overall sense of well-being, children's direct perspectives of their well-being and safety in Australia have rarely been explored.

Through qualitative methodology this study focused on understanding children's perspectives of safety in the wider context of their own well-being. Participants included 42 children aged 6 to 17 years who lived in a region south west of Sydney's central business district in New South Wales, Australia. Child focused participatory methods included creative art activities, photography, sandplay, focus groups and individual interviews. Reflective field notes were scribed following each fieldwork session in addition to research-peer debriefing sessions. Focus groups and individual interviews were transcribed assisting thematic analysis of the data. Through individual, peer-to-peer and participant-to-researcher interactions, children co-constructed the meaning of well-being and safety through dialogue and creative mediums. Key themes emerging from narratives shared by children included *Agency, Relatedness and Innate Needs* in describing what well-being and safety means for them. Children described their

understanding of well-being and safety and moreover the above identified key themes, as interwoven concepts which were often experienced together. Through this understanding, children shared importance that well-being and safety are experienced as co-existing concepts which influence each other.

This study provided an opportunity for children to collaboratively share their thoughts and discuss ideas of these concepts among peers, contributing to a child focused co-construction of conceptual development. In presenting findings from this study, I aim to position children's views centrally in the reconstruction and reconsideration of social policy and political frameworks that affect the lives of children.

Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction and background of research project

This thesis examines children's¹ understanding and their shared experiences of well-being and safety, highlighting the presence of interconnections between these two concepts. My MRes research project is nested within a larger international study titled 'Children's Worlds: A multi-national qualitative investigation of children's well-being'. Hearing and documenting children's subjective views about their well-being and safety is fundamental in allowing children to live out their human rights and social justice whilst providing an opportunity to be part of social change that nurtures children to live a life they value.

In the larger international project, chief investigator of the Australian research team Dr Tobia Fattore² is accompanied by researchers Prof. Jan Mason³, Assoc. Prof. Gabrielle Drake⁴, Dr Lise Mogenson³, Dr Michel Edenborough³ and Dr Janet Falloon³ who explore how children conceptualise the meaning of well-being and experience dimensions of well-being in the Australian context. By employing child-centred and participatory techniques the project aims to understand what factors are important to children by discussing what well-being means from their perspective. Internationally there are research teams situated across 22 nations, following a research protocol

¹This thesis uses the terms 'children' to refer to all those aged between 0 and 18 years

² Macquarie University

³ Western Sydney University

⁴ Australian Catholic University

developed by project coordinators Dr Tobia Fattore ², Prof. Susann Fegter ⁵ and Prof. Christine Hunner-Kreisel ⁶ (See Appendix E). This global project aims to understand child well-being in a locally orientated, but multi-nationally comparative manner.

⁵ Technical University Berlin

⁶ University of Vechta

1.2 Overview of Chapter One

The concepts of well-being and safety have been deeply grounded in social policy and political frameworks across Western nations for many years. Records of children having experienced adversity in the form of abuse and neglect exist since the earliest of times and long before enforcement of legislative frameworks (Tomison, 2001). It was not until the mid-twentieth century that a focus on child well-being and safety became pronounced in political and ideological contexts within social structures. This shift occurred in an era where Australia ratified the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which acknowledges and supports children to have rights across civil, cultural, economic, political and social decisions which affect them (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2019). A guiding principle of the CRC details children should have an opportunity to freely express their views on matters which affect them and promotes their participation in the decision making process. Establishing the importance of children's voices to be heard and legitimised is critical in understanding and supporting children to live a life they value. This shift has contributed to significant transformation of how the concepts of child well-being and safety are explored and researched in contemporary times, with children being increasingly invited to engage in conversations which rethink social and political frameworks that affect their lives (Ben-Arieh & Shimoni, 2013).

A review of the literature places research on child safety and children's description of being safe within the broader well-being and child well-being literature, focusing on explorations on what children describe as the meaning of safety. While this thesis was

prompted by an interest in exploring children's understandings of child safety, early in the project the importance of understanding the connection of children's experiences of well-being and safety became evident. This connection is moreover made in current Australian child protection policy documents which includes the concept of well-being in articulating child protection policy (NSW FACS 2019; VIC Health and Human Services, 2018).

A review of the literature on child well-being will firstly outline the conceptualisation of well-being generally and then focus specifically on child well-being and how this concept has shifted across time. The differing philosophical paradigms framing how the concept of well-being is presented and most frequently researched are discussed. Secondly, the concept of safety is critically presented in relation to well-being by highlighting empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks which present interconnections between these concepts. In discussing the concepts of well-being and safety, I thirdly review narratives in the literature on how children describe their experiences of well-being and safety. In prioritising discussion on subjective well-being (SWB) and safety among children, I further review contributions children have made to this field of research that signify the value and importance of child-centric research. Concluding discussions in this chapter will highlight methodological considerations researchers face when attempting to work directly with children in ways that respect, value and ensure accurate narratives are captured and presented so that children's voices are heard.

1.3 Children's well-being

1.3.1 Understanding the meaning of well-being and subjective well-being

Well-being is often described in terms of a person's state of health, happiness and prosperity. The prominent philosophical paradigms exploring the concept of well-being, the hedonic and eudemonic approaches, have contributed to the diverse meanings of how well-being is understood. The hedonic view describes well-being as an individual experiencing maximum happiness and pleasure with the absence of pain whereas, the eudemonic approach emphasises well-being as a concept reliant on individuals living in accordance to their true self and values (Waterman, 1993). Eudemonic theorists maintain that an individuals' desire may not yield a state of well-being, despite this being a pleasurable experience, some outcomes of these experiences may not promote well-being. And therefore, happiness cannot be equated with well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Well-being research explored through a hedonic approach has largely contributed to the development of quantitative well-being indicators and measurement frameworks which have formed the fundamental basis of many social policies (Fernandes et al., 2012). While research which has adopted a eudemonic approach has typically explored well-being through qualitative methodology mostly contributing to literature presenting well-being from a subjective standpoint, in particular where children's rights are discussed (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These two philosophical approaches which explore the meaning of well-being continue to highlight the importance of demonstrating well-being as a multidimensional complex concept where differing research standpoints are necessary

(Michaelson, Abdallah, Steuer, Thompson & Marks, 2009). This study adopts a eudemonic approach in exploring SWB and safety among children. This approach accords with the use of methodology that enables children to qualitatively and freely discuss their experiences and views about the subject matter.

Well-being research is growing substantially in the humanities and social science disciplines, making an overview of how the conceptualisation of well-being is understood as a complex process. The differing philosophical approaches individually enable the identification of characteristics and variables influencing well-being and the interpretation of its meaning. Exploring the meaning of well-being through qualitative methodologies draws attention to varying sociocultural differences in the norms and values that reflect the communities where the research is occurring and the development of the varying concepts (Fattore, Fegter & Hunner-Kreisel, 2018).

Psychological literature has demonstrated a history of pathologizing the concept of well-being. For example, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) refer to the concept of 'healing' which is dominant in this literature, particularly following World War II, where there was an emphasis on repairing the damaged mind to promote wellness with an absence of mental distress. This approach was later discredited as researchers found that positive affect was not the opposite to negative affect and therefore well-being was not simply the absence of psychopathology (Cacioppo & Berntson, 1999). In the late 20th Century social scientists began to explore personal growth (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and subjective well-being (Diener, 1984). Much research in

recent years has focused on studying well-being subjectively, that is exploring how individuals experience and describe their well-being, in contrast to research placing emphasis on objective indicators. Theoretical frameworks describing well-being through an objective lens, adopts indicators which materialistically measure social conditions of subjects, such as income food and housing.

The concept of SWB is receiving increasing attention in social science literature with researchers exploring this concept through both theoretical and empirical approaches. A popular understanding of SWB in the social science discourse is the act of one perceiving, evaluating and aspiring to aspects in their life (Campbell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976). Diener (2000), a key researcher in this area, further describes SWB as a wide judgement about life, including variables, such as life satisfaction, positive affect and low levels of negative affect, which contribute to experienced moods and emotions.

Research conducted by Ben-Arieh and Shimoni (2014) explored the meaning of SWB and safety among children aged 10 and 12 years, reporting that contentment, happiness and satisfaction contributed to one experiencing an ideal state of functioning. They note that the preferred state does not suggest perfection, rather what is a level of ideal functioning for that particular individual. A key component identified in this study describes SWB as an individual's own interpretation of this state and the attribution of meaning experienced in their lives.

1.3.2 Understanding children's subjective well-being

Research exploring children's understanding of the meaning of SWB has largely been explored from an adult-centric stance. From this view, the development of the concept of child well-being has positioned significant adults in children's lives including parents, teachers and professionals as the prominent constructors of what child well-being means (Hayes, 2002). This conceptualisation has predominantly focused on assessing and monitoring the child from a developmental perspective with well-being indicators and measures having been about assessing children's attainment from developmental milestones and identifying their developmental deficits. While these indicator frameworks have highlighted importance in social policy and practice frameworks in supporting children to experience well development, they have largely neglected children's perspectives of what well-being means for them. Researchers have identified the silencing of children's voices regarding their well-being positions them as objects for assessment, rather than subjects who are capable of assessing their own lives (Mayall, 1994; John, 2003).

Child well-being studies have shifted to include a more subjective approach with research methodologies asking children directly about their experiences and understanding of what well-being means from their perspective. In some of this research exploring the concept of well-being subjectively, children were more inclusively engaged in the research process and their contributions have often contested current understanding of the conceptual meaning of child well-being (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2016). This research direction has been influenced by major shifts in the representation

of children in the academic field through the work of researchers in the 'new' childhood studies. James and Prout (1990) discuss a pivotal point of change occurring in the late 20th century where child well-being research started to recognise children as active agents in their lives capable of co-constructing meaning of what well-being means for them. James and Prout (1990) refer to this shift in thinking as an *emergent paradigm* in childhood studies which has been fundamental in contributing to the way in which subjective child well-being is now researched. This approach has provided children with the opportunity to co-construct and contest current conceptual understanding in this field. Ben-Arieh et al. (2001) comment on the importance of acknowledging children as powerful contributors to academic knowledge of SWB. Shifting from the adult-centric approach in researching child SWB to engaging children directly in the co-construction of well-being research has enabled some children to exercise their human rights in becoming contributors in the SWB discourse.

Children sharing knowledge about their well-being is particularly important in understanding and responding to child development, wellness promotion and support frameworks that impact the lives of children (Murray, 2019). Research has indicated differences in how adults' and children describe well-being (Ben-Arieh, Casas, Frønes & Korbin, 2013) and highlight importance of social policy and well-being practice frameworks to be customised for the age cohort to which these policies are directed in supporting.

As discussed earlier, the hedonic approach to child well-being research has

predominantly focused on quantitative research methodologies that frequently exclude children in the construction of understanding and measuring well-being. The eudemonic approach is more likely to adopt a qualitative epistemological stance which provides children the opportunity to co-construct the meaning of well-being from their perspective. The shift to recognising children are in the best position to provide insight into their SWB has been a fundamental influence on SWB studies. Research by Nayak (2003) and Ben-Arieh and Shimoni (2014) both indicate the meaning of well-being is described differently by children and adults. Acknowledging this difference is critical in understanding how children's experiences of well-being can be substantially different from adults. Research has indicated that acknowledging these differences are important for everyday interactions that children experience, with their carers/parents, teachers, peers, community and services. These interactions have been identified as influential in shaping a child's sense of well-being (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2009) and particularly prominent when research has explored sensitive issues such as child safety or child abuse (see Moore & McArthur, 2017).

Children's SWB has been subjected to the development of various measures in further understanding and analysing the meaning of well-being in children, through both the eudemonic and hedonic philosophical approaches. Researchers have explored well-being by asking children to report on how they feel about certain aspects in their lives, in relation to experienced contexts, such as home, school and neighbourhood. A study conducted by Ben-Arieh and colleagues (2009) reported significant differences in how children, adults and teachers described their perceptions of safety and home-school

relations. The shift in exploring subjective child well-being from a child-centric approach has identified importance for children's perspectives of well-being as critical in forming knowledge and reconsideration of social and policy practices which directly affect their lives. However there is still a lack of child-centred qualitative research data where children have reported directly about their experiences of well-being and what fosters well-being in their own lives (Savahl, Malcolm, Slembrouk, Adams, Willenberg & September, 2015). Factors contributing to one experiencing well-being, including positive affect, life satisfaction, life purpose, mastery and supportive relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2008) mostly have emerged from an adultist research approach which often attempts to describe the conceptual understanding of child well-being. However, research (Ben-Arieh et al., 2009) has increasingly outlined differences in the way adults and children describe well-being, highlighting a critical need for further research exploring dimensions of well-being directly derived from children. Such knowledge can contribute to the development of and change to measures, community supports and interventions which children engage with in order to experience a life they desire and value.

1.4 Safety and children

Similar to SWB, child safety research has been explored through both eudemonic and hedonic philosophical approaches. Child safety has been described by children's exposure to risk and protecting children from harm, commonly seen in legislation (Government of South Australia, 2018) while others have shaped their definition of safety by listening to how children feel and describe their experiences (e.g. Ben-Arieh,

McDonnell & Attar-Schwartz, 2009). Among other studies which have explored children's perspectives of child safety, the term 'safety' had been pre-defined by the researchers prior to engaging children in research about what safety means to them. This can be seen in a Lebanese study where 405 children between the ages of 8 to 12 years, answered a 4-point scale on a child friendly image of a thermometer detailing their response of, 1 = not very safe to 4 = very safe, of their perceptions of safety in varying contexts (e.g. home, school, walking home from school and their neighbourhood) (Usta & Farver, 2005). Furthermore, a study conducted by Spilsbury (2002) explored children's safety and help-seeking behaviour of 60 children aged 7 to 11 years in Ohio (USA). As part of the child-researcher interview, children were posed three scenarios of potential experiences children may encounter in their neighbourhood and home settings (e.g. being bullied, being seriously injured and exposure to family violence) from the researcher and then asked to respond in how they would feel and what they would do in each situation. While these studies place children in the centre of their findings and discussion, children's freely constructed views and experiences of describing what safety means for them is not detailed. Seldom research to date has explored the meaning of safety as ascribed directly from children *themselves*, making this current study a unique contribution to the literature.

In the late 20th century, studies exploring child safety have primarily been conducted and/or explored in reference to particular settings such as home, school and children's neighbourhoods. With increased crime and violence statistics in some neighbourhoods across various countries, researchers have explored child safety across children's lived

settings (Spilsbury, 2002). Often through an objective methodology, researchers have explored child safety through children's direct or witnessed exposure to violence and crime (Spilsbury, 2005), children's exposure to violence within a school environment (Raviv, Raviv, Shimoni, Fox & Leavitt, 1999) and fear of crime and violence within a neighbourhood (Ross & Jang, 2000).

An example of this is an Australian mixed method study conducted by Hume and colleagues (2005) who explored children's perceptions of their home and neighbourhood through creative art activities including drawing and photography. The children's perspectives were further examined by the researchers who explored any associations of these shared perspectives with the children's physical activity through the use of an activity accelerometer. Across three Victorian metropolitan primary schools, 147 children aged 10 years participated in this research project. Frequency of themes illustrated by children on their creative drawings and photography were quantified for statistical analysis. Prominent themes identified in this study as being important to children's perspectives of their home and neighbourhood settings included children reporting that home and their neighbourhood encourages and/or hinders physical activity behaviour. The study reported that children's exposure to violence and crime within their neighbourhood was found to influence the opportunities parents were giving children to exercise independence (such as walking to school), physical activity (using local playgrounds) and social interactions with others in the community. Another example was a study conducted Weir and colleagues (2006) that also found that parental perceptions of safety and crime influenced children having access in exercising

their own agency and decision-making in their home and neighbourhoods.

As mentioned above, children's descriptions of SWB have attracted different understanding to how adults describe childhood well-being. Research has detailed similar differences of how the meaning of safety is being described by children and adults (Moore & McArthur, 2017). Understanding the differences between adult and children's meanings of safety is critical in how children, parents and carers interpret and respond to keeping children safe. Research which encourages the co-construction with children to understand the meaning of safety, by exploring how children think, feel, experience and perceive their SWB and safety, enables social policy change makers to inform child welfare practice which acknowledge the views from children that aims to improve the well-being and safety of children and young people.

Research has reported that protective and trusting adults are instrumental in supporting children to feel a sense of safety including children having access to a safe and private space (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2009), social connectedness in neighbourhoods (Ben-Arieh & Shimoni, 2014) and schools free from bullying and violence (Fu, Land & Lamb, 2013). In 2009, Fattore, Mason and Watson explored how well-being is experienced and defined by children across urban and rural locations in New South Wales, Australia. In this qualitative study, a total of 123 children aged 8 to 15 years, engaged in individual and/or group interviews with the choice of photography, collage making and drawing activities. The researchers described the children's narratives shared importance of experiencing security as an important component which

constituted to them feeling well and being able to engage fully in their life. Security was identified by the children, as having protection from trustworthy parents/caregivers and a safe place to be, which was heard from children as contributory factor in them experiencing wellness. In this study, children identified that having protective and trusting adults around them and access to a private and safe place are key elements which fosters the feeling of safety.

Another study conducted by González et al., (2012) explored how children describe the meaning of safety. The researchers engaged slightly older participants, aged 15 to 24 years (with 94.1% of participants aged 18 or younger) who identified safety as a core influencer to life satisfaction and enjoying their life which led to higher levels of experienced optimism. While this study employed quantitative methods by administering questionnaires to secondary school students, findings from the 1404 participants detailed that safety is intimately connected to values, freedom, choice and agency. Although this study shows the importance of safety in the lives of children using quantitative methodology, the utilisation of qualitative methods may have provided further details regarding children's experiences of safety. As research continues to define differences in how children and adults describe their experiences, values, aspirations and interactions to the meaning of safety for themselves and others, qualitative methodologies have shown to efficiently explore these subjective experiences (Prout, 2002).

Current child safety research has seen an increase of engaging children in

conversations to further understand children's perceptions of SWB and safety. In 2017, Moore and McArthur reported on findings from an Australian Government Royal Commission Inquiry into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, regarding what children identified as needing to feel a sense of safety in their lives. A total of 121 children and young people, aged 4 to 17 years, participated in this qualitative study which included two activity-based focus groups. The aim of this study was specific in exploring *how and why sexual abuse occurred within Australian institutions*, with findings identifying contextual influences impact on a child's sense of safety. The researchers reported some micro-systems (i.e. a child's home, familial relations, community and peer groups) fundamentally influences a child's experience of safety and well-being. Further findings described that children identify safety as a multi-dimensional concept with 'being safe' and 'feeling safe' as two separate, often interrelated, experiences. This recent project raised further questions regarding children's interpretation of powerlessness compared to adults over their choices, decision making and having some control over their environments. Consistent with other research, children discussed the importance of adults communicating risks in their environments with them including discussing control methods in how they were reducing the level of risk, as opposed to making decisions for them with the absence of conversation around why that decision had been made (Blanchet-Cohen, 2013; Chan, Lam & Shae, 2011; Spilsbury, 2002).

Despite these studies challenging the adultism approach of describing what safety means for children, research exploring the interplay between the concepts of safety and

SWB among children remains limited.

1.5 Children's perceptions of well-being and safety

Child well-being and child safety have often been researched as distinct phenomena, frequently informed by different philosophical approaches as discussed earlier in this thesis, regarding hedonic and eudemonic bases. More recently, child well-being and safety are increasingly being explored as interrelated concepts which intimately influence the experience of one another (Ben-Arieh & Shimoni, 2014). Child safety has attracted strong global focus from statutory agencies across the world. Supporting children's safety has previously been driven by placing children as the receivers of intervention and protecting society from risky adults *in the making* from potential experiences of adversity (Parton, 1985). Current epistemological approaches of exploring child well-being and safety have recognised subjective methodologies used with children are critical in understanding how well-being and safety are experienced by individuals. This research shift has afforded children the opportunity to share their perspectives of well-being and safety providing social change makers and political leaders with valuable information to inform child focused welfare political and practice frameworks. This collaborative co-construction of knowledge has shaped a more recent direction of child welfare practice as seen in recent practice models from NSW FACS (2019) as noted in their Practice First Framework, with increased recognition that children can contribute to conversations about what safety means for them, how safety can be achieved for themselves and their peers and what variables hinder their experiences of feeling safe.

Understanding SWB and safety from children's perspectives is critical in forming and directing social change that supports children to live a life they value. Studies have shown how children's perceptions of well-being and safety are two, often, interconnected and interrelated concepts (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2016; Butler & Williamson, 1996; Moore & McArthur, 2017).

In 2014, Ben-Arieh and Shimoni explored children's subjective perspectives about their experiences of well-being and safety. The researchers drew on data from a large international subjective well-being study (Children's World Study, 2019) focusing specifically on the Israeli sample of children, aged 10 and 12 years ($n=2238$) who attended Jewish and Arab primary schools. Findings indicate differences in how Arab and Jewish children living in Israeli describe the meaning of safety, detailing that Jewish children described feeling less safe in their neighbourhood than Arab children. With SWB and safety being correlated in this study, these researchers have raised credible demand of future research to explore safety subjectively with children as a fundamental concept that contributes to improving the lives of children.

Similarly, using four different psychometric instruments, Casas and colleagues (2012) explored adolescents' self-reported well-being through their opinions, evaluations and perceptions in Spain. A total of 5,934 children aged between 11 and 14 years from varying demographic profiles engaged in this study, with a mix from urban, semi-urban and rural environments. Through children's evaluations of their environments and perceptions of well-being, key themes were raised as important to children. These

included feeling personal safety, feeling listened to, that people treat children well, that there was a private space for children to be on their own and there are ample places for children to play and enjoy themselves in their environments. Through these findings, the researchers highlighted that children who reported feeling safe displayed a significantly higher level of SWB compared to other children who reported lower levels of safety. These perceptions transcended across various settings including home, school and their lived neighbourhoods.

These themes have been further identified in an English study by Rees, Bradshaw, Goswami & Keung (2010) and Rees, Goswami & Bradshaw (2010) who researched children aged 10 to 15 years finding significant correlations between children expressing feelings of safety with happiness and an increased overall state of well-being. The authors report interconnections shared from the children who identified feeling safe and secure as influential on their well-being, particularly identifying that a safe home environment contributed to higher levels of well-being.

Children's perceptions of well-being and safety have further been explored in a Southern Finnish study exploring perceptions of SWB and influencing variables among adolescents (Rask, Åstedt-Kurki & Laippala, 2002). A total of 245 children aged 12 to 17 years engaged in this study who answered structured self-reported questionnaires (The Berne Questionnaire on subjective well-being [BSW/Y] and The Finnish questionnaire on adolescent values and subjective well-being). The researchers highlighted that children who reported higher perceptions of safe family relations,

equilibrium and personal autonomy experienced higher levels of well-being and lower ill-being. Moreover, a study detailed above by Hume and colleagues (2005) indicated similar findings of SWB being correlated to children's ability to exercise autonomy and independence.

As described above, there have been serious advancements made by researchers exploring perspectives of well-being and safety directly from children. Despite many of these studies position children's voices centrally in their findings, the use of objective methodologies (e.g. scales, questionnaires) have often been employed, which may present limitations of how freely children are able to express their views and perspectives in describing these concepts. Future research engaging children in their fullest extent possible through a subjective epistemological framework, including in the research design, methodologies used, data analysis and dissemination of findings may provide varying perspectives to current understanding of child well-being and safety.

1.6 Children's contributions to subjective well-being and safety research

Listening to children directly, enables a child to live out their human rights as well as providing credible insight into how social and political frameworks can encourage children to live a life where they feel valued and listened to (Ben-Arieh et al., 2013; Rees, Bradshaw, Goswami, Keung, 2010). Research on child well-being is a frequently researched phenomenon offering an enormous amount of literature, however involving children directly in the research process is a newly emerging trend (Ben-Arieh, Casas, Frønes & Korbin, 2013).

Alderson (2001) identified a significant amount of research exploring the concepts of child well-being and safety have emerged from an adultism perspective. In recent years, contemporary researchers are making serious attempts to actively engage and involve children within the research process to co-construct the conceptual understanding of what child well-being and safety means. Involving children in research is important when the central reason is to understand the meaning of how well-being and safety are described and experienced by children (Fattore et al., 2016).

Researching children's perspectives is important when the main goal is to support and encourage children to live a life they value and desire. Casas et al. (2013) also argue that children deserve the same level of credibility we give adults when providing insight into their own well-being. The following paragraphs identify key studies which have adopted a child-participatory epistemological stance exploring child well-being and safety and further highlights contributions children have made to this field of inquiry.

In 2007, Sixsmith, Gabhainn, Fleming and O'Higgins explored parents', teachers' and children's perspectives of the meaning of child well-being. The aim of the study explored if these different population groups ascribe different understanding and meaning to well-being. Using photography and participatory data-analysis methods the researches used a four-phase (described below) research approach to demonstrate the views of well-being, including consistencies and differences, between these population groups. In the first phase, across four rural school settings in Ireland, a classroom of children aged 8 to 12 years, took 623 photographs which best described the meaning of

well-being from their perspective. The second phase engaged another group of 8 children (aged 10 to 12 years) from a separate school who were invited to group the photographs into categories they felt they belonged to. The third phase engaged another group of 8 children who were invited to arrange a pattern of the presented categories and indicate, if any, relationships within and between the categories. The process in phase 2 and 3 were repeated for the parent ($n = 7$) and teacher groups ($n = 6$) as these groups worked from the same photographs taken in phase 1 by the children. The researchers indicated differences in the way children, parents and teachers define child well-being and illustrated what is important for children. This research reinforces children as valuable and capable beings that can express meaning behind complex concepts. The purpose of recognising the different definitions shared by children, to other population groups, provide opportunities for social policy and practice frameworks which aim to support the lives of children to emerge from a child-centric stance.

Prezza and Pacilli (2007) explored children's understanding of the meaning of community, fears around crime and violence and feelings of safety and belonging. Using multiple measures of structured self-report questionnaires, 789 children ($n = 320$ boys, $n = 469$ girls) between the ages of 15 to 19 years participated in this research project. The children were in their third year of secondary schooling in central Italy. The researchers employed univariate and multivariate analysis techniques to explore the correlations between children feeling a sense of safety and their perceptions of crime and loneliness. The findings indicated children reporting a greater level of autonomy in play within public plays contributed to a sense of connectedness children

felt with their peers. The expressed feelings of connectedness by the children also indicated reduced feelings of isolation, loneliness and less fear of crime and increased feelings of safety.

Children's perceptions of well-being and safety are increasingly being recognised as valuable sources of knowledge in co-constructing meaning of children's individual assessments of their experiences of these concepts. Some researchers have raised concern for the power dynamic between adults and children that can be reinforced through these methodological techniques used in studies particularly in the analytic phase of the research project (Harden, Scott, Backett-Milburn & Jackson, 2000; Mayall, 1994). Other researchers have argued that this power dynamic can be mitigated through active and meaningful participation with children through the various stages of the research process (Darbyshire et al., 2005). Engaging children as active research participants through the use of *photovoice*, a participatory research technique, first used with adults (Wang and Burris, 1994 & 1997) and later with children (Darbyshire et al., 2005) has demonstrated effective opportunities for children to translate their perceptions of well-being and safety.

Based on the scope of this review of relevant literature, seldom studies have explored how children describe their experiences, perceptions, idealisations and meanings of well-being and safety in an Australian context. This study aims to explore this gap in the research literature by providing children an opportunity where they can share their

free narrative(s) of the meaning(s) of SWB and safety by asking children of their experiences and perspectives to these concepts.

1.7 Considerations for involving children in research

1.7.1 Children's agency in research

Children exercising decision making abilities in the research process exploring well-being and safety has increased since the late 20th Century. Understanding child well-being and safety from a child-centric position has underpinned contemporary childhood studies with James and Prout (1997, p.8) arguing "*a more direct voice and participation*" from children is needed to deeply understand the social construction of children's lives. This subjective research approach stands in contrast to the objective epistemological stance of exploring child well-being and safety through an objective approach. Children's voices are increasingly forging a significant stance in social studies and gaining interest and legitimacy among social change makers and political rulers cross-nationally (Mason and Hood, 2010).

1.7.2 Methodological considerations

As children's voices are forging importance in understanding the concepts of child well-being and safety, methodological processes need to be considered in how children's views are being explored, analysed and recorded. Fattore et al., (2012) describe the importance of co-constructing the research process, to the fullest extent possible, *with* children to formulate knowledge as co-creators in the discourse of well-being. Qualitative methods are not only important for gathering direct and comprehensive

understanding, however the epistemological approach of extracting this information holds value in shaping social and political change that fosters values aligning directly to the views of the children. Some research projects exploring subjective child well-being use qualitative methods by administering psychometric scales, and whilst the central purpose is exploring subjective views, these scales have been developed by adult researchers imposing pre-categorisation on the child participants (Rees, Bradshaw et al., 2010; Casas et al., 2013). The use of these scales with children, may illicit different responses, as opposed to using qualitative methods of free narratives in seeking a child-centric conceptual understanding to the meaning of well-being and safety.

Methodological processes which engage children as co-constructors of knowledge transcends their mere participation in adult-centric processes and provides an opportunity for children where they can contribute and contest knowledge of the explored concepts (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2012). When conducting research with children it is important for researchers to consider a variety of methodological techniques that are appropriate for the population group engaged in the study. Using creative art activities in the research process has been reported as an effective tool in facilitating conversation with children in exploring understanding and providing opportunities to discuss feelings and emotions on the concept (e.g. well-being) which is being explored (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). The methodological techniques used in this research project included hand-drawn mapping, photomapping and sandplay activities which have been reported as useful methods for exploring children's perceptions and understanding (Morrow, 2001; Dell Clark, 1999).

1.8 Research Question

The research objective of my thesis is to understand how children experience and describe meaning to the concepts of well-being and safety. Using child-participatory methodologies within a qualitative framework, this thesis further aims to understand the relationship of these concepts as shared directly from children's perspectives. The co-construction of meaning ascribed to these concepts are explored in a collaborative child-centric environment with children sharing their experiences and understanding in a child-to-child and child-to-researcher setting.

This thesis has two research questions: *How do children describe meaning to the concepts of well-being and safety? How do children describe the relationship between well-being and safety?*

1.9 Conclusion of Chapter One

A review of the relevant literature of subjective child well-being and safety, qualitative research identifies children referencing interconnections between these two concepts. Knowledge of these concepts established from a child co-constructed epistemological stance has provided value in understanding how children's experiences of safety are situated in the wider concept of well-being. Research has further shared importance of exploring the direct views and perceptions from children as critical to understand deeper the interconnections of these two concepts which enable accurate formation of social and political frameworks that aim to improve the lives of children. Authentic child

participation research exploring well-being and safety, through a co-constructed research model enables children to participate as co-creators of knowledge in this discourse. Children's participation in research has provided insightful contributions to the field of well-being and detailed value in how safety is experienced and perceived by children (Hume et al., 2005; Fattore et al., 2009).

Based on review of the extant literature there appears to be a gap in research *with* children which explores experiences and understanding of how children describe meaning to the concepts of well-being and safety. Researching children's perceptions of SWB and safety can add significant empirical information to the current body of research. Particularly, examining how children attribute meaning to the concept of well-being and safety, through qualitative methodology that places children as subjects, rather than objects, who are co-creating of knowledge in this research field. This thesis aims to contribute to the current body of information, by researching *with* children and presenting their subjective views of well-being and safety including the presence of interconnections between and within these two concepts.

Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1 Overview of Chapter Two

This chapter outlines the theoretical frameworks, methodology, data collection and analytic techniques selected to support and interpret this research project. A child-centred position has been adopted and this chapter details the epistemological and methodological approach to understanding children's perspectives of well-being and safety. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the implementation of this approach in translating key findings from the voices of children to the wider community.

2.2 Theoretical approach

2.2.1 A qualitative framework

This research project uses qualitative methodology in exploring the meaning of subjective well-being and safety for children by asking children about their understanding of these two distinct, but often interconnected concepts. This approach is within the tradition of researching *with* children, in contrast to research *on* children as a way of exploring children's subjective well-being, with focus on hearing 'children's voices' and the meanings they attach to concepts, rather than hearing children respond to questions developed by researchers. This accords with the reconstruction of childhood promoted by the international movement of New Childhood Studies where the emphasis has moved from seeing children as passive objectives, to seeing them as active subjects within society and as valid contributors to the construction of knowledge in the field of well-being (Ben-Arieh et al., 2001; Ben-Arieh & Shimoni, 2014).

Mason and Hood (2010) identify theoretical and methodological considerations of promoting children's agency in social science research. Research which has acknowledged children as social actors either by employing child-inclusive methodologies or by implementing a co-constructing knowledge framework with adult researchers, has provided children opportunities for their voices to be heard.

Supporting children's perspectives through collaboration with researchers as knowledge creators in exploring their subjective well-being and safety is complex, given socio-cultural contexts that frame social science research. The generational difference between adult researchers and child research participants has significant influence on potential engagement of children in research both in the interventions of adult gatekeepers and of researchers themselves. Researcher influence is perhaps strongest in the interpretation of findings and translation of key messages from research projects. Kellet and colleagues (2004) discuss ways of minimising adult researcher influence and highlight the importance of engaging children in the decision-making process of research including advocating for *child researchers* who facilitate their own research agenda and translate their own findings. Adopting this theoretical orientation of positioning children as active social actors in research challenges the construction of children as subordinate citizens in society. Research implementing methodologies which facilitate the participation of children as knowledge creators enables children to live out social justice and exercise their rights as social actors in their lived environments (Ben-Arieh et al., 2013).

This qualitative study explores how children conceptualise and experience well-being and safety in their everyday lives using child-centred participatory techniques. The techniques used include group and individual interviews, creative art activities and movie-making techniques relative to the children's preferences and abilities. The use of these research engagement tools provide the child research participant with opportunities to express their perspectives through various expressive mediums. Kraftl (2013, p.15) describes these engagement techniques in research as a "*form of knowledge production where literal 'voicing' is accompanied by various other expressive registers allowing for an expanded notion of voice*". Children's intimate views and perspectives in this research project were facilitated through creative mediums with accompanying verbal communication. These group and individual conversations were recorded on a dictaphone and later transcribed for in-depth thematic analysis and review.

2.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical and scientific approval was granted from Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (see Appendix H). This thesis meets the requirements set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NMHRC, 2018) with particular reference to Chapter 4.2 Children and Young People. Further guidance was sourced from the Human Ethics Research Team at Western Sydney University (WSU, 2016) where insight on research practice consideration's were adopted in providing the fullest opportunity possible of a child-centric research approach which

acknowledges the inclusion of children on matters which affect their lives, as set out in the CRC (UNCRC, 1990) and further detailed in the Australian Human Rights Commission (2019).

The researcher was granted approval of *A Working with Children's Check* through the New South Wales Office of the Children's Guardian as part of completing fieldwork directly with the child research participants, including being present at fieldwork sites where bystander children were also present.

2.4 Participants and recruitment

2.4.1 Children as research participants

Children were recruited as a sub-set of the larger global study described in section 1.1. Forty-two children between 6 to 17 years who lived in south west Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, participated in this project. Over 100 children participated in the Australian component of the global research project (as referenced in section 1.1) with 42 of these children engaging in my MRes project which focused on well-being and safety across three fieldwork sites.

The three fieldwork sites included secondary private schooling institutions and Local Government Area (LGA) operated Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) facilities across various locations within south west Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Children were informed via a child-friendly letter regarding the purpose, aim and requested engagement of them in this project (see Appendix A). Additionally, parent/carers were

informed via a letter outlining the projects aims, purpose and requested consent of their child's engagement (see Appendix B) in this project. Written consent was requested from the children (see Appendix C) as well as from their parents/caregivers (see Appendix D).

Information regarding my project's aims and purpose, supports available to the children before, during and after their engagement, as well as contact details for further enquiry was provided to the educational facility director prior to starting the project with the children directly. The participation of children in this study occurred on location at the respective educational facilities they regularly attended. The logistical arrangement was coordinated between the researcher and the facility director on a day and time which was most convenient for the child research participants. The duration of fieldwork activities was open-ended and lasted for as long as the participants were willing to engage. The engagement per activity typically lasted between 60 – 90 minutes.

Demographic data was also used for every child participant engaged in the study (see Appendix G). Collecting demographic data of each participant aimed to assist in understanding the political, social and cultural contexts which may influence a child's experience and understanding of well-being and safety.

2.4.2 Demographic and geographic profiles of fieldwork sites

The research project aimed to recruit participants who represented a diverse range of sociodemographic profiles. The purpose of this recruitment method was to obtain

contributions from children with varying living and population characteristics. This diverse recruitment approach is important to represent a board range of views from children.

Participation occurred at three fieldworks sites which are physically situated in three different LGA's in south west Sydney, New South Wales. There are statistical differences noted across these three postal regions, including socioeconomic status and ethnic density of the population. An overview of statistical information obtained via the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) outlines individual characteristics attributed to the respective postal districts:

1. Narellan NSW 2567

Narellan is a suburb located 60 kilometres south-west of Sydney's central business district in the Local Government Area of Camden Council. It is situated within the Macarthur region and reported a population of over 3,600 people in the 2016 National census. Narellan has three heritage listed sites including, Studley Park which was a former defence establishment, a grammar school and residence now operating as a golf house and club course on Camden Valley Way; *Camelot Kirkham*, which was formerly a residence, racehorse stud and homestead now occupied as a private residence purchased in 1999, and has since been featured in films such as *Australia* directed by Baz Luhrmann; and finally *Kirkham Stables* formerly a horse stud and dairy facility now operating as a vacant beef cattle farm which is privately owned.

A slightly higher number of females were reported to be living in Narellan constituting to 51.7% of all residences compared to males occupying 48.3%, and a slightly higher number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people reported to call Narellan home making up 3.6% of the regions population, with a median age of 22 years. The region reported a high proportion of Australian (31.5%) and English (29%) ancestries with smaller numbers resulting from Irish (8.1%), Scottish (6.3%) and Italian (3.2%) heritage. Families with both parents born in Australia resulted to 62.9% of the Narellan population constituting to the highest degree of ancestry in the area. Other counties of birth for the regions residences included England, Italy, Scotland and New Zealand.

The region shows prominence of blue-collar workers with a total of 17% reporting as technicians and trade workers which is higher than the national average of 13.5%. Most residences reported full time working arrangements (64.1%) compared to part-time workers (26.1%) in the area. Reporting similar findings nationally, Narellan's most common family composition was couples with children (43.4%) and couples without children (33.2%) with slightly less residences reporting single parent families (21.2%).

An overall picture which emerges from the postal area of Narellan is predominantly blue-collar working class families of both parents and children, living in standalone urban dwellings. Narellan is not classified as an affluent area, nor is it isolated from social interaction with larger and higher density areas reasonably close by, including Campbelltown which is situated 9.6km in distance offering many opportunities for work and travel.

2. Raby NSW 2566

Raby is a suburb situated in south-west Sydney's urban fringes 55 kilometres from Sydney's central business district. Raby also lies in the Macarthur region and reported a total population of 5,944 in the 2016 National census.

A slightly higher proportion of females (51.4%) compared to males (48.6%) were residents in Raby, with 3.1% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Straight Islander people. Sharing a similar ethnicity profile to Narellan, Raby residences reported English ancestry as the highest percentage (23.8%) with a slight variance to Australian ancestry (23.5%) of the region's population. A dominance of Australian born residences (71.7%) was reported for the area with the second top response of those who were English born (3%). The area attracted strong Catholic affiliation of 32.2% of residents, along with Anglican (18.3%) and no religious association (17.8%).

Similarly, a high proportion of residences reported to working in trade and technician (15.5%) occupations as well non-managerial white collar professions (17.8%). Raby attracted a higher median weekly household income (\$1,848) compared to Narellan (\$1,519), as well as a larger proportion of both parents reported to be working in full-time arrangements (28.5%) compared to Narellan (24.2%). Raby's reported typical family composition was similar to Narellan, with couple families living with children constituting to 49.7% of the region's population who were living in standalone privately owned dwellings (95.8%).

Comparatively, Raby shares a similar geographical and demographical profile to Narellan as predominantly blue-collar, non-managerial white collar working class families, with a high density of both parents and children living in standalone urban dwellings. Reporting a higher proportion of both parents working full-time may constitute to the higher reported weekly median household earnings, compared to Narellan. The cultural affiliation of residences displayed similar trends to those living in Narellan with white-anglo residences with Australian and English heritages as dominant in the region. As a neighbouring suburb of 7.2 kilometres away from the larger town of Campbelltown, Raby is not classified as isolated from social, employment and educational opportunities for children and adults.

3. Campbelltown NSW 2560

Campbelltown is a major metropolitan suburb in south-west Sydney 42 Kilometres away from Sydney's central business district. Attracting a total population of 78,849 people with a moderately even number of females (51.2%) and males (48.8%). A total of 3,728 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander who reported a median age of 20 years.

Cultural diversity displayed similar trends to the other reported regions listed above, with ancestry from Australia (24.1%) and England (22.7%) having the most dominance in the area. Similarly, those born in Australia (67%) constituted to the majority of the regions residences. Religious affiliation was predominantly residences identifying as Catholic

(28.2%) and no religion (19.7%) with a small proportion of residents classifying their faith to Islam (5.2%). Other than speaking English at home, residences also spoke Arabic (3.2%), with a smaller number of Samoan (2%), Spanish (1.7%), Hindi (1.3%) and Tagalog (1.1%) speaking people in the region.

A larger proportion of people reported to be working full-time (60.8%) compared to those part-time (26.5%) and those unemployed (8%) having a weekly median household wage of \$1,543. Residents reported a similar distribution as shown in the Narellan and Raby regions, of blue-collar non-managerial clerical employees (15.7%), trade workers and technicians (14.1%) and professionals (14.4%).

Campbelltown is classified as a major hub for health-care services including government operated hospitals, which was reported as the most common employed industry (excluding psychiatric hospitals) for employment of workers living in the region. The region has a slight increase of residents occupying flats/apartments (7.1%) compared to the other mentioned regions. Most residents occupied privately owned standalone dwellings with the majority of these dwellings being occupied by couple families with children (44.9%).

In summary, Campbelltown has a significantly greater population compared to Raby and Narellan with a higher degree of ethnic diversity among its residents. As a major metropolitan suburb in Greater Western Sydney, Campbelltown's transport, health, education and housing services are vastly more diverse than the other regions above.

Similar to Raby and Narellan, Campbelltown is not classified as an affluent suburb. However, it is centrally located and accessible to an array of services and supports for local and adjoining residents in neighbouring regions.

Overall, the locality of fieldwork sites in this study displayed similar demographic and geographic profiles. Limitations of this recruitment method are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.5 Data generation methods

In accordance with the theoretical underpinnings of this study, interactive data collection methods were used (Mukherji & Albon, 2010). Due to the age range of children interviewed, a variety of techniques which invited conversation on the meaning of well-being and safety across a variety of age cohorts was required. Clark and Moss's (2001; 2011) Mosaic Approach in research with children consistently adopts this approach while being responsive to the interests of children through a participatory interpretivist and rights-based framework. This approach enables children to communicate their perspectives and meanings through their preferred form of communication. While younger children may not be able to verbally articulate complex thoughts through language, communication through various mediums, such as drawing, photography and sandplay can support children to convey their meaning and experiences. Additionally, researchers who have adopted a variety of data facilitating techniques for hearing and documenting the 'child's voice' have reported that children are competent and active agents in conveying their own perspectives (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998).

The methods detailed below were used at different stages (see 2.6 Data Gathering Methods for sequencing) throughout the research project:

2.5.1 Mapping instruments

Cognitive mapping techniques have been suggested as useful alternatives to survey methods for exploring children's awareness and knowledge of their lived experiences (Morrow, 2001).

There are a number of mapping methods that have been developed, including drawing (Morrow, 2001) and photographing the physical environment (Orellana, 1999). These techniques have been shown to be useful tools for exploring children's perspectives and thoughts about their experiences, as they provide children with opportunities to autonomously interpret and actively record their lives through alternate mediums in addition to verbal communication (Dell Clark, 1999). These two qualitative methods were used in this present study.

2.5.2 Map drawing

The map drawing sessions were typically 2 to 4 weeks apart, with the subsequent sandplay and/or photographic mapping fieldwork session being used later. On both occasions, the procedure for map drawing and photography was discussed with the children. It was suggested that the map may include places and things that were important to them. A sheet of A3 paper was provided to each child, and children were invited to use the creative embellishments and the variety of resources provided

including magazine cut outs, glue, pencils, crayons, glitter, stickers, feathers, sticks, raffia and leaves to create their individualised maps. These maps constituted the meaning of well-being from the perspectives of children as a consequence of the participants being invited to include things which were important to them on their maps.

2.5.3 Photographic mapping

At one fieldwork site, during a second visit with the child research participants disposable cameras were provided and the children were invited to take photographs of things which were important to them. This disposable camera data gathering technique was chosen at one site, while a digital camera/video data gathering technique (discussed below) was chosen for another site in aim to explore potential variance of data the children would chose to convey their understanding of well-being and safety. The children were free to select any subject matter for photographs depicting what contributed to their well-being. One week after the cameras were distributed, they were collected, and the films were processed. Each child's photographs were developed and returned for viewing with children, in discussing with their peers and the researcher, the reasons for their choices of the subjects captured in their images.

At an alternate fieldwork site, iPads were used by participants and the participants were invited to take digital images of things which were important to them. Researchers advised the child research participants they could use the still photography function and/or the video function on the iPad to capture things which represented the meaning of well-being for them. No further instructions were given. Approximately 4 weeks after

the initial visit, a subsequent visit with the child research participants was arranged. In a group setting, the children discussed their captured images and the meaning behind each image/video, referencing how this represented the meaning of well-being from their perspective.

At another fieldwork site, where the children were older (12 years to 17 years) than the first two sites (6 years to 12 years), the participants were invited to create a digital map, either through the use of still images or videos, which represented the meaning of well-being. They could do this from their own personal devices, available to them from their school. At a subsequent visit to the school, 4 weeks later, in a group setting the researchers viewed the children's digital creations which represented the meaning of well-being from their perspectives. The participants used a variety of ways to report on their creations, including group presentations, individual presentations, slideshow photography and video mapping with some including music in the background. Group discussion between participants with their peers and with the researcher provided opportunities for elaboration on the chosen technique as well as the subject matter included in this medium.

2.5.4 Sandplay mapping

Sandplay is classified as an expressive activity related to art and play (Steinhardt, 2007). Sandplay has been reported as a useful methodology technique in a number of contexts, including trauma research with children (Friedman & Mitchell, 2008), situations where the children are from different language backgrounds to that of the researcher

(Reece, 1996) and with children who have disabilities e.g. autism spectrum disorder (Lu, Peterson, Lacroix, Rousseau, 2010). Sandplay provides children an opportunity for non-linguistic communication through the use of images in the medium of sand (Roesler, 2019).

Adopting an interpretivist approach through a qualitative framework, this study employed sandplay mapping to provide children with an opportunity where they were able to attribute meaning to the concepts well-being and safety subjectively. Working in a group environment, children were each provided with a handful of kinetic sand and asked to use the provided human and animal figurines and other articles (play money, toy cars, toy food items) which were placed for free choice and selection in the centre of the table. The researcher invited the children to create a sandplay map of what constituted the meaning of well-being and safety from their perspective. No further direction or guidance was provided. The researcher asked the group and discussed individually with the child research participants their meaning of well-being and safety, using the children's sandplay map as a conversation tool to reflect upon and ask questions regarding these concepts. The child research participants were also provided an opportunity to discuss items they would have liked to include on their sandplay maps but had not been available in the centre of the table.

2.6 Data gathering methods

2.6.1 Field Work

2.6.1.1 Stage One

Stage One of the fieldwork involved creative art activities, group workshops and

individual interviews. The aims of 2.6.1.1 Stage One included:

- To determine concepts which children value and identify as important to them
- Provide children with resources where they can creatively express how they experience and conceptualise well-being
- To gain narratives from the children about their experience of well-being
- To identify key themes about a child's perspective of well-being and safety

Firstly, in a group setting children were invited to create a map on an A3 piece of paper using a variety of textiles or create a 3D map using kinetic sand and miniature figurines. The children were invited to symbolise their meaning of well-being and safety using the provided resources. Secondly, following the construction of the children's map the researcher asked open-ended questions in an individual interview about various elements and features on their map. Stage One occurred at a single visit with the child research participants. My MRes project has drawn on the fundamental principles outlined in the Global Research Protocol for the broader project (see Appendix E) whilst adding questions and fieldwork instruments specific to my project (see Appendix F).

2.6.1.2 Stage Two

While Stage One focused on children narrating key concepts of their well-being and safety, Stage Two aimed to explore these experiences in a more detailed way. Stage Two occurred at a subsequent visit with, as far as possible, the same group of children engaged in the Stage One fieldwork session. Stage Two of the fieldwork was broken into two modules which were used either individually or collectively. The choice of the

module used at this fieldwork session was at the discretion of the researcher and was the one determined as the most suitable approach with the group of participants engaged.

Stage Two, Module 1:

Children created 'short films' from iPads provided through the broader global study or on their personally owned digital device. The aims of 2.6.1.2 Stage Two, Module 1 included:

- To provide children with digital resources where they were able to express their views about well-being and safety
- To understand the meaning of specific concepts identified by the child research participants in their presentations
- To determine if there are different concepts or similar concepts described by the children in Stage One and Stage Two

Firstly, the children were invited to create a short film or digital presentation either individually or in a group of 3-4 children as decided by the children. The purpose of this module was to provide children an opportunity where they could digitally capture their views about what makes them feel good, what was important to them and how they experience well-being in their everyday lives. Secondly, the completed digital presentations were viewed by the researcher and all child research participants in a larger group. Whilst viewing the presentations, the researcher and other children asked the producer(s) of the digital film open-ended questions to make clear their

meaning(s).

Stage Two, Module 2:

Well-being domains derived from the Children's World Study (2019) that may not have been explicitly detailed from the interviews in 2.6.1.1 Stage One were explored with the children. The aims of 2.6.1.2 Stage Two, Module 2 included:

- To explore how Australian children understand and draw meaning to these above listed domains
- To provide children an opportunity to speak openly and freely about key domains frequently explored in quantitative research (The Children's World Study, 2019) in a qualitative manner
- To determine how children organise and prioritise key concepts of well-being and safety

Firstly, in a group setting the adult researcher posed particular domains for discussion with the child research participants including their experiences of school, economic well-being, being able to participate, being listened to, agency and safety. The adult researcher followed a scripted research protocol of questions, developed for the larger global study (see Appendix E) to ensure standardised fieldwork practice of the MRes project and the wider global study for the purpose of cross-cultural analysis. For the MRes project an additional fieldwork protocol was developed for exploration of the concepts of well-being and safety (see Appendix F). This protocol identifies alternate fieldwork methods to assist in the exploration of these two concepts with the child

research participants.

Secondly, as a focus group the child research participants discussed their views on the posed domains. The intention of this module was to situate subjective childhood experiences in a local context that could be used for future international comparative analysis.

2.7 Analysis

With permission from engaged participants, all verbal communication was recorded on a dictaphone and later transcribed to assist in coding and interrogation of the data.

Using thematic analysis, this project aimed to identify, analyse and report patterns within the children's narratives that had been collected during fieldwork visits (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). The fundamental purpose of using thematic analysis in this present study was to recognise patterns (themes and stories) in the recorded conversations shared by the child research participants and to draw meaning and significance from their responses in relation to the research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe themes and stories identified in a qualitative data set as a patterned response which has been referenced by the research participants during the data collection phase.

Utilising a thematic analysis approach recognises child research participants as social actors with meanings attributed to phenomena as being socially constructed and contested through personal and/or significant lived experiences (Miles, Huberman and

Saldaña, 2014). During the coding process, themes were identified from data obtained in the focus groups and/or individual interviews. Miles and colleagues (2014) identify thematic analysis as an approach which offers opportunities to researchers in which language based and visual data can be interrogated through theme based analysis. This project specifically employed visual and creative mediums as conversational prompts for discussion with the children, and only in very broad terms supported verbal discussion. Therefore, researcher interpretation of the visual data was not a complicating factor regarding the analytical phase of this study as this was only used as a conversation prompting tool.

The qualitative data was managed using NVivo 12 Mac software to collate categorised data for thematic analysis.

2.8 Conclusion of Chapter Two

The primary purpose of this study was to understand subjective well-being and safety among children aged 6 to 17 years. There were forty-two children who engaged in this study across three different fieldwork sites in south west Sydney, New South Wales Australia. Data was collected through techniques including map drawing, map photography and sandplay in individual and group settings. The methodological approach used a qualitative framework which enabled emphasis to be placed on the expression by children of their views through verbal and nonverbal mediums. This was used to support children to conveying their understanding and experiences of well-being

and safety. Ethical considerations were underpinned by the HREC and the CRC guiding principles to support co-construction of knowledge *with* children.

Thematic analysis was used to examine the data by identifying themes within the children's narratives shared between researcher and child participants as well as peer-to-peer group discussions. As data was collected, electronic records were transcribed from the dictaphone recordings for easier coding and evaluation procedures and documentation of reflexive field notes contributed to the analysis.

Chapter Three: Findings

3.1 Overview of Chapter Three

This chapter highlights conversations shared by the child research participants with the researcher as they constructed the meaning of what well-being and safety means to them. Through creative art mediums and verbal communication, the findings shared by the children from this study are presented below with extracts of conversation and images. Emphasis will be drawn on the conversation shared by the children with the researcher.

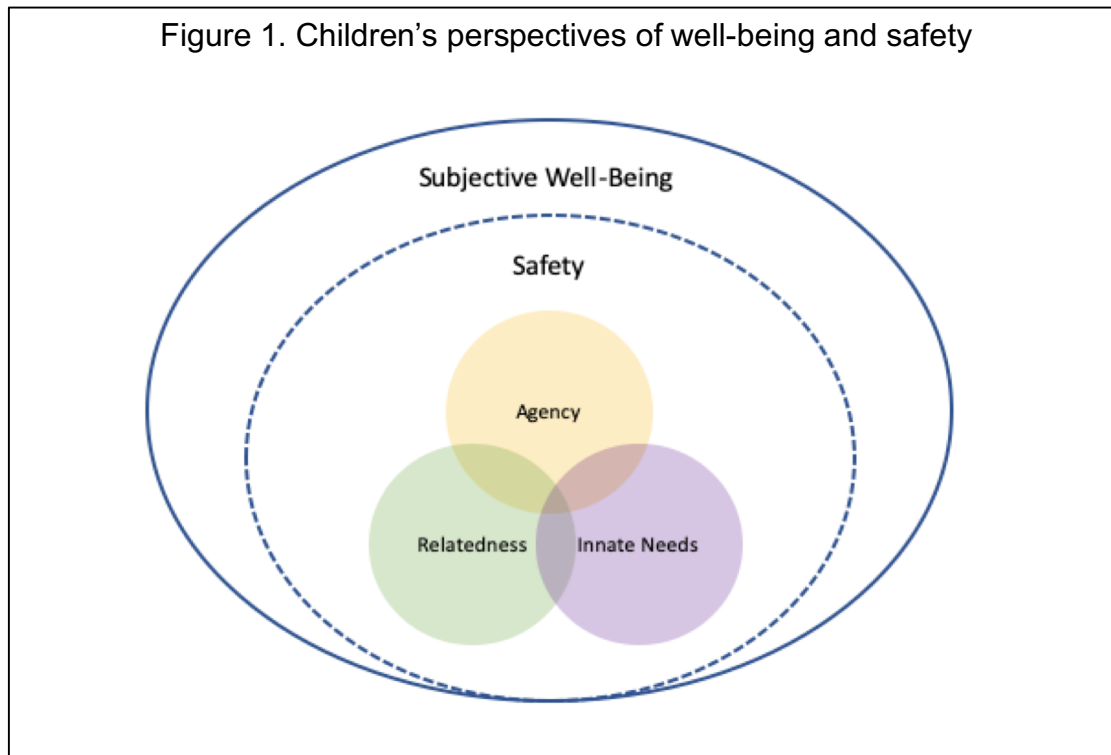
All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the child research participants. Black boxes used in selected figures in this thesis are covering identifying information which have been illustrated by the children.

Chapter 4 will be a critical reflection on the findings.

3.2 Establishing an interpretation of children's well-being and safety

Drawing on the field of children's well-being and safety, interpretation of children's narratives shared in this study are situated around three prominent themes. The three themes which developed through discussions with children include *Agency*, *Relatedness and Innate Needs*. Children referred to these themes as co-existing and interrelated experiences as they shared their perspective of what well-being and safety means for them. The interrelatedness of these themes are illustrated below in Figure 1,

demonstrating their central positioning linked together inside the overarching field of well-being and safety.



3.2.1 Agency

Children referred to *agency* as being able to autonomously make decisions in their lives. As children shared their perspectives of the concepts of well-being and safety, the meaning of *agency* was described as having opportunities where children can exercise personal choice which directly affect their lives. For example, a participant shared that being able to make decisions about her life was important to her well-being and safety as she stated, “Home is like the number one place where I feel safe. Because it’s like my little cave where I can just sit on my bed and do anything (...) I don’t feel uncomfortable at home. It’s like I can just do anything there”. During the fieldwork

visits, similar comments were made by children as they highlighted importance behind being able to make decisions whilst referencing the importance of having familiar contexts where they are able exercise this agency. Children often linked their experiences of being able to make decisions about their lives in familiar settings including, home, school and at extracurricular activities (e.g. dancing classes, weekend sport or part-time work environments). These physical places referenced by the children were familiar to them, and identified as places which contributed to their experiences of well-being and safety.

3.2.2 Relatedness

Children described feelings of connectedness with themselves, others and their community as important for their well-being and safety. The theme of *relatedness* refers to children feeling emotionally, spiritually and physically close with others (particularly family members) who contribute to their experiences of feeling secure and safe in their lives. For example, a child research participant described her relationship with family as important to her well-being and safety by stating “My family kind of mean a lot to me. They are like my biggest support system (...) So it’s kind of like no matter what you do, your family is always there for you”. Similar comments were referenced by children as feeling connected to others as important for their well-being and safety by stating “Because everyone needs friends (...) it’s like home, they [friends] comfort you when you are feeling sad”.

Whilst identifying the importance of *relatedness* as a crucial component to children's conceptual understanding of well-being and safety, children also discussed how their experiences of *relatedness* can change over time. For example, an older participant (male, 17 years) described how people connect to others differently as they grow older whilst highlighting the importance of feeling connected remaining important across age. This participant stated, "I guess just more connections [as you grow older] (...) like when you're younger you generally just become friends with people your own age or close family friends but now it's like I have older friends who are in uni or like, younger friends two years below or through work as well (...) well-being is just happiness, health and having connections with family, someone, like a support network I guess". The presence of *relatedness* was seen to be significant for many children in this study, however how relationships are formed appeared to shift across ages of children interviewed.

3.2.3 Innate Needs

Children associated having access to shelter and food as important components to experience when describing what the concepts of well-being and safety mean to them. Children discussed themselves as both receiving items in their lives, such as food, to meet their *innate needs*, particularly from parents/caregivers and other community members such as teachers as important. Children also referred themselves as providing items, such as shelter, to other people (e.g. family members and animals) for these other people to meet their *innate needs* as important. This can be seen when a participant described her home as a place where she felt safe as she stated "Home is

important to me because all my family are there and I feel really safe there. Because my mum is there and I have a nice, cosy bed”. During the group interaction, similar comments were shared by children positioning themselves as providers of items for others to meet their *innate needs*. This can be seen when a participant stated, “[well-being is] about loving animals, feeding them, and obviously hugging them”.

Early need theories refer to innate physiological needs (e.g. water, food, sex) as fundamental components which drive human interaction and survival (Hull, 1943). While this traditional paradigm of describing innate needs have provided rich understanding of human behaviour, shortcomings have subsequently been raised identifying gaps of knowledge of how humans experience and engage in life. Research has drawn significance to human needs as being conditions which provide support to enable one to fully realise and execute their potential, expanding from a stance which focused solely on physiological needs to now include importance on psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this study, children shared importance of having access to money and education as a fundamental need for their well-being and safety. This can be seen when a participant described having access to education as important for her immediate and future well-being as she stated, “Education is fundamental, and has a fundamental role in the well-being of children across the world. Particularly with females because they’re more aware to actually step-up for what they think is right and receive the knowledge that you need to in order promote equality in the future (...) so in terms of my well-being I think that [education] is really imperative”.

In establishing an interpretation of children's well-being and safety, these three themes listed above were identified in the narratives shared by children. The child research participants discussed these themes as co-existing and intertwined in their lives. The following sub-section of this chapter provides an overview of how the children referred to these three themes through verbal communication as well as creative illustrations.

3.3 Findings from the data

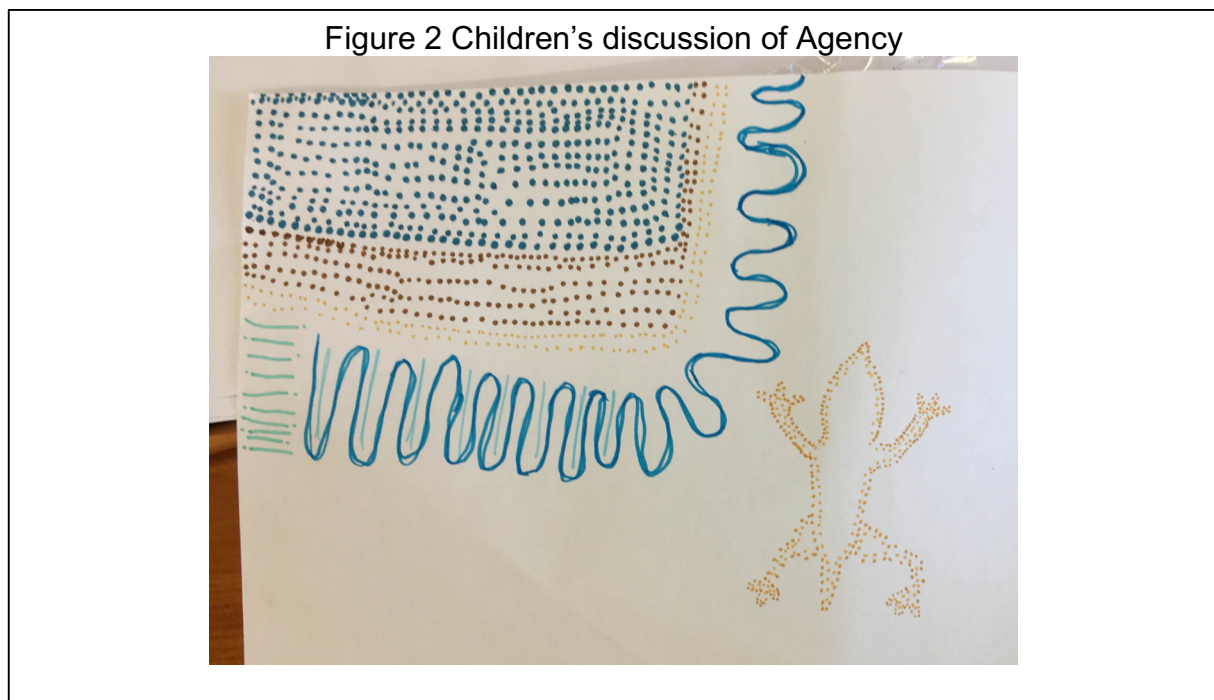
3.3.1 Theme 1: Agency

Children identified having control over decisions which directly affect their lives as fundamentally important in contributing to their sense of well-being and safety. Children discussed having control in making decisions and being able to share their lived experiences with others as important because they associated this experience with being valued and having relevance among others. Children identified feeling valued when others were listening to their views and having the opportunity to make decisions about their lives. These experiences can be seen in the first extract, as Hallie, 11 years discusses a daily ritual she engages in which makes her feel like someone is listening to her thoughts and feelings providing her a sense of safety:

Hallie: "I also have, like an object that makes me feel safe. It's like this, little statue that was like a, really, it's just small and squarish and it's like a little soldier kind of thing. So when I pray at home, and at the dinner table, it's always there. I always think what's it going to be like tomorrow and it makes me feel safe because I know that someone is there. And someone is listening [to me]".

Similarly, children discussed having opportunities where they can share knowledge with other people contributed to their well-being and safety. For example, Tia, 6 years said her cultural background and her ability to share this with others through the medium of dance was important to her. Tia further illustrated the importance of sharing her view in her creative map as shown in Figure 2. Tia stated:

Tia: “Well what’s really important is that I’m really proud to be all these different cultures and I’m really deep in my heart I really want to know everything that everybody knows [about these cultures] because actually I’m doing a dance and it’s my first time performing. Because I can use all these actions to tell a story, so yeah it’s not just like dancing, it’s like telling a story”.



While children shared importance of being listened to and having an opportunity to convey their views to other people, children’s lived experiences of seeking this autonomously appears problematic. Children seeking opportunities to exercise agency and have some control in their lives may be curtailed by adults. Children described

importance of being able to add value to, particularly to their own lives and the lives of others, through opportunities where they can make decisions. This is demonstrated in conversation with Olivia, 13 years who discusses children's voices are often silenced for many larger societal issues:

Olivia: "I believe that children and many people in adolescence aren't quite sort of listened to as much as adults would. Probably because of different stereotypes thinking that children are immature and irresponsible, which many are, however there are others who actually have certain concerns for society as well".

Children identified that being able to make decisions which directly affect their lives is an important experience which contributes to their sense of well-being and safety. Opportunities where children are freely able to express their views, thoughts, feelings and ideas with others were also referenced by children as critical in contributing to their subjective well-being and sense of safety. However, the reality of these opportunities appear to be complicating with children identifying not readily being able to make decisions and express their views on decisions which affect their lives.

3.3.2 Theme 2: Relatedness

Children identified having certain trustworthy and caring people in their lives, particularly referencing parents, caregivers and/or friends as a central factor which contributed to their well-being and safety. This notion is shown in the following conversations. In the first extract, Blake, 8 years asserts why his family are important to him and how they

contribute to his sense of well-being and safety. Blake identifies key people contributing to him feeling safe as he comments:

Blake: "Because they [my family] respect and care for me. They [my family] are always there for me and make me feel safe".

Similarly, Audrey 11 years, further identifies the sense of being cared for as important to her well-being and safety:

Audrey: "Of course, my family [are important to me]. You know they care for me and they are very loving. We celebrate stuff such as Christmas together, Christmas in July, I love that".

The notion of feeling connected with people was present across narratives from the youngest children interviewed (6 years) to the eldest children interviewed (17 years). In the third extract, Demi 15 years, further adds to the idea of trustworthy and caring people in her life as important for support being provided to her which contributes to her experiencing well-being:

Demi: "My family kind of means a lot to me. We are very family orientated. So we are taught that family is really important and that you are always there for your family and family comes first type of thing. I think because they are like my biggest support system. So it's kind of like no matter what you do, your family is always there for you and they are always the ones that, is kind of forever, type thing. Family and friends is most important for my wellbeing".

Henry, 16 years and Cooper, 17 years both identified family and friends as important to their well-being as this provides opportunities to them in being able to share things happening in their lives. The opportunity to talk to people and share their experiences with others was referenced as important for their overall feelings well-being:

Henry: "Well I like just talking with my dad and stuff so just socialising, just talking with my dad about like life and stuff like that, so just talking to people, and I talk to my mate Ted and stuff just, makes me feel a lot better if I can get everything off my chest and stuff, so I like talking to other people and I feel a lot better when I can have someone there in my life where I can just talk to about things and I'm not just, I don't really like holding stuff in to be honest".

Moreover, Cooper shares similar views about the importance of having people in his life that he is able to connect with. This can be seen in Cooper's comments as he states:

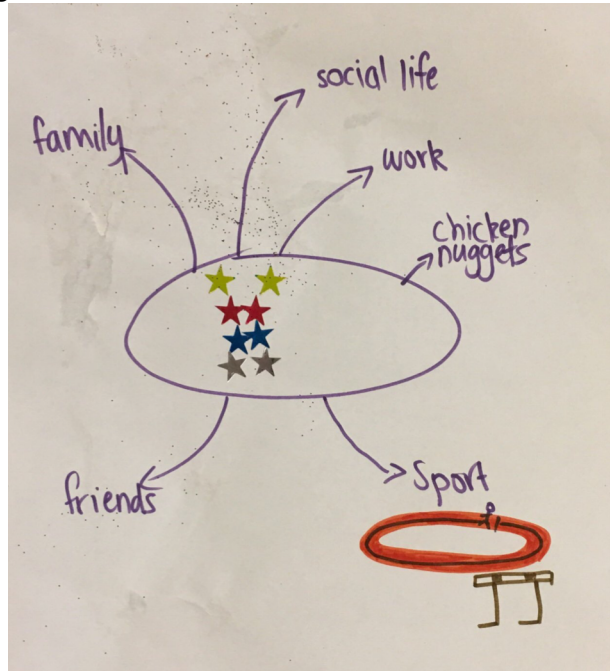
Cooper: "Ah, I think family comes first, to be honest. I mean like I live in the household with them so, seventeen years so far, so you get to know them pretty well. They're always sort of there as a support network, you know as well like you can always talk to them as if you can talk to your friends as well. I guess well-being is just happiness, health, you know always having those connections like family, someone, like a support network I guess".

As described above, children highlighted the importance of having trustworthy and caring connections with people who they can communicate their feelings and views with as part of their experiences of well-being.

In addition to children experiencing connection with others in their lives, children further identified that the way you form connections with people changes as you grow older. This was heard in conversation, particularly with older participants (17 years) who were interviewed. This can be read in Parker's extract as he discusses his illustration shown in Figure 3, by identifying extracurricular activities being responsible for providing opportunities where he is able to make connections with other people outside his family unit:

Parker: "I guess just more connections I guess, so like, um you know, like when you're younger you generally just become friends with people your own age or close family friends but now it's like, I have older friends who are in uni or like, younger friends who are in the year below, or two years below. You know, even like connections with other people that my parents might know, or like through work as well. Cos I think it is good, like just to have that sort of outlet. Just someone to like talk to".

Figure 3 Children's discussion of Relatedness (1)



Forming relationships was referenced by Parker as something which occurs in a more organic form as you grow older, through activities such as sport or work. The significance of feeling connected with people outside the family unit also appeared present in the narratives shared by younger children (6 to 12 years). The way these connections were being formed was referenced by children as occurring in a more controlled way with adults having input over the facilitation of these relationships. This can be seen as Kyah, 8 years references a 'Friendship Room' which is set up at school for students who don't have anyone to play with during recess and lunch time. Kyah states:

Kyah: "Because friendship is actually good, because you can like, if you don't have anyone to play with and you are new and no one doesn't want to play with

you, you can just go to the Friendship Room [established by the school staff] and then there's some people to play with. You can like, draw, and you can play leggo and lots of kinds of stuff".

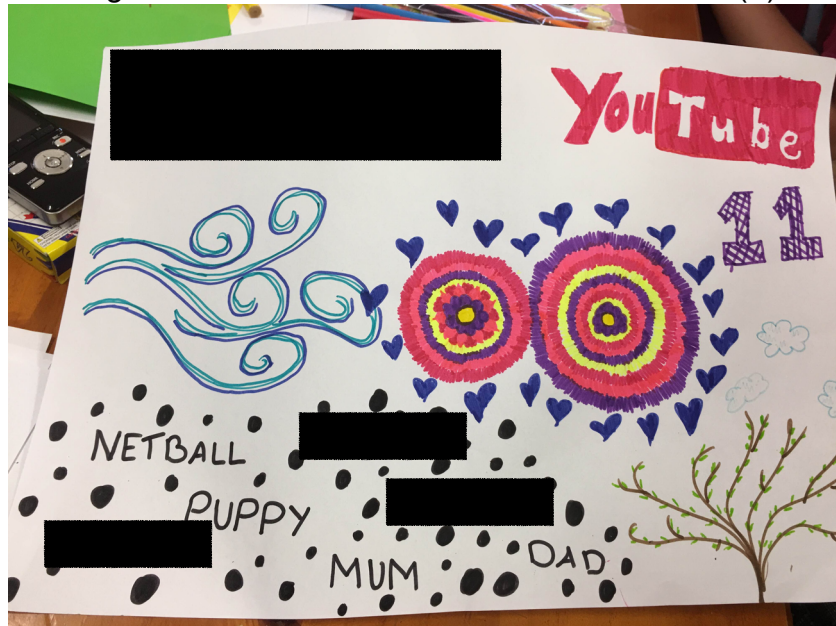
As these children's extracts show, the process of forming relationships with people appears to change across age, yet the presence of feeling connected to people remains important to children's well-being and safety across all age cohorts interviewed.

Children did not identify adversity to the way relationships formed across various ages, however changes were recognised and noted by children regarding the different way connections form with others as they grew older.

Children further identified importance of having connections with others transcending the physical world as they shared value of having relationships with people who are no longer living beings. This notion suggests that children experience well-being by feeling connected to those around them physically and also those around them in another form, perhaps spiritually. This can be seen in Figure 4 as Mia, 11 years described the clouds positioned above her family tree on the middle right of her artwork represented people who have passed away however are still important to her. Mia states:

Mia: “You are around each other [family] for so long, you just have a really strong bond. They [the clouds] are just the ones that, passed away, so that’s just like remembering them”.

Figure 4 Children’s discussion of Relatedness (2)



Children viewed these connections as being important in describing the meaning of well-being and safety in their lives. The presence of feeling connected with people and having people, particularly family and friends, appeared consistently present in the narratives shared by children.

Relationships that children share with their family was further referenced by Tom, 9 years who referenced that going fishing with his father once provided joy and peacefulness however, recently his father is sleeping more on the couch and they go fishing less often which contributed to him feeling less safe and lowered his sense of well-being. Children shared significance in their reflections of relationships they share

with people and noted the impact these relationships have on their lives. Even for children, such as Tom who identified changes in a particular relationship and how this change has impacted his lived experience of well-being and safety.

3.3.3 Theme 3: Innate Needs

Children discussed themselves being cared for and important people in their lives being cared for as significant factors contributing to their sense of well-being and safety. In discussing care, such as shelter and food, children closely linked having access to a safe and familiar place, (e.g. bedroom) contributed to their feelings of well-being and safety.

The presence of linking the prominent themes of *agency, relatedness and innate needs* was relevant in many conversations shared by the children as they described their meaning of well-being and safety. This can be seen in an extract Suzie, 11 years shares as she makes reference to all three themes found prominent in this project (*agency, relatedness and innate needs*) in the same conversation which are important to her in describing the meaning of wellbeing and safety. Suzie states:

Suzie: "Home is like the number one place where I feel safe. Because it's like my little cave where I can just sit in my bed and do anything. Watch my favourite [show], and just do things that, like at home I do like, I consider it really girly but I watch anime and my friends does too, and I hate talking about it because I think no one would like it, and not like me for what I like, so when I'm at home I can

just text my friend and talk about it, and it's just like I don't feel uncomfortable about talking about it, at home. It's like I can just do anything there".

When the researcher asked if there was anything further about being at home she finds safe, Suzie reported:

Suzie: "The fact that my family is there and they can always be there for me. I'm never allowed home alone until high school, because obviously they'll be at work and I'll be at home, but it's just having them around. And we always have mum or dad in the house. And they are always checking up on me, so it just makes me feel a lot better at home, and safe".

Children made reference to their physical space as being important to their well-being and safety. Further, children noted other people being present in their physical space as an important factor contributing to them feeling well and safe. This is identified in Suzie (11 years) and Mona's (8 years) conversation where both children make note of their parents being at home which makes them feel safe and protected. Suzie further references her younger sibling's presence contributing to her feeling safe at home as she comments:

Suzie: "like even my brother, like even though I'm the one who should be protecting him, but even having him there. It still makes me feel better".

The significance of children feeling safe by where they are and who they have around them has been shared by many children throughout this project. As seen in Suzie's

conversation who challenges the biological expectation of care structure by referencing that '[she should be] the one protecting him', as being the older sibling, having her brother physically close to her contributes to her sense of well-being and feelings of safety.

When discussing the meaning of well-being and safety, children strengthened the importance of experiencing *innate needs and relatedness* in their lives. This was particularly relevant when children spoke about safety by highlighting important factors which provide them a sense safety in their lives. As shown in Figure 5 Sunny 8 years, creatively mapped things which described her experiences of well-being and safety.

When talking to the researcher about her map, Sunny identified her home and family as key elements which contributed to her feeling well and kept her safe.

Figure 5 Children's discussion of Innate Needs and Relatedness (2)



Sunny discussed these two themes as co-existing factors which contribute to her well-being and safety. This can be seen in the following extract provided by Sunny as she says:

Sunny: "Because all my family is there [at home] and I feel really safe there.

Because my mum is there, I have a nice, cosy bed, and I always know, if there's bad guys out there, the police will get them".

Moreover, when children talked about safety in reference to physical places, there were narratives which identified the importance of children to experience having a sense of control in being able to protect themselves. This is demonstrated when Mika, 9 years discussed:

Mika: "Some safe places – school, home, maybe the police station, fire station, because if you don't the police and the fire station, if you don't know where they are, then, how would you feel safe if someone's chasing after you?"

In the narratives shared by children, the concept of children having knowledge of their physical environment and being able to make decisions which provide a sense of safety in their environments is further strengthened in comments provided by Willow 11 years and Ruby 10 years. This is identified in the following extracts:

Willow: "I like my phone because I have complete control over it".

Further, referencing the interconnections between physical environment and feeling a sense of safety Ruby, 10 years identifies having a familiar place in her life adds to her

being able to regulate her feelings in a way that makes her feel safe and calm. This can be seen in Ruby's extract:

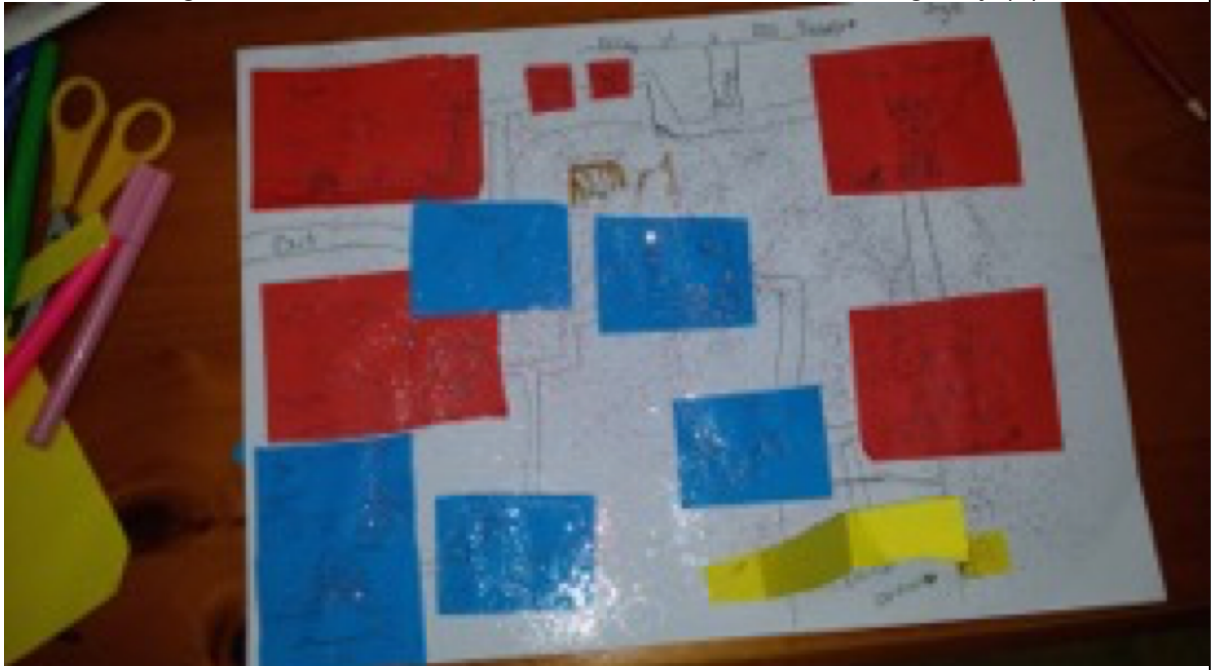
Ruby: "I guess my safe place is my bedroom, because I'm in there the most and its calming because no one else is allowed in it. And it's got everything that I need, basically it's got my instruments and all my art supplies so, and my charger, so yeah, I guess that's really it, it's just the place I'm most comfortable".

As detailed in the above conversations with Mika, Willow and Ruby, children having knowledge of their physical environments was important in providing a sense of safety in their lives as they were able to make decisions and have some control regarding their own safety with knowing who to contact and where to go to in the instance of them feeling unsafe.

Children also noted that providing items to others, including siblings and animals, for them to meet their *innate needs*, was also as important factor contributing to their sense of well-being and safety. This can be seen in Figure 6, as Nyla, 9 years discusses an illustration on her creative map which shows a built shelter for animals. She says:

Nyla: [My map is] About loving animals, feeding them, and obviously hugging them and... Because they're, I don't know, like, I don't know, I was just born with it". When the researcher inquired about the yellow paper at the bottom right which was glued and raised from her flat 2D picture of her artwork, Nyla responded "Oh that's the roof, covering the animals... looking after animals".

Figure 6 Children's discussion of Innate Needs and Agency (1)

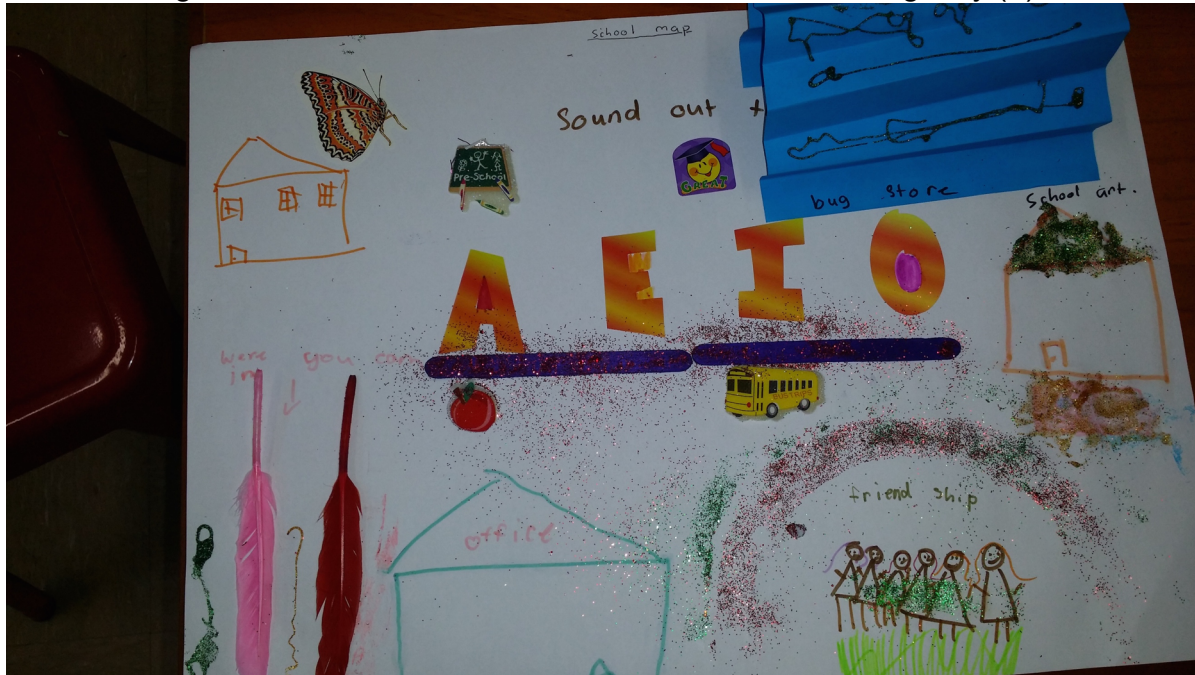


Another child research participant Lacie, 10 years further referenced the importance of exercising agency and acquiring *innate needs* as important for children's well-being and safety. This can be seen in a creative map Lacie illustrated as shown in Figure 7 whilst explaining to the researcher that providing a safe place for bugs to live will remove the likelihood of them being picked up, touched and hurt. During Lacie's interview she states:

Lacie: "I see some bugs at my school, and insects as well, some kids love insects and bugs, and so I just made a bug store so some kids can just come and look and the mothers can come and buy stuff there. Like bugs and creatures, and insects. [This is important] Because some kids, they always see, insects or bugs, they always pick it up, and I'm just like, ooh, I don't like it, so I

just said, how about if I make a bug store, that means no one would touch it then they can just take it home”

Figure 7 Children’s discussion of Innate Needs and Agency (2)



As it can be noticed in both of these conversations (with Nyla and Lacie) the child research participants shared importance of caring and providing for animals, such as facilitating a safe place for them to stay which they anticipated for these animals to feel a greater sense of well-being and safety from experiencing. Both these children made reference to being part of the decision-making process in how care was to be provided for the animals while also, presumably and with the intention of, contributing to the animal’s well-being.

In the children narratives interconnections of how money services *innate needs* was referenced. Children referred to this need as important for experiencing well-being and safety. The notion of interconnecting money in buying food, is illustrated in Figure 8 which was created by Tully, 7 years. Tully described the significance of money on her sandmap, as she stated:

Tully: “Because you get to buy things and get things that you really really, really, really want. It is important to buy food”.

Figure 8 Children’s discussion of Innate Needs and Relatedness (1)



Similar to the interconnection of money and *innate needs* (specifically food), another child discussed the interconnection between *innate needs* and *relatedness* when she was describing the conceptual meaning of well-being and safety. The connection of these two prominent themes can be seen in Raven’s (11 years) extract as she says:

Raven: “Lately in this generation, money is really, you have money, you depend on money really, like it’s your life source almost, if you don’t have money you don’t have food. You don’t have water. You don’t have a house. It’s a big part of your life, you need to have money. To earn money, you need to work. And you earn it, you don’t just, most of the time you earn it, you don’t just get it given to you”.

Furthermore, Raven transcends the concept of money for not only being fundamentally important in being able to service *innate needs*, for example being able to purchase food or other important items, however children also shared importance of money being significant in experiencing social *relatedness* and belonging among others. This is illustrated as Raven highlights:

Raven: “Like, it makes you feel better about yourself if you have a few dollars on you. Like it makes you feel, like, it’s hard to explain but when you are like, and this is in a different way but when you don’t have a lot of money and you have friends that own a mansion and stuff, which is in my case, that my friend’s, some of my friends own like mansions and they have a lot of stuff, and it makes me feel like I belong with them, if I have money, because they go to the canteen all the time, because they have that money”.

As noted in Raven and Tully’s discussion, the concept of money was considered a tool in providing opportunities to service *innate needs*, such as food, while also providing opportunities to feel connected to others.

The narratives shared by children drew significance in how the concepts of well-being and safety are fluidly situated in the lives of children. Children discussed well-being and safety as co-existing and interrelated concepts which are often experienced and understood together, with an imbalance of one concept often impacting the experience of the other concept.

3.4 Conclusion of Chapter Three

In summary, narratives shared by children in how they described the concepts of what well-being and safety means for them are described above. Moreover, creative illustrations constructed by the children have been included in this chapter which were used as a conversation tool that accompanied dialogue about conceptual understanding. The fieldwork visits not only provided an opportunity for children to share their meaning of well-being and safety, though verbal and non-verbal mediums, it also enabled children to participate in co-constructing conversations with peers of similar ages about what constitutes well-being and safety in their lives. This peer-to-peer engagement encouraged group discussion of lived experiences about ideas and challenges which were collectively experienced by children in this era regarding their well-being and safety.

Through thematic analysis, three prominent themes emerged from the narratives shared by the children. These themes included *agency, relatedness and innate needs*.

Children referred to *agency* as exercising control and decision making in their lives which directly affect them. This was noted as being able to make decisions in caring for other people and animals as well as being provided opportunities where people would listen to their story and hear their thoughts and feelings which were important to them.

In the children's narratives, the theme of *relatedness* was identified by children as feeling socially and emotionally connected with others. Children referred to their connections with family and friends as an important factor to their experiences of well-being and safety. Children extended their understanding of *relatedness* to not only being physically bound as feelings of connectedness with others were still significantly important with people who have passed away. Further, children identified how changes of *relatedness* with people, positively or negatively can impact on their perspectives of well-being and safety. This included children referring to how forming connections with people can change across time with, with older participants (17 years) sharing that relationships form more organically, typically outside school and family settings as you grow older. Children referenced importance of forming connections with those engaged in similar extracurricular activities as themselves, such as part-time work environments, dancing classes or weekend sport. Children additionally noted that relationships can change across time with the same person, which can change experiences of well-being and safety.

The final theme identified in this study from the children's narratives was *innate needs*. The children referred to *innate needs* as fundamental needs for living, including access

to shelter, food, money and education. Children referred to *innate needs* as receiving these from parents, caregivers and friends as well as themselves being the provider of *innate needs*, specifically to animals and family members. In children's narratives, the co-existence of *innate needs* with *relatedness* and *agency* was present where children discussed the importance of how *innate needs* were to be provided for significant others. Further connections were made by children where access to *innate needs* provided a sense of belonging among social groups.

Through children's narratives and their creative illustrations, this chapter presents perspectives of subjective well-being and safety from children. As identified in this chapter, the prominent themes emerging from the data including *agency*, *relatedness* and *innate needs* co-exist and are intertwined in the lives of children contributing to their lived experiences.

Chapter Four: Discussion

4.1 Overview of Chapter Four

Findings from this study will be discussed in relation to the reviewed literature. This discussion will demonstrate the contribution these findings bring to the field of subjective child well-being and safety by discussing a child-centred description of *agency*, particularly focusing on how children shared importance of having opportunities to make decisions which directly affect their lives and for their voice to be heard by others; *relatedness*, with focus on children sharing importance of having connections with trustworthy and supportive people in their lives; and *innate needs*, with children sharing importance of being the receivers and providers of what they describe as essential living requirements.

4.2 Contributions to the literature

This study aimed to broaden our understanding of subjective child well-being and safety. The findings demonstrate significance of children's views to be heard in the construction to both concepts, of well-being and safety. To guide the main research questions, child participatory research methods were used to facilitate discussion in how children express their view through dialogue and non-verbal creative mediums regarding their perspective of what well-being and safety mean to them. There were three dominant themes which emerged from the findings including *Agency, Relatedness and Innate Needs*. The children discussed their experiences of these themes as interconnected aspects co-existing in their everyday lives. Through conversation with

children these themes appeared to surface as important to them about exercising decision making and sharing opinions (*agency*), who they had around them physically, emotionally and spiritually (*relatedness*), and access to or being a provider of food, shelter, money and education (*innate needs*).

4.2.1 Agency

Reconstructing a child-centred interpretation from the children's narratives, I have shown that *agency* emerges as a prominent theme when listening to children's understanding of what well-being and safety means to them. Children shared importance of being able to make decisions which directly affect their lives (for example, Hallie and Willow shared the importance of exercising authority in being able to contact people in the instance of them feeling unsafe) whilst sharing importance of having knowledge and familiarity of the physical environment. Furthermore, children shared the importance of being listened to by significant people and the ability to share their personal views as significant in experiencing well-being and a sense of safety. This is highlighted by Tia who discussed importance of being able to share understanding of her diverse cultural background through the medium of dance with others, as this was an integral part of her overall well-being and safety. Similarly, Olivia discussed the problematic position society often places children in with their views often silenced or not validated on significant matters which affect their lives directly. Children's ability to exercise agency is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. In this study, children discussed often feeling constrained by adult gatekeepers which inhibited their contribution and ability to engage freely on matters which affect them, suggesting their

minority societal position. While children discussed this sub-position of themselves in society, other children in this study reported comments of responsibility for others. This is seen in Suzie's comment as she refers to herself as having responsibility of caring and providing protection for her younger sibling.

Children's ability to exercise agency in their lives is most notably referenced in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) with the Australian Human Rights Commission (2019) detailing children's participation on matters which affect them as a guiding principle of the CRC following Australian's ratification in 1990. While the formality of child participation rights is solidified by these globally recognised political entities the daily experiences of children often conflicts these suggested principles as children discussed their participation on matters in their lives are not readily experienced. Previous research has further highlighted parental/caregiver control limiting children to exercise free engagement in decision-making on matters in their lives (Hume, Salmon and Ball, 2005).

Further research supports the findings discussed in this study where children shared importance of being able to make decisions which impact their lives. Children expressing importance of exercising *agency* was similarly shared in a qualitative study by Fattore and colleagues (2009), where children highlighted significance of being able to exert influence in their lives. In this study, children additionally linked the availability of being able to exercise this *agency* was often within boundaries and opportunities set by others, particular their parents/carers. This notion accords with the discussed

findings shared from Hume and colleagues (2005) study (above) as well as the narrative shared in this present thesis. The findings discussed in this thesis strengthens the conceptual understanding of how children understand and experience well-being in their everyday lives, by highlighting contextual possibilities and restraints which contributes and influences children's experiences of well-being and safety.

4.2.2 Relatedness

Children's experiences of *agency* co-exists with other prominent themes which have emerged from the data in this study. Children discussed the importance of being able to make decisions about their well-being and safety (i.e. *agency*) closely aligning with feelings connectedness with trustworthy and supportive people, particularly friends and family members. This is illustrated by Henry and Cooper who discussed importance of being able to share their thoughts and feelings with significant others highlighting that the absence of these connections would inhibit them to feel an overall sense of well-being and safety.

Similarly, many children spoke about having positive connections to people in their lives which contributed to them feeling safe. This is evident in discussions shared by Blake, Audrey and Demi who described their family as a support system who care and love them. The relationships children share with others was identified by children as a fundamental basis giving meaning to their experiences of well-being and safety.

Previous research has also identified children's safe and trustworthy connections with

others, particularly parents/caregivers, as important in eliciting feelings and experiences of wellness and safety (Fattore et al., 2009).

Children further identified relationships they share with significant others can change overtime, which influence their experiences of well-being and safety (as discussed by Parker and Kyah). The findings from this study demonstrate that the younger child research participants discussed the formation of connections with others as contextually relevant to environments they are exposed, which often are to at the discretion of their parent/caregiver, whereas older child research participants discussed having wider opportunities to form connections with others in environments of their choice (e.g. part time work places, outside school sporting groups). Despite no negativity was shared by the younger research participants, it is notable to mention that the older research participants shared positivity of experiencing authority in forming relationships with others who share similar ideas and extra-curricular motivations as themselves.

Previous research has further commented on the impact of parental/caregiver's perceived safety of children which has informed child rearing practices and children's exposure to opportunities such as social interactions with others in their community (Hume et al., 2005). Few studies have explored children's perspectives of safety across different environments, with these studies reporting children's perceptions of safety are seen to be influenced by different environments they are exposed to (Ben-Arieh & Shimoni, 2014; Spilsbury, 2002). In review of relevant literature, children's exposure to environments which provide opportunities for children to form connections with others is often associated with parental/caregiver influence formed by adult perceptions of what

constitutes a safe person and/or environment for these connections to take place (Hume, et al., 2005). This study uniquely contributes to the current conceptual understanding of subjective child well-being and safety as children were invited to share their direct views, outside contextual settings or formed questions asked by the researcher referencing to particular environments (as seen in Spilsbury, 2002), of how they ascribe meaning to these concepts freely in their own words.

Children shared further importance of experiencing relatedness in discussing their meaning of well-being and safety. Experiences of feeling connected with others transcended the physical world, with children (as referenced by Mia) identifying a significant relationship with a family members who had passed away. Despite the physical presence of this relationship being absent, feelings of connectedness were still reported. The notion of children continuing meaning bonds and connectedness with significant people who have passed away has also been demonstrated by Foster and colleagues (2011), who found that children frequently reflect on relationships following the passing to provide comforting effects from bereavement in their lives.

The findings from this study suggest that relationships are diverse and dynamic, often changing over time as to how children experience these through lived opportunities, exposure and reflection.

4.2.3 Innate Needs

Research extends the notion that feeling secure with others is an innate human need (Laing, 1978). In the data, children's descriptions of feeling secure with others whilst referencing access to a familiar safe place were continually identified. This was demonstrated in narratives shared by Suzie and Sunny, who noted that accessing a safe familiar place (i.e. home, private bedroom) accompanied by the presence of others (i.e. family members) was important for them to experience a sense of safety. Further data in this study suggests children who are abreast of their lived environments provided a sense of safety as they were able to navigate themselves to a safe place in the likelihood of identifying danger. Other research contributes to this same conceptual understanding where children have highlighted importance of co-experiencing trustworthy connections with parents/caregivers and access to a safe place (Fattore et al., 2009).

Children shared importance of being able to make decisions which intimately affect their lives and the lives of others, including humans and animals, regarding innate human needs such as shelter, food and protection. As seen in narratives shared by Willow and Ruby, exercising authority in how they navigate safety of themselves and others was identified as important in their experiences of well-being and safety. The co-experience of these two prominent themes identified in this study (i.e. *innate needs and agency*), were maintained by children as playing an important role in receiving care *from* others and providing care *for* others.

4.3 Conclusion of Chapter Four

This study represents an attempt to explore, understand and describe children's subjective views of their well-being and safety. Through a qualitative framework, children aged 6 to 17 years engaged freely in conversation with their peers and the researcher in co-constructing conceptual understanding of what well-being and safety mean for them. Through thematic analysis, three prominent themes emerged from the children's narratives, these include *agency, relatedness and innate needs*.

In representing a child-centric meaning of this study, it is essential to consider how contextual environments may have influenced children's subjective views. The main finding indicated from this study is that children's experiences of well-being and safety is complex, dynamic and co-existent across a variety of elements in children's lives. It was rarely heard that children referenced their meaning and understanding of well-being and safety in isolation to one element in their lives. For example, children did not reference feeling related with others as singularly important in their lives, rather children shared their understanding of well-being and safety as grounded and interwoven concepts among a multitude of experienced elements (i.e. *agency, relatedness and innate needs*) as outlined above in this thesis. This finding is critical for social and political change makers to acknowledge in the reconsideration and reformation of practice and policy frameworks which aim to support children to live a life they value. In particular rethinking how social frameworks which often are established in isolation (e.g. education policies and practice frameworks) can transcend and acknowledge importance to other areas of children's lives (e.g. child welfare policy and practice

frameworks). The interconnectedness of child well-being and safety was shared strongly by children in this study providing valuable insight for social change to shift in a way that can support children experience a life they understand as important.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Overview of Chapter Five

Methodological considerations will be discussed when working with children exploring the concepts of subjective well-being and safety. Focus will review the ethical and practical applications conducting child participatory research as well as reflecting on the ways in which children have co-constructed knowledge of these concepts in this present study. Potential future research methodologies will be discussed as a reflection from the learnings made from this study.

The limitations of this study will be addressed. This chapter will conclude by highlighting future directions of researching subjective well-being and safety with children.

5.2 Implications for research

5.2.1 Methodological considerations

The methodological approach of this study adopted a qualitative child-centred participatory framework, assuming children were capable of engaging and co-constructing the meaning of well-being and safety with their peers and the researcher (Duncan, 2009). The suitability of employing this methodological approach was affirmed by the children's descriptive and intricate narratives they shared by describing their experiences and meaning of what well-being and safety means for them and children in a broad sense. Furthermore, the qualitative participatory framework

validated children's rights to participate and contribute to the construction of conceptual understanding of matters which directly affect their lives (Australian Humans Rights Commission, 2019). The creative art mediums children engaged in as part of this study aimed to facilitate dialogue between the children, peers and the researcher in drawing understanding of what well-being and safety mean. This has been evidently shown from the children's illustrations (as seen in Figures 2 to 8 above) where these creative maps are accompanied by dialogue. The qualitative approach provided opportunities for children to solicit rich and relevant descriptions which were reviewed through thematic analysis, supporting the supposition children are capable experts in their own lives (Harcourt, Perry & Waller, 2011).

5.2.2 Limitations of the present study

The findings of this study have contributed to and affirmed current conceptual understanding of subjective child well-being and safety. This study however, presents limitations in the methodology and analysis which need to be discussed. Firstly, the geographic area where the research was conducted was localised to a small region south of Sydney's central business district in New South Wales Australia, constituting to similar demographic profiles of child research participants. The limited diversity of living environments experienced by children may have provided less rich conceptual understanding of what well-being and safety mean for them. Secondly, all fieldwork was conducted onsite at educational facilities (eg. Secondary Private Schools & OOSH facilities) where the research proposal and design was supported and approved by adult gatekeepers, both a representative from the facility (i.e. teacher/educator) and the

child's parent/caregiver. Conducting research with children where these conditions may not be as supportively framed, narratives shared by children may elicit very different conceptual understanding. Therefore, it is not possible to position the findings discussed in this study as broad consensus of child well-being and safety across other contextual environments, rather the methodology and findings of this study may inform and encourage further studies to be replicated across diverse contexts.

The methodological design of this study inclusively encouraged and supported children from diverse cultural backgrounds to participate. However, the unique and significant role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have in co-constructing conceptual understanding of subjective well-being and safety was not possible in being fully addressed in this small study. Further research encompassing children from diverse cultural backgrounds, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, would expose greater understanding and be more inclusive of developing further knowledge of subjective child well-being and safety in an Australian context.

Engaging children from diverse cultural backgrounds where power differentials between the child, their peers and the researcher exist, presents complex research considerations. The narratives shared by children in this study may have been conducive of the situational environment where the study was conducted and of the researcher's cultural background. Cultural competency of those working and supporting children directly is critical in accommodating the complex needs of supporting a child to express freely and wholly develop their cultural identity (Hedges, 2015). This affirms

the need for those engaging with children directly in future research, to include opportunities for children to construct meaning which may individually or collectively align with their individual cultural identity.

5.2.3 Future directions of research on subjective well-being and safety

Ben-Arieh et al. (2013) have argued that children are capable and trustworthy agents in co-constructing conceptual understanding of well-being and safety. This study shares deep understanding from children describing their experiences of well-being and safety in the aim of improving their well-being through child-centred social and political changes. Research has identified that children's perceptions are different from adults, and thus future research exploring child well-being and safety must provide children authority in discussing freely their experiences across diverse contextual and cultural settings in order to improve current knowledge (Ben-Arieh et al., 2009). And thereby, reaching the aim of supporting a child to live a life they value.

This study shared understanding of well-being and safety experienced by children aged 6 to 17 years. It is only warranted for future research to explore well-being with younger children. Shared interests have been identified in research with infants and toddlers (Degotardi & Pearson, 2014), suggesting possibilities that well-being and safety research could expand to further explore with younger children than the ages of children interviewed in this study. While verbal expression may be less articulate from this age group, modification of methodology which supports developmental and cognitive

milestones would be encouraged to facilitate extraction of knowledge and perspectives in their fullest form.

5.3 Conclusion of Chapter Five

Through a qualitative child-centred participatory framework this study has enhanced understanding of subjective child well-being and safety. The data in this study affirms children as capable social subjects of sharing perspectives on complex and dynamic phenomena, which can provide insight into change across social and political landscapes globally.

Despite the limitations of this study (as described above), the findings shared by children regarding their interpretation of the meaning of well-being and safety argues significance for future studies to adopt authentic child collaborative designed research exploring these concepts further.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information sheet for child/young person

WESTERN SYDNEY
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Participant Information Sheet – Children and Young People (Specific)

Project Title:

Exploring children's perspectives of well-being and safety

Project Summary:

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by *Rhea Felton, Master of Research Candidate, School of Psychology and Social Science* under the supervision of *Dr Michel Edenborough, School of Psychology and Social Science*. The research is part of a larger international research project exploring how children understand and experience well-being. This research will focus specifically on understanding the meaning of safety in relation to child well-being.

How is the study being paid for?

There is no funding for the completion of this project. This project is being completed for the submission of Master of Research thesis.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to partake in one workshop with other children between 6-18 years of age. These workshops will ask your child questions about what is important to them, what safety means to them and places in the world that constitute feelings and experiences of safety.

How much of my time will I need to give?

The workshop will be conducted at a location convenient to you. The workshop is anticipated to take two hours.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

The research project intends to contribute to knowledge and understanding of how safety is experienced and understood by children. Your participation in this study will be for research purposes only.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

This research project poses minimal risk to you. During the workshop, the greatest risk is that some prompting questions by the researchers may raise uncomfortable feelings in you. Should you become upset or distressed, the researchers will provide you with the option to stop being involved and inform the facility where the research is being undertaken and your parent/carer.

A resource kit has additionally been developed as part of the larger international research project which is available for access that can help you and your parents/carers in providing support to you, should this be appropriate.

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How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission.

The study intends to protect your identity and your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. No identifying characteristics will be detailed in any publication of the results. Contact details will be kept in a separate computer file from the transcribed interviews and will only be linked to your responses by the researchers. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. Personal information that may allow others to guess your identity will be removed. All research data will be kept securely by the researchers and will be destroyed after a minimum period of five years, as per University policy.

The only time the researchers will be required to breach confidentiality is if we suspect, on reasonable grounds, that you are at risk of harm. In that event, we will be required to inform the appropriate child protection authority.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide and that your data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason.

If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be disposed of securely and not included in any publications of this research. You can withdraw from the study by notifying the researchers they do not wish to be part of the workshop any longer. No explanation or reason is needed and withdrawing from the research will not pose any consequence to you in any way.

What if I require further information?

Please contact Rhea Felton, Master of Research Candidate or Dr Michel Endenborough, Supervisor should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

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What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H11446.

Appendix B: Information sheet parent/carer



Participant Information Sheet – Parent/Carer (Specific)

Project Title:

Exploring children's perspectives of well-being and safety

Project Summary:

Your child is invited to participate in a research study being conducted by *Rhea Felton, Master of Research Candidate, School of Psychology and Social Science* under the supervision of *Dr Michel Edenborough, School of Psychology and Social Science*. The research is part of a larger international research project exploring how children understand and experience well-being. This research will focus specifically on understanding the meaning of safety in relation to child well-being.

How is the study being paid for?

There is no funding for the completion of this project. This project is being completed for the submission of Master of Research thesis.

What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will be asked to partake in one workshop with other children between 6-18 years of age. These workshops will ask your child questions about what is important to them, what safety means to them and places in the world that constitute feelings and experiences of safety.

How much of my child's time will he/she need to give?

The workshop will be conducted at a location convenient to you and the participating children. The workshop is anticipated to take two hours.

What benefits will my child, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

The research project intends to contribute to knowledge and understanding of how safety is experienced and understood by children. The children's participation in this study will be for research purposes only.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for my child? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

This research project poses minimal risk to participating children. During the workshop, the greatest risk is that some prompting questions by the researchers may raise uncomfortable feelings for your child. Should your child become upset or distressed, the researchers will provide the child/ren the option to stop being involved and inform the facility where the research is being undertaken and yourself.

A resource kit has additionally been developed as part of the larger international research project which is available for access that can help you provide support to your child, should this be appropriate.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

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It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission.

The study intends to protect your child's anonymity and the confidentiality of your child's responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. No identifying characteristics will be detailed in any publication of the results. Contact details will be kept in a separate computer file from the transcribed interviews and will only be linked to your child's responses by the researchers. In the final report, the participating children will be referred to by a pseudonym. Personal information that may allow others to guess the identity of the child will be removed. All research data will be kept securely by the researchers and will be destroyed after a minimum period of five years, as per University policy.

The only time the researchers will be required to breach confidentiality is if we suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a participating child is at risk of harm. In that event, we will be required to inform the appropriate child protection authority.

Will the data and information that my child provides be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data your child will provide and that their data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

Can I withdraw my child from the study? Can my child withdraw from the study?

Your child's participation in the study is entirely voluntary and they are not obliged to be involved. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time – or you may withdraw your child from the study at which point all written and audio records of your child's participation will be destroyed.

Your child may withdraw from the study by notifying the researchers they do not wish to be a part of the workshop any longer. No explanation or reason is needed and your child/ren withdraw will not pose any consequence.

What if I require further information?

Please contact Rhea Felton, Master of Research Candidate or Dr Michel Endenborough, Supervisor should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

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Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree for your child to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H11446.

Appendix C: Consent form for child/young person

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Consent Form – Child and Young Person

Project Title:

Exploring children's perspectives of well-being and safety

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to:

- Participating in an interview*
- Having the interview audio recorded*
- Having my photo taken]*

I consent for my data and information provided to be used for this project.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

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This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H11446

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix D: Consent form for parent/carer

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Consent Form – Parent/Carer

Project Title:

Exploring children's perspectives of well-being and safety

I, _____ hereby consent for my child _____ to participate in the above named research project.

I have discussed participation in the project with my child and my child agrees to their participation in the project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my child's involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent for my child to:

- Participate in an interview*
- Having their information audio recorded*
- Having their photo taken*

I consent for my child's data and information provided to be used for this project.

I understand that my child's involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about them will be used in any way that reveals their identity.

I understand that I can withdraw my child, or my child can withdraw, from the study at any time without affecting their relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H11446

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If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix E: Global research protocol

Interview Protocol and Notes

Multi-National Qualitative Study of Children's Well-being

Stages 1 and 2

Project Coordinators:

Dr Tobia Fattore (Sydney)
Prof. Dr Susann Fegter (Berlin)
Prof. Dr Christine Hunner-Kreisel (Vechta)

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Conceptual Context for Stage One and Stage Two

The main research objective of the multinational qualitative study is to understand how children understand dimensions of well-being in a locally oriented, but multi-nationally comparative manner. This will help to understand findings from the quantitative *Children's Worlds Study* in a more detailed way. Further, this objective contributes to responding to one of the main challenges in current research on child well-being: the question of normativity and cultural contingency (see Andresen/Schneekloth 2014, Weisner 2014, Esser 2014, Fegter/Richter 2013). How can we deal with the fact that well-being is culturally contingent, value-oriented, a construct embedded in society and culture and prone to change and redefinition over time (see Fattore/Mason/Watson 2007: 112)? In exploring the relationship between culture, context and child well-being Weisner (2014) has recently suggested that we understand well-being as the "the engaged participation in the activities that are deemed desirable and valued in a cultural community and the psychological experiences that are produced by such engagement" (Weisner 2014: 90). This definition has particular value for this project as it specifies two dimensions that allow us to recognize the cultural contingency of well-being, but nonetheless allow comparisons across contexts- that is what is valued in a cultural community and the subjective experiences associated with such engagement. These concepts inform the research processes described below. In the context of these considerations the two steps are focused on:

- i. everyday experiences and narratives about what makes children feel good;
- ii. everyday experiences and narratives about what is important for children; and
- iii. the everyday contexts in which concepts of well-being are experienced.

Fieldwork Considerations

Documenting Field Notes

Field notes will be obtained to provide information regarding the fieldwork setting. Observation based field notes will be critical in analysis of the methodology and for documenting the challenges, processes and mechanisms through which the multinational qualitative research is undertaken. For example field notes allow for a comparative analysis of what concepts, methodologies and methods 'work' or are adapted across different fieldwork settings.

It is suggested that observation based field-work notes be obtained on the following:

- *Demographic details*: time, place, date of the fieldwork.
- *Descriptive notes*: portraits of participants, a description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events or activities.
- *Personal notes*: any salient fieldworker reflections – for example speculations, feelings, problem, ideas, hunches, impressions.
- *Research modifications and reflections*: Changes to suggested questions and processes. What worked and what didn't.

Obtaining Demographic Data

Demographic data will be obtained to provide basic information regarding the participants, the context in which the field-work occurs and the socio-economic and demographic context in which the participants live. This information will be crucial for attempting to understand the importance of local cultural, social and political contexts as factors influencing children's understandings and experience of well-being.

It is recommended that several sources be collected, where possible

- *Area field-notes*: An observation based description of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the fieldwork setting. This will provide critical information on the demographic context of the fieldwork and potentially the demographic characteristics of the environment in which the participants live.
- A question on children's self concept (see Question 1.1 below)

- A short version of the *Children's Worlds* quantitative questionnaire, or the attached 'About You' survey, which obtains basic demographic data on the participants. This should be adapted for local purposes and can be distributed at the end of Stage 1 to participants for their completion (see 1.5 below). This could be converted into a self-administered questionnaire or be administered as a face-to-face questionnaire, with the fieldworker presenting the items orally.
- Publicly available statistical data on the local area, where this is available. For example 'neighbourhood' level data is available at the postcode level for all Australian suburbs via the Australian Bureau of Statistics and will be collected for all fieldwork sites.

Stage 1 Workshop: Exploring Children's Concepts of Well-being

Stage 1 workshops involve focus groups or individual interviews with children involving open questions about important places, important people, important activities and so on from their perspective.

The purpose of this stage of the research is to work inductively from children's narratives to identify key concepts regarding well-being as experienced in their everyday contexts.

This should then provide a basis from which key concepts from the perspectives of the children can be contrasted with the key concepts from the *Children's World's Study*. In the *Children's World's Study* underlying concepts of well-being are associated with specific domains that include leisure time, daily activities, significant relationships as well as community questions, that are linked to questions of space. Additionally the *Children's World's Study* places emphasis on Home, School, Neighborhood and Friends which are also linked to space. (Subjective quality of life is connected to these particular social contexts in terms of 'feeling safe', 'being treated fairly', 'being able to participate', 'being listened to', 'Agency and freedom'. 'Having fun/ a good time together'. These concepts are not addressed and interrogated explicitly in this first Workshop)

However for these reasons the concept of space, **via a 'Map exercise'**, is used to explore children's own experiences of well-being. in Workshop One. It therefore is premised on an open sense of what is important and what makes children feel 'well or good' within the parameters of everyday life.

The Aims of Stage One are:

- To start with the children's every day experiences, to gain narratives and expressions about what makes them feel good and what is important for them.
- To determine the key concepts central to experiences of well-being from children's perspectives
- To determine what concepts are most important for children
- To compare the inductively generated concepts derived from the perspectives of children with the concepts of the Children's Worlds Study
- To see a.) whether they are different or similar and b.) how they relate to the everyday experiences of children in their social and cultural contexts

The questions below are designed to elicit narrative responses from the participants. Therefore they should be read as guides to facilitate open-ended responses from the participants.

Therefore for each of the questions, the suggested prompts can be utilised to facilitate open-dialogue between the researchers and the participants. These are suggested in the table below.

Concept	Question	Notes
1.1. Self-concept	<p>First, we would like you to tell us a little about yourself. How would you describe yourself?</p>	<p>This question prioritises what children see as important to self-concept. Their age, gender, cultural background etc.</p>
1.2 Mapping important aspects of well-being	<p><i>Map Exercise</i> – Invite children to draw a map of what is important in their life. For example children could be invited to highlight on their map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The places that are important to them; • The people who are important to them; • The things they do that are important to them; • Particular things that they own that are important to them; • Anything else that may be missing of importance that they wish to include? <p>The activity forms the basis of a semi-structured auto-driven interview. The Participants should be prompted to discuss and explain the content of the map.</p> <p>For example, for any of the features included on the map, participants should be asked to describe what the feature is, and what about that feature is important, and therefore the reasons they have included it on their map.</p> <p>Field workers will probe the content by asking about key aspects of the presented content. The following prompts can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tell me something about (<i>feature on map</i>) - Is there a specific situation or occasion that you could describe about (<i>feature on map</i>) ... Could you describe this in more detail to help me understand (<i>feature on map</i>)... - When you talked about (<i>story told about feature on map</i>) 	<p>The activity provides a representation of a particular point of view (as explained and interpreted to us by the participants), as a manifestation of the young person's way of looking at, experiencing and interpreting the world.</p> <p>As much as possible the parameters of the map should be determined by the participants, The process of developing the map should be child-led rather than directed by the researchers. But guidance can be provided, for example through making concrete suggestions of things that could be put on the map or for example, through the following process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decide what you want to make (draw/build etc.) a map of. It can be your home, your local area or your district or something else. If you want to you can do more than one map. For instance you could draw a map of school, a map of your house and some maps of places you like playing. You can make a personal map. This includes making a map of things around you in your everyday environment. - If you want to, write or draw on your map all the things you want to put on your map that are important to you. Think about the places on your map where you would like to put these things. You don't just have to put physical things on your map. You can put on anything that you can find a symbol or picture for, or even write on. For instance you could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o People important to you. o Activities that you do that are important.

	<p>what happened next? How was that for you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Places you go that are important to you. What do you do at these places? o Things you own that are important to you. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work out the basic layout of where you want to put these things. - Decide how you want to put these things on your map. Do you want to draw things on, cut things out of magazines, use photos that you have taken, and stick them onto places on your map? - Make as many changes as you like. <p>The medium upon which the map can be made can be determined by local preferences. For example building blocks, individual maps on paper, or a collective map on a large piece of paper.</p> <p>Stickers, for example, can be used to anchor places. Different stickers could represent, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Points that are important on the map - Points that make them feel happy or good - Points that they would want to change <p>These can then be used as concrete discussion points.</p>
<p>1.3 Mapping what makes children feel well (check survey)</p>	<p>We have talked about what is important, how about what makes you feel well or good?</p> <p><i>Prompt</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you describe a specific occasion when you have felt well or good? - Are there particular people? What is it about these people that makes you feel well or good? - Are there certain things that you do? What is it about these things that makes you feel well or good? - How about certain times? Tell me about them? 	<p>The concept of 'well or good' switches to the emotive/affective experiences of well-being.</p> <p>Similar to the importance question, the activity should serve as a medium for children to focus their ideas, and then serve as the basis for a discussion where the researcher obtains participant's interpretations.</p>

<p>1.4 Changing important aspects of well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How about certain occasions? - Are there particular places? - How about particular things that you own? What is it about these things that makes you feel well or good? - We are talking about what makes you feel well or good, what else needs to be in your life to make you feel this way? Is anything missing? 	
<p>1.5 Demographic Data</p>	<p>Imagine you had a magic wand and could change whatever you wanted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Looking at all these things on your map, what would you change if you could to make it even better? ▪ <i>Prompt</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would it be the people you were with or the things that you were doing? Is it something else? <p>Short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A)</p>	<p>This question attempts to focus on both ideal aspects of life quality but also what children identify as areas in their life that they wish to change. The question potentially explores the extent to which children adapt their preferences to existing situations, and what they would prioritise as requiring change.</p> <p>As an alternative it may be more appropriate to talk in terms of 'power to change things'.</p> <p>At the end of the workshop a short questionnaire will be distributed to participants to obtain some basic demographic data about them.</p> <p>This information could also be obtained by adopting a short version of the <i>Children's Worlds</i> quantitative questionnaire, specifically items 1-7, or the attached 'About You' survey, attached at Appendix A.</p>

Stage 2 Workshop: Exploring Children's Understandings of *Children's Worlds Study* Concepts and Reconstructed Concepts from Stage 1

While Stage One focuses on children's concrete experiences and concepts, Stage Two aims to explore children's understandings of the concepts that have arisen in the first workshop in a more detailed way and also children's understandings of some of the salient domains and concepts used in the *Children's Worlds Study*.

Stage Two therefore has three components or 'modules'. These components can be used together, or treated separately, with each being a fieldwork stage. It is at the discretion of each research team as to how to proceed, either using all three modules (which could involve a half to full day workshop), a combination of modules (which could be the basis of a shorter group process) or one module (which could be the basis of a focus group). For example, research teams may only wish to focus on asking questions directly relating to the key domains and concepts derived from the *Children's Worlds Study*.

Each module is described below.

Module 2.1

- Module 2.1 is based on a thematic analysis of the Workshop One interviews. Based on this analysis, questions will be developed summarising the key themes from the first workshop and introduced as topics for discussion in the second workshop, allowing the participants to prioritise and elaborate on their Workshop One discussions. This approach attempts to involve children as co-constructors of knowledge to inform later analysis.

Module 2.2

- Module 2.2. focuses on children's understanding and experiences about domains and concepts of well-being derived from the *Children's World Study* that may not have been explicitly discussed by children in Stage 1, or been part of Module 2.1. (because children did not discuss these in Stage 1). However they may be of specific interest for the research teams due to national or local research interests.
- Module 2.2. involves discussions about how children understand key domains/concepts from the *Children's Worlds Study*, and explores the everyday contexts in which these concepts are experienced. These include: 'Experiences of School', 'Economic Well-being', 'Being able to participate', 'Being listened to', 'Agency' and 'Safety'.

Module 2.3.

- Module 2.3. involves creating 'short films where children prioritize what topics they want to convey to children in other parts of the world. In small groups of 3-4 participants, each child will be asked to prioritize which three topics are most important for them. They will then be asked to discuss together which topics they want to explain in more detail to children in other places of the world. The result will be short movies in which they present and explain their ideas and give examples. This can be analyzed but it can also be given to the children in other participating countries, so that they can learn from each other with the potential to develop a cross-national dialogue amongst the participants.

It is envisaged Stage 2, in whichever form, will involve group discussions and will occur, as much as possible, with the same group of children as those who participated in the Stage 1 Workshop.

Similar to Stage 1, reflexive field notes about the process and fieldwork context will be documented.

Aims of Stage 2:

- To understand the meaning of specific concepts from the *Children World Study* from the perspectives of the children and how this is linked to their social and cultural contexts.
- To be able to bring these concepts into conversation with children's narratives from the first phase.
- To determine how concepts from the Stage 1 and 2 workshops, as prioritised by the participants, are understood and experienced within and across national contexts.
- To understand how children understand and experience dimensions of well-being in a locally oriented, but multi-nationally comparative manner

Concept	Question	Notes
2.1.1 Understanding Well-being Concepts Stage One	<p style="text-align: center;">Module 2.1</p> <p>'The last time we spoke, some of the things you talked about included ... These are what we thought were some of the main things that you were saying were important to you and what made you feel well or good? But are they?</p>	<p>Between the first and second workshops, key descriptive themes from the first workshop are to be identified. These could be similar to first order codes undertaken as part of an inductive qualitative analysis.</p> <p>At the second workshop, the fieldwork team should discuss the summary themes with the participants. The fieldworker should explore whether the participants want to alter these themes, add to them, delete some, or emphasise certain themes.</p> <p>Discussion of key themes can lead to further exploration of the significance of key points. Fieldworkers can point out particular sections of transcript from the first workshop and prompt for further explanation from the participants on the significance and meaning of the text. This serves the purpose of reviewing the transcript and providing opportunities to explore issues in greater depth.</p> <p>This question also aims to provide an opportunity to investigate issues not previously explored, thus allowing participant led changes in the research.</p>
2.2.1 School	<p style="text-align: center;">Module 2.2</p> <p>How do you feel about school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the most important things about school? - What is the best part about school? - How about the worst part? 	<p>2.2. to 2.6 refer to underlying domains or concepts derived from the <i>Children's Worlds Study</i>, which have not been explicitly asked about in Stage One. These questions are not definitive and local adaptations are encouraged. The following are Domains that comprise the <i>Children's Worlds Study</i>. The information in</p>

<p>2.2.2 Money and things you have – Economic Well-being</p>	<p>We want to hear about important people in your life. How about teachers? Are teachers important in your life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why or why not? - What makes a good teacher? 	<p>parentheses indicates where qualitative information regarding this domain might be obtained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home and the people they live with [1.1, 1.2, 1.3] - Money and things they have [2.3] - Relationships with friends and other people [1.1, 1.2, 1.3] - The area where they live [1.2, 1.3] - School [2.2] - Leisure time [1.2, 1.3] - Self [1.1, 1.2, 1.3]
<p>2.2.2 Money and things you have – Economic Well-being</p>	<p>What sorts of things do you think it is important for children to own?</p> <p><i>Prompts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic necessities? Personal items? Of what standard? - How about things like phones or computers? - Books - Etc.? <p>How about having your own money? Is it important for children to have their own money?</p> <p><i>Prompts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why so? - What do you spend your own money on? How does it make you feel? <p>What is it that you think families need to have a good life in terms of money and owning things?</p> <p><i>Prompts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Basic Necessities o Own transport, like a family car o Owning home o A television at home o What do families need to do to make sure they have enough? o Etc.? 	<p>The prompts included are quite general and are only intended to trigger further discussion rather than being a definitive list. Like the other questions, this question is intended to be the basis of a conversation that obtains what children prioritise as important to them. In this case specifically regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Things they own or would like to own - Family standard of living

	How about not having enough money? Is this something children worry about?	
2.2.3 Being Listened to	<p>Lots of people talk about listening to what children have to say. We are really interested in whether you feel listened to and when you feel your opinions matter.</p> <p>Can you tell us about a time when you felt your opinion mattered? How about a time when you felt someone was really listening to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How about at home? Do you feel this way at home? o How about at school? o Are there other situations you feel as though you felt listened to? <p>Are there situations where you would want to be listened to more?</p>	<p>Questions 2.4 to 2.6 deal explicitly with underlying concepts central to the domains identified in the <i>Children's Worlds Study</i>, that of 'Being Listened To', 'Participation' and 'Safety'.</p> <p>For both this and the next question, a matrix exercise could be used.</p> <p>On one axis, participants identify what they consider are the features of 'being listened to, or 'being treated fairly' or 'being free'. The other axis could be used to identify contexts in which 'being listened to, or 'being treated fairly' or 'being free' is possible. This then forms a grid, or matrix, which can be populated with ideas or examples.</p>
2.2.4 Agency	<p>We have talked about whether children feel listened to, but we are also interested in when children feel free to do things that they want to do.</p> <p>When do you feel free to do the things you want to do?</p> <p>Can you describe a time or a situation where you have felt free to do what you want to do? Tell us about it.</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How about space for yourself? [see which contexts are prompted by this question – home, school, etc?] <p>Are there situations where you would want more freedom [to be able to do what you want]?</p>	
2.2.5 Safety	What does being safe mean to you?	Picture elicitation can also work for this question (and also for others). Here the participants are asked to

	<p>What is it that makes you feel safe?</p> <p><i>Prompts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there particular people? - Are there certain things that you do? - How about certain times, like times of day or week? - How about certain occasions? - Are there particular places you feel safe (How about places in your neighbourhood or town)? - How about particular things that you own? - How about school? - Do you have any other ideas on what it is that makes you feel safe? 	<p>choose a picture or pictures that they associate with safety. This could be from a range of stock photos of everyday situations or items provided by the researchers.</p> <p>Participants are then asked what is it about these images that they associate with safety and the reasons they chose the picture, leading to further discussion.</p>
<p>2.3.1 Short film exercise – What is it like being a child in [place]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Module 2.3</p> <p>Step 1: Imagine you are a researcher and you wanted to explain to children about what it is like being a child in [place]. You are doing this so children in other parts of the world – children who have never been to [place]- can find out what it is like to be a child in [place].</p> <p>What are the three things that you would want to tell them about being a child in [place]?</p> <p>Step 2: (As a group) Ask each child to explain their choices. Are there similar topics? As a group, discuss which topics they want to explain in more detail to children in other parts of the world.</p> <p>Step 3: So we want to make a film telling children in other parts of the world about these topics that you think are important.</p>	<p>How the film is produced can be determined by the fieldwork team, but one possibility is to replicate the research context or undertake a ‘journalistic interview’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From the topics, workshop some guiding interview questions - Decide which children will be the researcher (s) doing the interview and who will talk about being a child in [place]. One child can also operate a camera (use of phone etc.) in addition to one of the researchers filming the situation on another phone or video camera. - This activity can be enhanced by the use of props, such as a microphone etc.
<p>Concluding question:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Wrap-up Question to be used at end of Stage 2</p> <p>What did you like about our questions? Which questions did you like? Do you have any suggestion?</p> <p>Are there messages you want to send us to keep us on track? These could be instructions to us about how to do the project, or other things about our research that you would like us to hear.</p>	

Appendix F: MRes project fieldwork protocol

Rhea Felton – MRes project Fieldwork Template

MRes Purpose:

To understand the meaning of safety in relation to space and place in children, and how/if this relationship is important for constituting to their own wellbeing.

Concept	Question	Notes
Excerpt from 2.2.5 Safety	<p>Research Protocol IV: Interview Protocol</p> <p>What does being safe mean to you?</p> <p>What is it that makes you feel safe?</p> <p><i>Prompts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there particular people? - Are there certain things that you do? - How about certain times, like times of day or week? - How about certain occasions? - Are there particular places you feel safe (How about places in your neighbourhood or town)? - How about particular things that you own? - How about school? - Do you have any other ideas on what it is that makes you feel safe? 	<p>and Notes Stages 1 and 2</p> <p>Picture elicitation can also work for this question (and also for others). Here the participants are asked to choose a picture or pictures that they associate with safety. This could be from a range of stock photos of everyday situations or items provided by the researchers.</p> <p>Participants are then asked what is it about these images that they associate with safety and the reasons they chose the picture, leading to further discussion.</p>
	<p>Rhea's additional MRes questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there places in the world that are more safe than others? And what makes these places safe? - Tell me about places that make you feel safe, these could be places you visit often, not very often or not at all but are still important in making you feel safe. 	<p>Instruments to be considered for capturing conversation around these prompting questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Place mapping - Sandplay storytelling <p>(full instrument details below)</p>

Field instruments:

1. Place Mapping

Purpose

This participatory tool enables children and young people to share their experiences of places around them. It can also be used to identify protection factors in their local communities, whilst also identifying places which make them feel unsafe to be noted for change which has the potential to be addressed through child led action planning.

Key objectives

- To enable children and young people to identify places and spaces which elicit positive and negative experiences for them.

Time needed

This tool would benefit from engaging children and young people for approximately 45 minutes.

Resources

- Paper, pens, pencils, crayons and other creative art resources

Key Steps

- Provide a large piece of paper, pens, pencils, crayons (and other creative art resources) to children engaged in activity. Ask participants to draw a map of their community/camp highlighting all the important places in their community.
- Ask the children and young people to highlight places where they feel most safe and supported, this could be places they visit often, only sometimes or not at all but are still important to them feeling safe.
- Ask the children to highlight on their map places where they feel most unsafe, this could be places they visit often, only sometimes or not at all but are still seen as places where they feel most unsafe.
- Places identified on the children's map could be places which are physically close to them or far away. Enable discussion with the children for them to identify if they would like places to move in their distance, moving places on their map closer to them or moving them further away.
- Enable group discussion (if appropriate) to see if there are shared/collective thought on practical things which could be done to make places safer for children and if this is important for their wellbeing.

Facilitators notes

- To enable the views and experiences of children and young people of different ages and backgrounds to be heard.
- Where children are, or have been internally displaced (eg. children living in care settings, refugee settings) – you could use the place mapping with body mapping exercise to explore challenges faced by children relating to insecurity in places where they felt unsafe. The two tools combined will enable children to express their feelings about how they felt when they were in these unsafe and what changes they feel in their body.
- With permission from the children, record conversations during the group activity for transcript development.

Alternate activity

- Place activity could be completed with the use of magnetic individual white board where the children can use magnets which symbolise themselves, other people

and places where they can place and move physically to different locations on the whiteboard. The movement and locations of the magnets on the whiteboard can symbolise closeness or distance between themselves and certain things in their lives, where conversations can capture the meaning of their relationship with places/people.

2. Sandplay Storytelling

Purpose

The use of non-verbal techniques can be a powerful enabler for children to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Sandplay activities engages children in non-threatening symbolic play where they have the authority to manipulate figurines in a way that is congruent to their thought process throughout the activity. Probing questions can be used during the activity to capture thoughts of the children whilst playing.

Key objectives

- To enable children and young people to engage in symbolic play which can be complemented by verbal discussion in identifying places and spaces close or far away from them which elicit feelings of safe and unsafe.
- With the permission of children, photos to be taken of the finished sand map. Photos to be provided to children at the next visit for their reference.

Time needed

This tool would benefit from engaging children and young people for approximately 60 minutes.

Resources

- Kinetic sand
- Miniatures + figurines
- 10 x same sized Tupperware containers (minimum 3 inches deep)

Key Steps

- Provide individual container with kinetic sand to children engaged in activity
- Lay miniature figurines in centre of table for children to select variety which most closely symbolises each place they are wanting to identify in their sand map.
- Ask children to select a figurine which most closely symbolises themselves to place somewhere in their tray and place this somewhere in the tray.
- Ask children and young people to create their individual sand map which identifies places symbolised by different figurines where they feel most safe and supported, this could be places they visit often, only sometimes or not at all but are still important to them in feeling safe.
- Ask children to move these figurines close to their self-figurine or furtherer away from self-figurine to identify places which they identify as being important or less important to them. Encourage conversation in this section of the activity to understand why places hold certain closeness to the participant.
- Places identified on the children's map could be places which are geographically close to them or far away. Enable discussion with the children for them to identify if they would like places to move in their distance, moving places on the map closer to them or moving them further away which will refer to the importance of that place for the child.

Facilitators notes

- Sandplay has been noted as a highly engaging child led activity as it shifts children's language from exclusive child-adult interaction to communication through the use of symbols.
- The figurines act as miniature representation of people, places and things that are important in the child's life. The representation may be actual, imagined, idealised or otherwise exaggerated. They should include many different people of different ages, races, professions and genders. There should also be animals, insects, food, buildings, vehicles, tress bridges, furniture, mythological creatures, marbles, shells etc.. The greater the variety that the child has to choose from, the more likely that they will be able to select figures that have symbolic significance to them.
- With permission from the participant, record conversations during the group activity for transcript development.
- With permission from the participant, take a photo of the finished sand tray and print photo to provide to child at the next field visit.

Appendix G: Demographic profile questionnaire

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

1. How old are you?
2. Were you born in [country of research] or a different country?
3. If a different country, which country?
4. Were you parents born in [country of research] or a different country?
5. If a different country, which country or countries?
6. What language do you mainly speak at home? (If you speak more than one language a similar amount, please tell us)
7. What language do you mainly speak with your friends? (If you speak more than one language a similar amount, please tell us)
8. Do you have siblings? If so, how old are they?
9. Do you have any hobbies? If so, what are they?
10. If you have any hobbies, do you do them through a club or organization?
11. Do you have a religion? If so, what is it?
12. Do you have pets? If so, what pets do you have?
13. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?

Thank you!!

Appendix H: Ethics approval

Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia
Office of Research Services

ORS Reference: H11446



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

14 December 2015

Adjunct Professor Janet Mason
School of Social Sciences and Psychology

Dear Janet,

I wish to formally advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has noted the external HREC approval of your research titled: "Children's Worlds: A multi-national qualitative investigation of children's well-being" under the UWS number H11446.

Conditions of Approval

1. Please advise UWS HREC of amendments approved by the Administering HREC.
2. Please advise UWS HREC of any serious or unexpected adverse events reported to the Administering HREC
3. As the Administering HREC has approved the protocol until 26 May 2020 the UWS record will close after that date unless we are advised that the Administering HREC has approved an extension.
4. Please provide a copy of the Final report to UWS HREC.

Please quote the registration number and title as indicated above in the subject line on all future correspondence related to this project. All correspondence should be sent to the email address humanethics@uws.edu.au as this email address is closely monitored.

Regards

Human Ethics Officer on behalf of UWS HREC
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