A Wellbeing approach in social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal

Tainna Souza

Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth

Prof. dr. Jolanta Pivorienė

Mikolas Romeris University

Supervisor

University Institute of Lisbon, May 2023

Abstract

Title: A Wellbeing approach in social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal.

Child poverty is a significant problem with far-reaching consequences, perpetuating cycles of poverty, social inequality and exclusion. The current monetary approach for measuring poverty does not consider important variables such as family structure, gender, age, discrimination, access to basic sanitation, school enrollment and nutrition. Therefore, adopting a focused approach that takes into account the diverse of dimensions of children lives that are essential to their overall wellbeing, is essential to produce effective policies for children in poverty.

This research work investigate the current social policies to tackle child poverty in Portugal and proposes a multidimensional well-being approach to address the various dimensions of child poverty and promote a dignified quality of life.

The objectives of the research were to investigate existing social policies to combat child poverty in Portugal and to determine which dimensions of child poverty they target, to analyze how these policies contribute to children's well-being and to propose a multidimensional well-being approach to increase the effectiveness of social policies in Portugal, using Bradshaw & Richardson's (2009) Child well-being dimensions as theoretical approach. To collect data, a literature review on theories of child poverty and well-being was carried out, together with an analysis of existing data on measures of child poverty in Portugal. Additionally, Problem-centred-interviews were conducted with experts in the field of social security and policy formulation in Portugal.

The results revealed that current social policies in Portugal only partially address the dimensions of child well-being, and there is a heavy reliance on social protection units to individually navigate and meet the diverse needs of children within the social protection system, for which many gaps were found, such as the disparity of access of children to public policies like quality of health-care and education depending on the region they are located, and scarcity of professionals available to follow the cases.

The research highlights the importance of a focused multidimensional well-being approach in social policy making to ensure comprehensive support for children living in poverty and the need to address the various dimensions of child poverty and promote their overall well-being. The results can inform policy development and decision-making processes to create more effective social policies to combat child poverty in Portugal.

Author(s): Tainna Souza

Key words: child poverty; social policies; social work; wellbeing.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

There were more hands involved in the production of this research that I can count. But I want to thank first my dear supervisor, Prof.dr Jolanta Pivorienė that accepted to guide me on this journey and has been so patient and assistive with me since day one. I also want to thank all the involved in the realization of this Erasmus Mundus Programme and all the universities of the consortium that were day by day doing their best to provide their students with the best experience possible, and all the resources for a successful development of the thesis, from the research data bases and softwires provided, to the provision of special sessions destined to help us along the way. And, finally, a special thank you for all my classmates and professors that made this experience be even enriching than I expected. Hope this research can contribute for our profession and be an important beacon for our personal lives.

Introduction

Child poverty is a key factor for the remaining cycle of poverty, social inequalities, and exclusion. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that over one fourth of children in EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (EUROSTAT, 2022). Reports estimate additional 100 millions of children plunged into poverty during the pandemic, around the world (UNICEF, 2022).

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and there are notable factors that increase the risk of poverty and social exclusion. During the pandemic, more than 147 millions of children missed more than half of school classes, and the damage to child education is predicted to take at least eight years to recover (UN, 2022). The soar of unemployment rates, closure of schools, and the disruption in mental health and social services contributed to worsening the global scenario in child poverty.

Social supports and most of the social work action is on taking the children from a risk situation and offering support through the social welfare policies. And due to the urgency of the matter, an important question to raise is: How have the countries been working to deal with the current scenario of child poverty.

How do the current social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal are sufficiently contemplating different dimensions of poverty and wellbeing in children; and How do social policies for children would benefit from a wellbeing approach.

The reality of many countries like Portugal is that most of the social policies are based on tax and benefits transfers. For example, a person that walks into social security offices in Portugal (Social Security service counters, counters of the Citizen's Stores or Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa), can find assistance on several programs aimed to social support such as: Porta 65-Jovem" Programme; scholarship for higher education; Request the widow's pension; prenatal family allowance; and others. What these programs have in common is that they are mostly

financial social support. They are strong allies of a whole-family approach when thinking of child poverty from the material deprivation point of view.

But the current monetary approach for measuring poverty alone isn't enough when it comes to other dimensions of child poverty. The point is that income-based assessment can't consider variables such as the household structure, gender, age, discrimination, access to basic sanitation, school enrollment, access to appropriate nutrition and others.

Poverty is not only material deprivation or lack of access to services and resources, but as well a violation of human dignity (UN, 2004). Therefore, to discover an approach in social policy making that not only focus on enabling children to exert their basic rights, but as well considering the child's wellbeing is a via for helping them to walk out of poverty and achieve a more dignified quality of life.

Therefore, the objectives of the research are:
- To investigate the current approach in social policies for tackling Child Poverty in Portugal and discover which dimensions of child poverty they are targeting to.
- To analyze how do the Social Policies in Portugal fulfill children's wellbeing dimensions.
- To propose a multidimensional wellbeing approach for the policies targeting child poverty in Portugal.

For so, it will be presented a literature review on child poverty and wellbeing theories, an existing data on child poverty measures in Portugal and, finally, an interview with specialists in the field of Portuguese social welfare system and policy making.

The paper will start by presenting the concept of poverty and its different dimensions, as well social policies and EU frameworks that are current in practice for tackling child poverty, a literature review on wellbeing theories, followed by an introduction to the theoretical approach chosen for the research analysis.

1. Problem area

1.1 Poverty definition

At first sight it'd be easy to define poverty as "the lack of money". But as soon one goes deep in literature, there is no uniform definition or accordance in measurement of poverty and its

causes. But defining child poverty is a departing beacon from any social policy formulation or even to assume a measurement indicator.

In 1990, the World Bank defined poverty as the population living on less than a dollar per day. The amount has increased following the inflation rates. Currently, the World Bank uses an international poverty line of people living on less than U$ 1,90 per day (World Bank, 2015).

Another income-based poverty assessment approach comes from the OECD's equivalence scale, that rates the proportion of children living in households with income bellow 50-60% of the national media 1 (OECD, 2021). This scale is also used for the European statistics AROPE (At risk of poverty and social Exclusion), along with material deprivation and social deprivation indicator, that refers to the lack of necessary and desired items for living an adequate life. The items are, for instance: Capacity to face unexpected expenses; Capacity to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish, or vegetarian equivalent every second day; Having internet connection and working intensity; Having regular leisure activities; and others (EROSTAT, 2021a). Another indicator used by AROPE is low work intensity, when, in the household, the number of people at working age worked 20% or less the past year of their working capacity (EUROSTAT, 2021b).

Nevertheless, the poverty concept outgrew the income approach. For instance, some authors refer to poverty from a Human Rights, deprivation, or even subjective poverty perspective, whilst UN works with a concept of multidimensional poverty, considering it as not only material deprivation, but as well deprivation in other areas that concerns an adequate wellbeing.

Bradshaw J. & Finch N. (2003) have done an extensive comparison work on 43 different poverty measures. They observed that different measures used different approaches for assessing poverty, being either from a subjective poverty, income poverty or deprivation perspective.

As before mentioned, they concluded that these different measures identified different groups of poor. One person considered as poor in one dimension was not always considered as so in another. Therefore, they concluded that a cumulative approach was a more effective way of assessing poverty rather than considering one dimension as more important than another. Besides the cumulation of theoretical approach, they also analyzed the cumulation of groups considered by gender, family type, number of children in household, employment status, and social exclusion factors (for which they assumed it was associated with each of the poverty dimension's). For them, "*we cannot rely on a single measure if we are in search of poverty*" (Bradshaw J. & Finch, 2003).

1.2 Multidimensional poverty and Child-poverty

In 1998, the United Nations updated their understanding of poverty as having multidimensional variables that deprives a person from decent living conditions and access to basic rights and needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, leisure or even depriving a person from participating from communities' activities and making them susceptible to be exposed to violence and lack of sanitation or access to clean water.

> *"Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and cloth[e] a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation." ("teaching tolerance - Learning for Justice',UN, 2004)*

In 2005, the UN updated the poverty concept adding the "*the absence or inadequate realization of certain basic freedoms, such as the freedom to avoid hunger, disease, illiteracy, and so on [...]"* (UN, 2005). Recently, they added *"social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision-making*" as another factor for poverty.

There is a great consensus in literature that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, and that income is just one of its dimensions (Chzhen & Ferrone. 2017; Ravallion 2011). However, what it is still, in fact, been discussed is if all its dimensions can be adequately captured by a single index composed of multiple deprivations. Ravallion (2011) argue that we should use a set of credible multiple indices on each dimension of poverty rather than using one single multidimensional index. However, Bradshaw & Finch (2003) found an overlap on using different scales for each dimension and giving more weight to some than others, since, doing so, the people considered poor in one dimension might not be considered poor in another. For them, the results using a cumulative approach were more reliable since, such different results would, inevitably, influence policy responses in different ways depending on which measure is adopted. Therefore,

the use of a more reliable method of assessment of poverty is an urgent matter for an effective policy making.

Child poverty has been hardly differentiated from adult poverty, as it is mostly assessed based on the household's income mean, although children are not always using or receiving the same share of household's resources as the adults since they rather have different needs. Therefore, the necessity of creating a specific assessment measure based on dimensions of the child-wellbeing.

Children are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than adults, and face negative outcomes not only in the present, but as well in the future, being likely to remain in poverty (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; UNICEF, 2021). The current monetary approach for measuring poverty isn't enough when it comes to the child poverty field. The income-based assessment can't consider variables such as the household structure, gender, age, discrimination, access to basic sanitation, school enrollment, access to appropriate nutrition and others.

It is also based on the comprehension that children experience poverty in different ways than adults:

> *"Children experience poverty as an environment that is damaging to their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. Therefore, expanding the definition of child poverty beyond traditional conceptualizations, such as low household income or low levels of consumption, is particularly important. And yet, child poverty is rarely differentiated from poverty in general and its special dimensions are seldom recognized."* (UNICEF, 2021)

Hereafter it will be better explained the wellbeing concept and, finally, the relationship between wellbeing and poverty.

1.3 Wellbeing definition in literature

Many definitions of wellbeing emerged in the philosophic, social, and psychology field. In literature, the description of the structure of wellbeing is commonly found rather than its meaning. We might also find associations to good life, positive psychological wellbeing, subjective

wellbeing, life-satisfaction, flourishing and happiness as synonymous, or as outcome variables of wellbeing (Bradburn,1969; Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961; Ryff, 1989).

The notion of wellbeing has been discussed since the Ancient Greece, first associated with the idea of eudaimonia (Aristotle) and hedonia (Epicurus). Both terms are often translated and used by contemporary researchers as "happiness", or "wellbeing" (Bradburn 1969; Waterman, 2008). Although their ideas are closely related, their meanings differ from each other, and the proper translation and understanding of the terms have been discussed in the literature (Waterman, 2008).

The two concepts emerged the hedonic and eudaemonic traditions in the history of wellbeing: the first one that states wellbeing as happiness, satisfaction with life, low presence of negative affects and high positive affects, and the second that infers the positive psychological functioning to personal development, self-realization, achievement of one's true potential.

Many measures of assessment have been developed to assess wellbeing. The Affect Balance Scale of Bradburn (1969) is a widely used measure, composed of 10 items rating subjective perception of life-satisfaction and general wellbeing, by using positive and negative affects constructs.

Bradburn (1969) defines that, to have a high psychological wellbeing, an individual might have a higher frequency of positive affects than negative affects. And the opposite will determine a low psychological wellbeing. To Bradburn (1969), the balance between positive and negative affections serves as a happiness indicator. However, his scale was largely criticized. Research in 38 countries shows that the model does not fit in any of the nations surveyed (Macinstosh, 1998). Ryff (1989) states that happiness isn't the only indicator for positive psychological functioning and raises questions about the use of eudamonia and hedonia as equivalent terms, as well as their translation to happiness.

Happiness and wellbeing are not synonymous. The documentary Happy (2011) explores different meanings of happiness in different contexts. It endorses the understanding of happiness as a subjective concept, particular to each person, and it comes hand in hand with concepts of self-realization and life satisfaction. Ryff (1989) found in literature common concepts that can be integrated in a few aspects of wellbeing: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. Happiness can be

perceived as one of the ends of wellbeing, yet one can achieve happiness despite the other variables of wellbeing, such as social or physical wellbeing.

In Dodge et al (2012), the authors speak about the challenge of defining wellbeing, and how most of the precedent researchers have focused on the dimensions or description of wellbeing rather than its definition. As for Ryff & Keyes (1995) Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB), other scales developed intended to measure wellbeing from a psychological, subjective standpoint, either from the frequency or ranging of the presence of positive and negative emotions, to cognitive assessments of satisfaction with the Life as a Happiness Measure (Fordyce, 1988), and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1999).

Dodge et al (2012) emphasize that, despite precedents works where the researchers associate quality of life, health, life satisfaction, to wellbeing, these are mere dimensions of wellbeing.

Clinical psychology refers to good life in the view of the fully functioning person (Rogers' 1961). His concept of good life comes close to the current understanding of wellbeing. For him, the good life is a process, not a stage of being, it is a direction, not a destination." While for Maslow (1962) hierarchy of needs suggests another idea of wellbeing, based on a full satisfaction of needs.

In sum, literature raised several versions of wellbeing. Many authors dedicated their work to describe or relate wellbeing to other concepts. Although the definition of the term is still unresolved, the most recent works have consented that wellbeing has multi-dimensions.

Wellbeing is an integration of key factors such as socioeconomic, environmental, physical and mental health. These factors are intrinsically related. For instance, a vulnerable socioeconomic condition is a driver of mental and physical vulnerabilities. Populations more exposed to socioeconomic and environmental unfavorable circumstances are at higher risk of mental disorders (WHO, 2014). Higher school dropout is also observed among children and adolescents in low-income households (Neri, 2009). People with the lowest socio-economic status (SES) are eight times more likely to present schizophrenia than those with the highest socioeconomic status (Holzer et al, 1986).

Unemployment is also a risk factor for poverty and social exclusion, and mental disorders increase the risk of the remaining cycle of poverty, by increasing the chances of unemployment (Robins, L. 1991). Other researches in determinants of health found strong factors associated with

Mental wellbeing. Employment status and satisfaction at work are related to better levels of health and wellbeing. On the other hand, unemployment, and poor labor security (such as the fear of losing the job) increases distress levels, low self-esteem, feeling of humiliation and risk of mental disorders like high anxiety and depression levels and these factors are also heavily associated with suicide rates. (Wilkinson R et al, 2003; Stevens, 2005).

From this literature review on the topic, it was realized that wellbeing is a broad concept of many factors, and each one of them has a whole bunch of variables worth digging into and it is indeed a great field for researching. But one conclusion from the literature about wellbeing, is that it has a close relation with poverty dimentions.

1.4 Child Poverty x Child Wellbeing

Bradshaw J. & Richardson D. (2009) developed a Child-wellbeing index based on the research of common data components in 43 wellbeing indicators in 27 countries. In their index, they considered domains of subjective wellbeing, health, personal relationships, material resources, education, behavior and risks, housing and the environment. Coincidentally, these domains align precisely with before studied domains of poverty, for what they state: *"Child well-being and deprivation represent different sides of the same coin."* (Bradshaw & Richardson, 2007), meaning that child-wellbeing and child poverty are intrinsically related, low child-wellbeing equals higher child poverty (Bradshaw & Richardson, 2009). When they point out "deprivation", they refer to one of the three approaches cited before on Bradshaw & Richadson's (2003) comparison study of poverty measures and for which branches out other domains of poverty such as the one's presented by the UNICEF Multidimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA; Chzhen Y. & Ferrone L. 2016)

The following table is an analysis of common poverty and wellbeing dimensions found in Bradshaw & Finch (2003) and Bradshaw & Richadson's (2009) studies (poverty dimensions + social exclusion factors). Social exclusion factors could be found in every dimension of wellbeing but in different levels. Sometimes with great association in all of three poverty measures but mostly polarized in one or another social exclusion factor. The table analyzes the wellbeing dimensions'

and most scored social exclusion domains in Bradshaw & Finch (2003), and to which poverty measure each wellbeing dimension can be related.

Table 1: Bradshaw & Finch (2003) Poverty and social Exclusion and Bradshaw & Richadson's (2009) Child Wellbeing Dimensions

Bradshaw J. & Richardson D. (2009) Child Wellbeing dimensions	Bradshaw J. & Finch N. (2003) Poverty and Social Exclusion domains					
	Deprivation (Social Perceived poverty)	Subjective Poverty (subjective measure)	Income poverty (households living on less than 60% of median)	Exclusion from Services	Exclusion from Labor Market	Exclusion from Social Relations
1 Health Child health from birth Immunisation Children's health behaviour	▓			▓		
2 Subjective Well-being Well-being at school Self defined health		▓		▓		▓
3 Children's Relationships Quality of family relations Peer relationships		▓				▓
4 Material situation Deprivation Poverty Worklessness	▓		▓		▓	
5 Risk and Safety Violence and violent behaviour Child deaths Risk behaviour	▓			▓		▓
6 Education Achievement Participation/enrolment Youth Inactivity	▓			▓		▓
7 Housing and environment Overcrowding Environment Housing problems	▓			▓		

From this analysis is possible to see how dimensions of poverty are closely related different dimensions of wellbeing. The EU frameworks for the rights of Children also highlight and encourage the work on different areas of wellbeing of children. Therefore, tackling child poverty should not only be the mere provision for families income-deficits, but rather having the understanding of children different necessities and working to provide for their wellbeing as a

whole. The question that remains is: how are social policies for tackling Child Poverty working for the fulfillment of children wellbeing?

This question is the focus of this paper, where we will look into the case of Portugal social security system and analyze how the different social policies for children, in specific the ones directed to child poverty, are succeeding in fulfilling children's wellbeing dimensions. For this study, it was used the concept of multidimensional poverty and multidimensional wellbeing indicators from Bradshaw J. & Richardson D. (2009).

Portugal's welfare system responds to two main levels: the national laws and international regulations for EU member states. Hereafter it will be explained the main legal frameworks on the international level for child welfare in Portugal, and, next, the main laws and policies that regulates child welfare on a national level.

1.5 Frameworks for child welfare's systems in EU

The European Union Member States are responsible for implementing social policies and welfare initiatives employed to disadvantaged families and children for combating child poverty. Social policies come from the financial support such as social transfers, or by the provision of direct services and resources, and promoting targeted intervention programmes.

Bradshaw J. & Richardson D. (2009) found that child-wellbeing and spending with family benefits are positively associated.

There are important frameworks to guide the policy making for children in Europe aimed to ensure children in risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU the access to basic rights and needs such as: early childhood education and care; education (including school-based activities); healthcare; nutrition (at least one healthy meal each school day), effective access to health nutrition and adequate housing.

One of the most important documents is the universally accepted *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), that outlines children' civil, politic, social, economic and cultural rights that should be guaranteed and protected in 41 articles. The article 27 states: "*The child has the right to a standard of living which will allow physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.*" ("Article 27: Standard of living | CRIN - Webarchitects Shared Hosting")

The *EU strategy on the Rights of the Child* encourages six thematic areas as proposed actions for child protection. The first one suggests to introduce children as agents of change. The second key is to ensure every child the right to realize their full potential no matter their social background. The third aims to prevent the children from violence by proposing legislations to combat violence and to build integrated and effective child protection systems and national legislation to end corporal punishment. The fourth point claims the right of children to child-friendly justice, by implementing legislation and trainings to the judicial staff for a more respectable detention and civil mediation. The fifth aims to ensure the children's access to a safe digital environment and harness its opportunities, by implementing audiovisual rules that protects children (proper address of harmful behavior online and remove of illegal content) and developing the children's basic digital skills. Finally, the sixth strategy propose to the member states to commit with the children's rights globally, by fighting against child labour, allocating a percentage of humanitarian aid funding for education in emergencies and protracted crises (European Parliament, 2015).

As part of the EU strategy on the Rights of the Child, the *European Child Guarantee* (2015), provides guidelines and funding to support member states in implementing projects that promotes social inclusion, adequate early childhood education and care, school-based activities (providing adequate equipment for distance learning and school trips, for example), adequate housing, at least one healthy meal at day and facilitating access to healthcare, such as medical examinations and screenings programmes (European Comission, 2021).

The 2013 council recommendation presents three targeted strategies for investing in children: employment and adequate income, access to quality services and children's participation. These strategies are the EU common framework for tackling child poverty and social exclusion. It emphasizes the Member States role to ensure the children access to adequate resources and guarantee the equal opportunities for all children to be able to realize their full potential and prevention of social exclusion (European Comission, 2013).

Finally, the *European Pillar of Social Rights* set 20 key principles and rights essential for the well-functioning of labour markets and social protection systems. All the keys' principles are essential for reducing inequalities, social exclusion and overall poverty, but there are some keys addressing human rights that are also important for the guarantee of children' wellbeing, such as: Education, training and life-long learning; Equal opportunities; Childcare and support to children;

Health care; Long-term care; and Access to essential services *(European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017).*

The European Pillar of Social Rights action plan includes different measures to ensure vulnerable children the access to basic rights and needs. Financial support is the most direct way of impacting the families by social transfers as social benefits and pensions. But indirect expenditures and non-financial policies are essential to achieve the goals for combating child poverty.

Child poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and needs to be addressed as so. To walk children out of poverty financial interventions are not enough (social policies based on tax and benefits transfer). Therefore, non-financial policies and an approach focused on the fulfillment of the children wellbeing is a way of not only tackling short term child poverty but guaranteeing the sustainability of a quality of life.

Next, it will be presented the main national social policies in Portugal for tackling child poverty.

1.6 Social Polices in Portugal for Tackling Child Poverty

Despite having about 20% of the children population (people aged less than 18 years old) at risk of poverty and social exclusion, Portugal is one of the countries with the lowest spending on social policies destined to families with children than the rest of European countries (EUROSTAT, 2022).

The following figure is an extract from the SOCX (Social services expenditures) database, where the blue line represents the OECD countries' mean trend, and the red line represents Portugal's.

Figure 1: Spending on social services, % Portugal x OECD countries.

Spending on social services, % GDP ⓘ
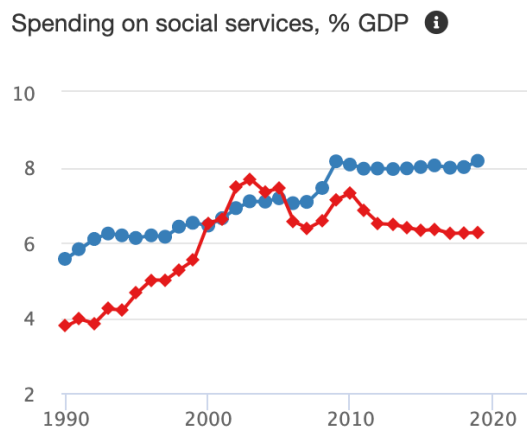
There are three major measures in the Portuguese tax and benefit systems targeting families with children: the benefits transfer RSI (*Rendimento social de inserção*) and the AF (*Abono de família*), and the tax transfer DFD (*Dedução fiscal por dependente*) (ref 7).

The RSI is a benefit aimed to tackle extreme poverty and social exclusion among low-income families by providing them with a minimum income. The amount provided is determined by the difference between the national minimum income and the family's total income, taking into consideration household composition, such as the number of children.

The AF is determined considering five income groups and the child's age. It provides a complement for households with single parents and large families with children aged 12-36 months old, as well as a minimum amount allotted to children in the extreme poverty group.

The DFD is a tax credit from *Imposto sobre o Rendimento das Pessoas Singulares* or just IRS (personal income tax), that reduces tax liabilities based on number and age of dependent children declared.

In addition, the *Complemento Garantia para a infância* (CGI) supplements the AF and DFD to reach the specified minimum amount for each child.

There is also an additional compensation (topped up in the AF amount) for children and youth (until 24 years old) with disabilities or chronic diseases (*Bonificação for deficiência*), and an allowance for helping on expenses related to especial education.

Besides these direct measures, there are polices that favor parents and, therefore, the children' household indirectly. For example, *subsídio parental* is an amount paid to parents during parent leave from their jobs due to birth of a child. The *Abono Família pré-natal* is a cash

assistance to women from the 13th week of pregnancy, for period of 6 moths, for the use on gestational expenses.

Other non-financial measures are integrated in the social child-protection system. The municipal offices of social security, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Deus de Lisboa and The Commission of Child and Youth Protection (CPCJ) are the entities responsible to assist and connect families to the services and, the latter one, to apply measures aimed to child protection, which are mainly four:

- *Center for Family Support and Parenting Counseling* (CAFAP)

Offers family support, parental counseling through specialized interventions for families with children and youth with the objective of enhancing family bonds, and the well development of the children whiting the family.
The specific objectives are:

- Prevent risky and dangerous situations by promoting the exercise of positive parenting.
- Evaluate the risk and protection dynamics of families and the possibilities for change.
- Develop parental, personal and social skills that allow the improvement of the performance of the parental role.
- Empower families by promoting and reinforcing quality relational dynamics and daily routines.
- Enhance the quality of family interactions.
- Mitigate the influence of risk factors on families, preventing situations of separation of children and young people from their natural environment of life.
- Increase family and individual resilience capacity.
- Favoring the reintegration of the child or young person into the family environment
- Reinforce the quality of family relations with the community, as well as identify resources and respective forms of access.

(Republic Diary, 1st series — N. º 64 — 2nd of April of 2013)

- *Street support team for children and youth*

Assistance and support to children and youth at risk and in social exclusion, that receive no family or institutional support, and subsist through deviant behavior with the following objectives:

- To promote their reintegration to the family, school and society,
- To recover them from street situation and promoting a healthy project of life,
- To carry out primary prevention of drug addiction and deviant behavior and connect them to necessary Services to promote social integration.
- To recover them from risk situations and possible drug addictions
- To attend basic needs such as: food, hygiene, health and clothing, as well preventive measures for sexually transmissible infections.
- To promote the connection between the families and community.

- *Foster Care*

It is a measure for the child to be adopted by a foster family, that will provide them with an adequate environment and resources for their healthy development. The program aim is to promote the:

- Conditions for the adequate satisfaction of their physical, psychological, emotional and social needs.
- Establishment of affective, safe and stable bonds.
- Acquisition of skills aimed at their personal, social, educational and professional development.
- Conditions that contribute to the construction of their identity and integration of their life history. (Decree-Law n. º 139/2019, de 16 of September)

- *Host homes*

Are social support institutions that act in situation that requires the removal or withdrawal of the child or young person from a danger situation. There are three residential types of units where the children assisted are placed depending on each case: a unit to respond to emergency

situations; a unit to respond to specific problems and educational and/or therapeutic intervention needs; and a unit to support and promote the autonomy of young people (autonomous apartment).

The objective of this measure is to provide the child with:

- Minimizing the emotional damage resulting from the exposure of the child or young person to dangerous situations
- The acquisition of skills aimed at personal, social, academic and professional development.
- Conditions that contribute to building your identity and integrating your life story
- The progressive acquisition of autonomy with a view to full social, school, professional and community integration.
- Promoting the acquisition and reinforcement of the skills of fathers and mothers and/or people who exercise parental responsibilities so that they can, with quality, exercise them with respect for the best interests of the child or young person.

(Decree-Law No. 164/2019, of October 25)

From the previous chapter, it was analyzed how Portugal frames the international directives on their social welfare system. From all the presented measures, only one is fully regulated by EU regulations, which is the *Complemento para a infancia* (by the European Child Guarantee fund). The social protection system naturally follows EU guidelines for the Right of Children, and some characteristics of Portugal's public health and education system encounter similarities with the *European Pillar of Social Rights (*public health system and free education from childcare until college).

The social policies are presented on the Table 2, chapter 4 of findings, analysed using the Bradshaw & Richardson (2009) Child wellbeing dimensions.

2. Theoretical Framework: Multidimensional Poverty and Wellbeing Theory

Social policy making is a result of a complex dynamic process between politics, international frameworks, the national welfare model, public participation and so on. When it comes to child protection field, depending on the targeted issue, that are many variables that should be considered when analyzing and suggesting measures to deal with the matter, such as children's

rights, EU guidelines and recommendations, social security, childcare, foster care, etc. As this research has chosen the object of child poverty, inside the field of child protection, that are specific lens that should be used in order to investigate the pathology the fairer possible.

While going deeper in literature about the child poverty phenomenon, it was observed the trend about the multidimensional factor of poverty, and the concern on how the global trend in approaching the phenomenon using the economic perspective (income poverty). As before presented, there is a problem when using one dimension of poverty in detriment of others (see chapters 1.1.2 and 1.3), which is that different measures of poverty identify different people. This population, assessed and addressed from one or another measure, can benefit or not of social policies aimed to them. As this research is specifically targeting child poverty, the point is that it is necessary to find an effective measure to assess poverty, that will guarantee that the most number of children in all dimensions of poverty can be contemplated. In other words, there is a need for a standard approach for assessing and tackling child poverty, in both the measurement and application of social policies.

As cited in the literature review, Bradshaw & Finch (2003) studies pointed to the direction of using a multidimensional concept and cumulative approach of measuring poverty. And Bradshaw & Richadson's (2009) pointed for the association of dimensions of wellbeing and poverty, which means that when addressing poverty dimensions, wellbeing dimensions are also being targeted, and vice-versa, for what they said and other studies mentioned in the literature review, are "*different faces of the same coin*".

Therefore, the theoretical approaches of this research to analyze social policies for tackling child poverty are Bradshaw & Finch (2003) multidimensional poverty and Bradshaw & Richadson's (2009) wellbeing dimensions.

In addition, there is also a challenge to the collection of information about the problem researched and the national system for tackling it, and for so it was chosen the *Problem-Centered Interview* (PCI) approach for data collection and analysis (further explained in the chapter of methodology).

In the literature review of this research it was already presented important EU frameworks for social policy making for tackling child poverty, legislation and main instruments used in Portugal to address the matter, along with an overview on the question of interest: How do social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal are targeting different dimensions of poverty and

children's Wellbeing. From the information gathered from documents it is already possible to read some of the characteristics of the Portuguese social policies for children and youth, however, the complexity of the matter requires a deeper research, a gather of more refined information from two extra vias: experts in the field of social policies in Portugal, and practioners in the field of executing the policies. This would allow us to look the problem from different perspectives and, therefore, understand patterns, differences, weight and impacts of the subject in different levels.

The *problem-centered expert interview (PCI)* is a method to obtain the knowledge on the issue research from a high-level source (Witzel, A. & Reiter, H; 2012). Although it presents a structure: a method for interviewing and analyzing data (that will be further explained in the next chapter of methodology), it also is a reliable way of guaranteeing the extract of the most amount of information in a qualitative interview, for the use of a specific *discursive-dialogic method*, when both parties are having a "dialogue", and the interviewer knowledge dialogues with the interviewees perspectives with the objective of obtaining and reconstruct knowledge on a relevant social problem. Witzel (2012) states that PCI is "*an exchange between real people in their own physical, social and cultural context*".

3. Methodology

This research targets two complex themes (social policies x child poverty) in terms of dimensions and levels of impact. While the child poverty phenomenon has different perspectives and approaches, there is also the challenge of identifying and choosing one focus from the different hands involved in each level of the social policy system: from the macro level (politicians, public commissions), mezzo level (communities centers and governmental entities involved on the child protection system), to the micro level (the target person, child, family, community, etc). This research focuses on the macro and mezzo levels, in the seek off finding responses and solutions for the problem addressed in the way the social policies for tackling child poverty are made and delivered to the final target.

Given the research questions of the paper seeks the understanding current social security system and social policies for children (0-17 years old, following the OECD standard for children in child poverty indexes), the legal frameworks and analyze whether they are able to fulfill

different dimensions of wellbeing in children, using Bradshaw & Richardson's (2009) Child Wellbeing framework. The questions requires both document analysis for the understanding of legal regulations in the national and international level, and it was chosen a qualitative method in experts' interviews for understanding the dynamic of these policies and how they address different areas of wellbeing of children in the practice and gathering of further detailed information about the system in Portugal. The other main reason of the choice for a qualitative method in this research is in regard of the second research question: to answer it, it's important to understand the experts' perspectives on the matter, and a qualitative interview gives more freedom to the participant to share.

Still about data collection, here's the details of each technique used:

• Document analysis: It was collected data from national laws and committees on social security and child protection field in Portugal that specifically address social policies for children and youth, namely: *Estratégia Nacional de Combate à Pobreza 2021-2030, Plano de Ação da Garantia para a Infância 2022-2030,* Decree-Law No. 164/2019, of October 25, Decree-Law n. º 139/2019, de 16 of September, Republic Diary, 1st series — N.º 64 — 2nd of April of 2013;

Also, documents from EU international frameworks for child the rights of Child and child poverty, namely: *European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017, European Child Guarantee* (2015), *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989)*.

• Problem- centered expert interviews (PCI): It was conducted interviews with experts on the field of social policies in Portugal, and professionals in the main governmental entities in the field of social protection of children and Youth, using the mentioned PCI approach (which is further explained in the theoretical approach chapter), consisting of systematized questions using discursive-dialogic method. The questions are divided in three parts, being a fist narrative opened-ended question, followed by a second part consisting in four questions of general exploration, seeking descriptive information of social policies system in Portugal and follow-up questions when necessary (based on the PCI's discursive-dialogic method). The last part is composed of four questions of specific exploration, seeking the participant perspectives on the matter of social policies for child poverty in Portugal and how it contemplates dimensions of wellbeing, and follow-up questions when necessary, using, again, PCI guidelines for the interviews.

- Discursive-dialogic techniques used during interviews:

Follow up questions: when the participant introduces a theme of potentially relevant to the research, a follow-up question can be made by the researcher in order to obtain more information on the subject.

Specific exploration strategies:

Mirroring: Is a close ended question used by the researcher to reassure or validate a statement before mentioned by the research participant, in order to avoid ambiguous interpretations of the latter's speech.

Comprehensive questions: Questions used to clarify terms or meanings before mentioned by the participant.

Confrontation: Questioning possibly contradictory statements made by the research participants.

- Sampling: The sampling was chosen using the purposive method and of Bogner and Menz's (2009) conceptualization of experts. For them, the expert interviews are a comprehensive and structured collection method of expert knowledge in the object of study. In this research, the object of study is 'social policies for tackling child poverty'. Therefore, the sample should be of experts who have relevant knowledge of social policies and process of the social security system in Portugal. The experts are divided in the categories of knowledge in the object of study that can be potentially provided by the interviewees.

- Technical knowledge: Persons with a high educational knowledge of social policies and social security systems in Portugal, being so Professors or researchers in the field of social Policies.

- Process Knowledge: Persons with a practical experience, with an institutional position or involved in the action-context of social policies and social security system in Portugal, directed to children and youth, being so agents in key governmental organizations in the field such as: CPCJ (Center of Protection of Children and Youth), and Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa. The organizations were chosen based on the literature review on the social policies system for children and Youth in Portugal, which was addressed in the chapter 1.4.1.

Other requirements for the participants choice were being an expert in the specific country of research (Portugal), being in the field for at least 2 years for processual experts or having a superior education (e.g., master's or superior education) in the field of research for the technical experts.

In sum, the number of participants were 4: Being one professor on the field of Social Policies (technical knowledge), and 3 agents in the processual field of Social Policies with Children and Youth (being 2 from CPCJ units, and 1 from Santa casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa.

- Analysis of data:

The PCI approach requires a thematic analysis using deductive and inductive method for the analysis of data. Therefore, the interviews transcripts were coded in the software MAXQDA using both the themes extracted from literature review and theoretical approach and emerging themes from interviews, as it follows:

Inductive coding: Quotes with mentions to dimensions of Bradshaw & Richadson's (2009) child wellbeing approach; and the social policies strategies for tackling child poverty before found in literature review.

Deductive coding: Quotes with emerging themes not mentioned before in literature review.

The analysis of the findings will consist of identifying dimensions of Bradshaw & Richardson wellbeing approach (mentioned in the table x) in social policies or strategies mentioned by the participants, with the objective of answering the first research question of this paper, which is how do the current social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal are sufficiently contemplating different dimensions of poverty and wellbeing in children.

The second part of the analysis of findings is identifying the themes that emerged during interviews, and comparing experts points of view about the current system of policies, gaps and points of improvement.

3.1 Ethical issues

In this study, all participants received a detailed explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and their rights as participants. Participants were given ample time to consider their involvement in the study and were encouraged to ask questions before signing the informed consent form, that was developed by the ESWOCHY consortium in accordance with the four universities involved. The consent form explicitly states the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The consent of the research participants was obtained before the start of data collection, ensuring that their autonomy and rights were respected.

Research participants were assured that their identities would be kept confidential and that their personal information would be used exclusively for the purposes of this research. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to further protect their identities during data analysis and reporting. In addition, all data collected was securely stored and accessible only to the researcher to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants.

On the other hand, potential benefits of participating in this study included contributing to the understanding of child poverty problems in Portugal and the development of effective social policies to improve children's well-being. By sharing their knowledge and experiences, participants had the opportunity to shape future policy interventions and potentially create positive social change.

3.2   Limitations

The social policy system is a broad and complex system that involves different levels, such as international organizations, politicians and ministries of social security system, commissions and public assemblies, community, and users of the system, etc. It was not possible to get data for all the parties that might be responsible for the policy making and implementation and, therefore, the study is limited to the perspectives of experts and professionals working in the field.

4. Results

This chapter presents the main findings of the expert interviews conducted to investigate the social policies in tackling child poverty in Portugal and their alignment with the dimensions of child well-being. Consult the ANNEX 3 for further consulting all the quotes related to each category that will be presented here after.

4.1 Poverty perspectives: Multidimensional poverty perspective

The interviews revealed a consensus among the participants that children should be seen from a holistic perspective, taking into account their various needs and dimensions. One participant emphasized the importance of considering children as a whole and understanding their needs in multiple domains such as family, health, education, community, and society. This participant stated, "Children, the man, the human being, must be seen from an always holistic perspective, which falls as a whole and often in human sciences" (Participant 2). They also highlighted the interconnectedness of social services and the need for an integrated approach, stating, "Our intervention is not an isolated intervention, it is an integrated intervention, with several services that exist on the network and that is where we effectively see the weight of public policies to cover all those audiences in situations of poverty given vulnerability" (Participant 2).

4.2 Poverty perspectives: Income based poverty.

Income poverty is closely intertwined with child poverty in Portugal. Families with low incomes, often receiving the minimum wage, face challenges in meeting basic needs. The poverty line is often determined by the income of the parents, and children from these families may not have access to essential resources (Participant 4). Although recognizing the need for a multidimensional approach for poverty, in all the interviews, it was also expressed the opinion of the importance of combating family poverty through wage, labor and employment policies, and social protection policies (Participant 1).

4.3 Gaps in the child social policies' system

It was identified by the participants several gaps in child social policies' system in Portugal. One gap mentioned was the difficulty in adapting policies made from top to bottom, and therefore the need for a bottom-up approach in policy-making, allowing for public consultation and input from various stakeholders. Participants expressed the importance of "involving the community and considering their opinions and ideas when formulating policies" (Participant 3). Another gap identified was the lack of focus on health and mental health in social policies. Participants emphasized the increased vulnerability of children and young people in terms of mental health, particularly during the pandemic, and the insufficient response and resources available in this area (Participant 4). Additionally, there were concerns about policies being more reactive than proactive, acting as palliative measures rather than addressing the root causes of poverty (Participant 2).

4.4 Gaps: Stagnation in the educational system

The interviews revealed concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the educational system in Portugal. Participants highlighted gaps in the educational project, particularly in terms of lost quality time and inadequate reforms. They expressed disappointment with the educational policies implemented in the past decade, attributing them to a lack of dialogue with union structures and a failure to address the needs of students effectively (Participant 3).

4.5 Gaps: Differences between regions in Portugal

Disparities between regions in Portugal were identified as another significant gap in the child social protection system. Participants emphasized the differences in access to services and opportunities for children living in metropolitan areas compared to those in rural or less developed regions. The lack of equal access to kindergartens, healthcare, and other rights created a sense of social exclusion and hindered the well-being of children in these areas (Participant 4).

4.6 Policy-making Process

The participants highlighted the significant role of social workers in the production and implementation of public policy in Portugal. Social workers hold strategic positions in key areas such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Children's Guarantee, National Commission of the National System for Early Childhood Intervention, and National Intervention Strategy for people in situations of homelessness. Social workers are involved from the decision-making phase to the implementation phase, ensuring alignment between policy intentions and their actual impact on the ground (Participant 5).

"It really is the technicians in the social area who provide the services. In the community that carries out social action, like us here in Portugal, they carry out every level of social action that supports families that then have their children and young people and the others, the other age groups, another type, another type of population, and therefore, the social workers are the ones who execute and who carry out and monitor the measures, which are the social measures and policies that are implemented, important and have a central role in what it is." (Participant 4)

"And, therefore, there is also a whole phase of work here that must be done with those who are on the front line, on the ground, to ensure an alignment between what was and what deserved public attention as a problem, as a social phenomenon. What was thought and conceived is that what was decided in the context of decision-making and what then actually happens on the ground and everyone has a word to say. We currently have social workers in key places in the production of public policy. We have a social worker who is the national coordinator of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. We have a social worker who is the national coordinator of the Children's Guarantee. We have a social worker who is president of the National Commission of the National System for Early Childhood Intervention. We have a social worker who is the executive manager of the National Intervention Strategy for people in situations of homelessness. And we have a lot of social workers in top positions in the Portuguese public administration. This means that Social Work is strategically placed in the production and implementation of public policy." (Participant 5)

About the policy-making process in Portugal, it was mentioned the involvement of various stakeholders, including policymakers, public services, civil society, and specialists from universities and institutions. Working groups are established to propose legislative changes, address specific issues, and redesign response systems. Also, according to interviewees guidelines from the European Union do influence policy development in Portugal (Participant 5, Participant 1).

4.7 Expert's Perspective on Poverty Policies

Experts highlighted the need for a holistic approach to social policies that goes beyond sectoral boundaries. Social policies need to be connected with economic policy, housing policy, public education policy, and health policy to effectively address social problems. The well-being and happiness of the population should be prioritized over the accumulation of wealth (Participant 5).

"In the same way as long as we have social policies that close in on themselves. We don't have social policies that are effective in responding to problems. Social policy, which is social policy measures, are only effective if they are connected with economic policy, housing policy, public education policy, health policy. That's the only way they can produce. So putting your finger on this wound is important. And this requires a very broad macro effort, which is beyond what the specific job of the social worker is, but which the social worker must not neglect and must not give up his share." (Participant 5)

Also, it was stressed the importance of collaborative and community-based approaches in policy implementation. Programs like the Social Network program, which promotes interconnection and collaborative work among relevant actors in each territory, were seen as key to improving public policy and protecting children from poverty (Participant 5).

"[…] which seems to me to be the most important key to improving public policy for the protection of children, protecting their risk of poverty, and keeping alive the community forces that work to strengthen what is the vivacity that is the agency of each territory. In this sense, it seems to me that programs such as the Social Network program, which basically means that in each territory the actors relevant to social intervention are interconnected with each other, that they are linked

by joint and collaborative work in the identification of common problems, but above all in the construction of common and group work objectives and in the cooperative co-construction of the approach to solving these problems". (Participant 5)

"But then these resources cannot continue to be channeled to the accumulation of capital. They have to be channeled to important reinforcements in social policies that have to be directional, because when the family arrives, things have to be taken as a whole. It's not worth giving families housing if they don't have jobs". (Participant 1)

4.8 Policies for Nutrition

Regarding nutrition, the interviews revealed some strategies in Portugal aim to address the nutritional needs of children living in poverty. Examples mentioned include the provision of free school meals and support programs like the Food Bank.

4.9   Employment Strategies

Participants discussed the importance of employment strategies in combating child poverty. They emphasized the need to address not only the child's well-being but also the parents' employment and skills development. Referrals to employment centers and vocational training courses were mentioned as means to increase parents' education and improve their job prospects. One participant stated, "The father, who was a fourth-year old and who has already taken a professional training course at the Institute of Employment and Professional Training and whose course allowed him to have a double certification, obviously has better personal and professional skills to have a better job" (Participant 2).

4.10   Integration of Multiple Systems

The interviews highlighted the importance of integrating multiple systems to effectively combat child poverty in Portugal. Participants emphasized the need for collaboration among entities responsible for health, education, housing, and social intervention. One participant explained, "Entities with competence in matters of childhood and youth are all entities in the community that have contact with the child... All of these actors must be aware of what children's rights are" (Participant 5).

4.11   Access to Public Facilities

The interviews revealed the significance of ensuring access to public facilities for children living in poverty. Participants mentioned the importance of collaboration with community services, such as Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa and municipalities, to provide comprehensive support. Housing and education were specifically highlighted as essential components. One participant stated, "The Parish Council and food support to the municipality have the program for granting social housing to families in situations of poverty" (Participant 2). Also, access to free childcare and health facilities were mentioned in all the interviews.

4.12   Financial Policies

Financial policies were identified as crucial in addressing child poverty. Participants mentioned social integration income (RSI), family allowances (Abono Familia), and other support measures provided by social security (such as Garantia para a infancia). One participant explained, "We have the benefits, as I mentioned earlier. We currently have the guarantee for children, which is an increase in family allowance for low-income families living in situations of severe poverty" (Participant 5). Another participant stated, "In the case of a child who is in a situation of poverty, Social Security has the allowance, food allowance, school social action allowance" (Participant 2).

4.13 Overall Findings

Overall, it was possible to gain insights into the current social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal and their effectiveness in addressing different dimensions of poverty and child well-being.

The findings of the interviews shed light on the policy-making process in Portugal, the role of social workers, the income poverty perspective, and the expert's perspective on poverty policies.

The findings from the interviews suggest that social policies in Portugal incorporate various dimensions of child poverty and well-being. The policies are able to provide support in areas such as nutrition, education, employment, and health care. Nevertheless, most of the social policies are financial supports to children and families, and the other areas of the children' wellbeing are managed as second priority, or as an approach used by the technicians of the centres of child protection.

They also highlighted the importance of adopting a multidimensional approach to tackle child poverty in Portugal. The findings suggest a need for policy reforms that consider the well-being of children, involve stakeholders in decision-making processes, address gaps in health and mental health services, improve the educational system.

"But the most comprehensive thing is that sometimes there are those who argue that the total abdication of poverty is a utopia. But when these policies are made solely with the macro objective of safeguarding and promoting the full well-being of a child, in this holistic, systemic perspective with a child, an individual is not an isolated being in and of itself. It brings with it a range of problems, a range of skills, a range of needs. So we cannot see a being purely solely from the perspective of an isolated being. By working and applying these policies, we are working on the child as a whole, from a systemic and holistic perspective, with the child at the center of our intervention." (Sic participant 2)

These insights provide a foundation for proposing a multidimensional well-being approach to tackle child poverty in Portugal, aligning with the research objectives and questions.

5. Discussion

The interviews with the experts were made primally in the hope of finding clear information about the set of social policies and measures for tackling child poverty that would only answer the research questions but, besides that, the research returned important findings from the reality of a system that is rather complex.

First, there are very few direct measures targeted to child poverty, and many other indirect measures that are found within the social protection system.

A common affirmation in the participants interviews was that children are poor because the family is poor and, therefore, monetary transfers and employment strategies are key measures for tackling child poverty which reflects a traditional trend of assessing and addressing child poverty through an income approach.

Nevertheless, it was possible to understand how the different measures in the social protection system can actually address child poverty in an indirect way. For instance, the free education until superior studies, affordable health care, free nurseries, early interventions programs, housing strategies, etc. In the analysis with Bradshaw & Richadson's (2009) theory, the conclusion is that the social policies in Portugal for tackling child poverty are only able to fulfil partially the child wellbeing dimensions. Domains such as housing, overcrowding and environment, wellbeing at school, education achievement, social and family relationships are areas that have no mentioned targeted interventions. And domains such as education, health and material situation, although subjects of current social policies interventions, have gaps and weaknesses that call for a reform (refer to table 2 in Annex 3 for a visual comparison of elements of Bradshaw & Richadson's [2009] child wellbeing dimensions and actual policies that target each of its dimensions).

The Table 2 (Annex 3), provides further information about the findings, divided in two groups of themes: the first one responds to the first research question using Bradshaw & Richardson dimensions of wellbeing approached in the social policies for talking child poverty, and the second is the emerging themes that were, primely, the most mentioned social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal, mentions for challenges in the system of policy making, and experts perspectives on policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal.

When it comes to the social protection, Centres of Child and Youth Protection (CPCJ) and Santa Casa da Misericordia de Deus, are entities that work in the executions of measures in child protection and connect people to services working on a holistic and eco-systemic approach, where they can analyse individually the cases and address each need of the various dimensions of the child's wellbeing. Because of this characteristic, these entities that act on a mezzo level, are key agents on the implementation of child poverty actions, not because they have this phenomenon in target, but because they actually intervene in different domains of child protection that, somewhat,

also aim to the meet of needs, wellbeing and best interest of the child. The result of this approach is an indirect impact on child poverty through the social protection system.

Despite that, the participants mentioned some of the challenges in the social policies system, which lead us to other important findings in this research:

The social protection field is mostly composed of palliative measures, aimed to children that are already in a risk situation, not necessarily poverty. That's because the targeted children arrive to the system mostly under the situations when the families walk to the services seeking help for a specific of problem, or when other public entities such as schools or hospitals refer the family to the services, or in a compulsory way when the judicial level decides for the intervention with the child and family. Which means that they arrive to the system already with a problem and the policies available are made for assisting families and children when they are already in a risk situation.

The problem of the lack of specific measures for tackling child poverty is that a phenomenon like child poverty that has many variables such as age, gender, household structures, geographic location, nationality or immigration status, physical and mental health background and others, are assessed and intervened in a general approach and, therefore, are unable to attend children around the country at the same quality of level. For instance, children in rural areas are less likely to have the same level of access to public equipment and social services as children in the urban areas. Some areas of prevention are also left as a second priority to palliative plans, such as health and mental health. Another issue raised is the necessity of more human resources. The number of technicians in the field versus amount of family cases are, currently, unbalanced. On the matter of social policies, the participants raised the need of improvement of financial polices as one of the main strategies to tackle child poverty.

On the points of improvement in social policies for child poverty in Portugal, the experts talked about the necessity of multidisciplinary and multidimensional strategies that are able to undertake an essentially preventive approach on all the children's areas of life.

At last, the participants addressed the importance of the social worker on the creation, implementation, and change of these public policies for children and youth. The main discovery of this research is that social workers are not only key agents in the execution of policies and measures, but also in their formulation. The multidimensional approach used by the agents in the entities of child protection is what, currently, make children in the service able to be assisted in

the dimensions of wellbeing that are not covered by the financial measures. Also, the policy making system in Portugal enable citizens and experts in the field to raise issues, discuss the gaps and needs of the field, and social workers are able to participate in public debates and groups of experts on one subject to help create and improve social policies.

Social workers are then key agents on the social policies for children from top to bottom, from the discussion of policy making, to the actual execution of them and, therefore, are incredibly relevant for the changes in the social policy system, exerting their influence in the suggesting of tools, projects, guidelines, determining priorities and directing resources toward areas where they are most necessary.

6. Conclusions

The research revealed that the social policies for tackling child poverty in Portugal use a relevant income-based system, but also, in the day-to-day practice, the social workers are the key agents to navigate the different dimensions of the child poverty and seek ways of fulfilling their needs and wellbeing within the social protection system, and not necessary with direct social policies for child poverty.

Answering the first research question, it was observed that the current social policies for tackling child poverty address only partially dimensions of child wellbeing. Some dimensions have no target intervention and other are not directly approached, depending on the strategies of the social protection entities to address them individually. The problem on relying in such strategies is that children that arrive to the services are already in a risk situation and the policies available for assisting them are rather palliative measures than preventive ones. Which means that the current measures in the social protection system are not specific to tackle child poverty and then are not adequate to address the problem that needs intervention in different phases. Also, children in different areas of the country, and from different profiles have not the same access to services. Coming back to the second research question on the necessity of a new approach for social policies focusing on the whole wellbeing of children, it was highlighted from the experts' perspectives and from the discovered gaps in the system of social policies the formulation of specific policies aimed to the prevention and combat of child poverty is indeed needed in the Portuguese system of social

policies for children. The need of amplifying the income-based approach to the formulation of policies that address different areas of the child's life aiming at their overall wellbeing, using the before mentioned wellbeing x poverty equation that consists in guaranteeing and promoting children's wellbeing in all its dimensions to prevent and tackle child poverty.

By incorporating the insights from Bradshaw & Richardson's (2009) theoretical framework, policymakers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the domains that require attention and develop policies that address child poverty more effectively. The active involvement of social workers in the policy-making process is crucial for promoting multidisciplinary strategies and ensuring the well-being of children remains at the forefront of social policy development and implementation.

Finally, this research was made departing from a macro to the mezzo level, using perspectives from international guidelines, laws, social protection centres and experts in the field. It is necessary a further investigation that also analyses the other perspective: from bottom to top, listening to the experience and opinion of the users of the social policy system (children and families with children), in order to have a broader understand of the phenomenon of child poverty, and how the social polices actually reflect on the children' lives.

7. References

BANCO de Portugal. (2021). Working Paper Series No. 12/2022: Exploring how social networks affect personal bankruptcy outcomes. Banco de Portugal. Retrieved from https://www.bportugal.pt/sites/default/files/anexos/papers/re202212_eng.pdf Accessed in March, 2023

BANKS, S., Cai, T., Jonge, E., Shears, J., Shum, M., Sobočan, A., . . . Weinberg, M. (2020). Practising ethically during COVID-19: Social work challenges and responses. International Social Work, 63(5), 569–583.

BOGNER, A., & Menz, W. (2009). The theory-generating expert interview: Epistemological interest, forms of knowledge, interaction. In A. Bogner, B. Littig, & W. Menz (Eds.), Interviewing experts (pp. 43–80). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

BRADBURN, N. M. (1969). The structure of psychological well-being. Chicago: Aldine.

BRADSHAW, J., Hoelscher, P., & Richardson, D. (2007). An index of child well-being in the European Union. Social Indicators Research, 80(1), 133-177. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-006-9024-z Accessed in January, 2023

BRADSHAW, J., & Finch, N. (2003). Overlaps in dimensions of poverty. Journal of Social Policy, 32, 513-525. doi:https://doi.org/10.1017/S004727940300713X Accessed in January, 2023

BRADSHAW, J., & Richardson, D. (2009). An index of child well-being in Europe. Child Indicators Research, 2(3), 319–351.

BROOKS-GUNN, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. The future of children, 7(2), 55–71.

CHZHEN, Y., & Ferrone, L. (2017). Multidimensional child deprivation and poverty measurement: Case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Social Indicators Research, 131(3), 999-1014. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1291-8 Accessed in January, 2023

DIÁRIO DA REPÚBLICA ELETRÓNICO. (2019). Decreto-Lei n.º 164/2019, de 25 de outubro. Diário da República Eletrónico. Retrieved from https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/decreto-lei/164-2019-125692191 Accessed in March, 2023

DIÁRIO DA REPÚBLICA ELETRÓNICO. (2019). Decreto-Lei n.º 139/2019, de 16 de setembro. Diário da República Eletrónico. Retrieved from https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/decreto-lei/139-2019-124716448 Accessed in March, 2023

DODGE, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. International Journal of Wellbeing, 2(3), 222-235. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4 Accessed in March, 2023

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (2013). Commission Recommendation of Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage. Official Journal of the European Union, 59/5-59/11.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (2017, December). The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. Retrieved from European Commission: https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/ Accessed in January, 2023

EUROPEAN COMMISSION. (2021, March). EU AND INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS. Retrieved from European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/childrights_annex1_2021_4_digital_0.pdf
Accessed in January, 2023

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. (2015, November). European Parliament resolution of 24
November 2015 on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty
(2014/2237(INI)). Retrieved from European Parliament:
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2015-0401_EN.html Accessed in
April, 2023

EUROCITIES. (2020, December). Fighting child poverty in European cities Lessons from cities
for the EU Child Guarantee. Retrieved from Eurocities: xhttps://eurocities.eu/wp-
content/uploads/2021/01/Eurocities-report-on-fighting-child-poverty-in-European-
cities_Dec-2020.pdf Accessed in April, 2023

EUROSTAT. (2020, October). Living conditions in Europe - poverty and social exclusion.
Retrieved from Eurostat Statistics Explained: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-
explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-
_poverty_and_social_exclusion#Poverty_and_social_exclusion Accessed in January, 2023

EUROSTAT. (2021, November 12). Glossary. Retrieved from Eurostat Statistics Explained:
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-
explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_(AROPE)
Accessed in March, 2023

EUROSTAT. (2022, November). Children (aged less than 18) at risk of poverty or social
exclusion. Retrieved from EUROSTAT: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-
datasets/-/tepsr_lm412 Accessed in November, 2022

FISHER, M. (2019). A theory of public wellbeing. BMC Public Health, 19.

FORDYCE, M. W. (1988). A Review of Research on the Happiness Measures: A Sixty Second
Index of Happiness and Mental Health. *Social Indicators Research*, *20*(4), 355–381.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/27520745

HENLEY, L. J. (2021, July 5). Social Work in the Time of COVID-19: A Case Study from the
Global South. The British Journal of Social Work, Volume 51, pp. 1605–1622.

HOLZER, C. E., Shea, B. M., Swanson, J. W., Leaf, P. J., et al. (1986). The increased risk for
specific psychiatric disorders among persons of low socioeconomic status. American
Journal of Social Psychiatry, 6(4), 259-271.

MACINTOSH, R. (1998). A confirmatory factor analysis of the affect balance scale in 38 nations: A research note. Social Psychology Quarterly, 61(1), 83-91. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2787059

MASLOW, A. H. (1962). Toward a psychology of being. New York: Van Nostrand.

NERI, M. C. (2009). Motivos da Evasão escolar. Retrieved from https://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/dspace/bitstream/handle/10438/21964/Texto-Completo-Motivos-da-Evasao-Escolar.pdf

OECD. (2021). Poverty rate (indicator). OECD Data. Retrieved from https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-rate.htm Accessed in March, 2023

RAVALLION, M. (2011). On multidimensional indices of poverty. The Journal of Economic Inequality, 9(2), 235–248.

ROBINS, L. (1991). An overview of psychiatric disorders in America: The Epidemiologic Catchment Area Study. New York, NY: Free Press.

ROGERS, C. R. (1961). On becoming a person. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

RYFF, C. (1989). Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57(6), 1069-1081.

RYFF, C.D. and C.L.M. Keyes: 1995, 'The structure of psychological well-being revisited', Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 69, pp. 719-727.

SEGURANÇA SOCIAL. (2013). Portaria n.º 139/2013, de 9 de abril. Segurança Social. Retrieved from https://www.seg-social.pt/documents/10152/1197978/Port_139_2013. Accessed in April 2023

SULEMAN, S., Ratnani, Y., Stockley, K., Jetty, R., Smart, K., Bennett, S., . . . Loock, C. (2020, October 6). Supporting children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: A rights-centred approach. Paediatrics & Child Health, pp. Pages 333–336.

UN. (2004). Human Rights and Poverty Reduction. New York and Geneva: OHCR.

UNICEF. (2021, November 12). Child poverty. Retrieved from UNICEF: https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty Accessed in April, 2023

WATSON, D., L.A. Clark and A. Tellegen: 1988, 'Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales', Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 54, pp. 1063-1070.

WATSON, K., Astor, R., Benbenishty, R., Capp, G., & Kelly, M. (2022, January 1). Needs of Children and Families during Spring 2020 COVID-19 School Closures: Findings from a National Survey. Social Work, Volume 67, pp. 17–27.

WILKINSON, R., Marmot, M. (Eds.). (2003). Social determinants of health: The solid facts (2nd ed.). Copenhagen: World Health Organization. Retrieved from http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. (2014). Social determinants of mental health. Geneva, World Health Organization. Retrieved from https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/112828/9789241506809_eng.pdf Accessed in November, 2022

WORLD BANK. (2015, November 2). News. Retrieved from The World Bank: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/04/world-bank-forecasts-global-poverty-to-fall-below-10-for-first-time-major-hurdles-remain-in-goal-to-end-poverty-by-2030

ANNEX 1 – Interview guide

1- Narrative question:

- Could you tell me about Portugal's social protection system for
children and young people, and how do you think current social policies are involved in.
combating child poverty?

2- General exploration

- What would you say are the main social policies for children in Portugal? You
can you give some examples?

- How is the process of drawing up social policies in Portugal, guidelines or
frameworks and who is involved?

- How are social workers involved in implementing these policies?

3- Specific exploration

- How do you think child poverty is perceived in the policy system
in Portugal and how is this reflected in the implementation of these policies? (Ex., what is
the focus or target of social policies to combat child poverty?)

- How would you say that current social policies in Portugal are guaranteeing well-being
of children as a whole (physical, social, mental and economic well-being)?

- In your experience and knowledge, how do you believe that the social policies of
combating child poverty in Portugal can be improved?

ANNEX 2: Table 2

Results x Bradshaw & Richardson (2009) Child Wellbeing dimensions

Categories	Subcategories	Quotes	Specific policies
Health	Child health from birth	And health is also more or less segmented according to age. There is a period that is essentially one of prevention, of follow-up. Mothers have the right to enter at the height, more than just daycare centers and with the children. Therefore, those screening techniques, such as the little foot tests and other tests that prevent and, finally, that allow us to know if the child is not at risk of having certain diseases in the future, since vaccination, then skin monitoring, pediatrics and the areas of pediatric care are often not the same as the care for older young people, who have received care more similar to adult care.' (Participant 1)	Free or afordable health care, and early childhood intervention programs
	Immunisation		
	Children's health behaviour	no mention	
Subjective Well-being	Well-being at school	No mention	

	Self defined health	This is precisely because they are a very relative concept of quality. And quality is how well-being is subjective. Now, the tendency is to say the quality of what people consider has quality. Yes, these people. How is the quality of social equipment evaluated today? Ask if people like it, if they like the social network, if they will have quality. If they do, it has quality even after the diet is with rotten food. But if people like it, that's fine. (Participant 1)	DNA (does not apply)
Children's Relationships	Quality of family relations	For example, Santa Casa has family support teams that effectively work on parenting skills, which channel families to the needs of needs to have income support and social income from the session, for example. In the community there must be these services at the reception center. We also have a team that evaluates parents in order to understand what parenting skills exist so that the child has access to the parents, so that the affective and relational bonds that exist between the child and the parents and vice versa are not severed (Participant 2)	
	Peer relationships	Which means that some families that before do not have the resources to be able to have the children in a socialization space, a space in the	Access to free childcare and kindergaden

community that today they are able to do
. (Participant 3)

Material situation	Deprivation	Then, books, school supplies, school food are given free of charge to these families that have no income. (Participant 2)	Distribuition of materials free of charge for children in low income household
	Poverty	We have Social Integration Income, we have the support measures and the income supplemen (Participant 5)	Finantial benefits like RSI (Social integration income), Abono Familia and Complemento Garantia para a infância (child allowance)
	Worklessness	The Professional Employment Institute had a program to increase education and convert these professional practices to equivalent, often to double certification (Participant 2)	The Professional Employment intitute and organizations like Santa Casa da misericórdia de Deus offer professional training and help to connect people to the labor market

| Risk and Safety | Violence and violent behaviour | Some time ago, we had an enlarged Commission in our Committee, which consists of several partners: health, the Police, the Parish Council, who were taking action that is the prevention of the same, of mistreatment. And so it is with the police that we encourage actions, for example, in schools, about the most disruptive behaviors that some young people were starting to have, behaviors of aggression or in pairs, behaviors of some acts of aggression in the community, breaking glass, throwing rocks at the vans, damaging the gardens, therefore, all the least appropriate behaviors we were able to do with the police. Awareness-raising actions for behavior change (Participant 2)/

At the level of the Criminal Code. We didn't work with the Criminal Code here, we worked with the Law for the Promotion and Protection of Children and Youth. (Participant 2) | DNA |
| | Child deaths | no mention | |

	Risk behaviour	With the police, we also had an alcohol and drug prevention program. We normally did it together with the police. A trip, for example, to Bairro Alto. There have been situations where, if memory serves me correctly. It was every three months. Then the police were next to those neighborhoods where there were young people, most of the time having fun, but also consuming worrying amounts of alcohol, some already with other types of consumption. And our role as police was to first identify young people under 18 years of age, after identifying them, contacting parents, opening a promotion and protection process here that was nothing more than an alert process. (Participant 2)	The street support team works for identifying and assisting children and youth in risk situations, and it's a official strategie inside the plan for Childhood Guarantee.
Education	Achievement	no mention	
	Participation/ enrolment	Certain educational structures are very important, such as now, for example, free daycare centers, which are very important from the point of view of the future of children and their possibility of having Preschool Education. (Participant 1) / Scholarships, for example, are only available after three new levels of study, namely higher education, because up to secondary education and secondary education, all education is free. (Participant 1)	Education is free and compulsory until college age. There are also college scholarships programs for youth.

	Youth Inactivity	And for these young people, that is the only group of the Portuguese population for which there is no social protection measure. None zero. And the only unprotected group are young people from the one between the end of their studies and then the period in which productivity begins. Typically, in our current society, in which they begin to have an actual situation defined in Social Security, until then they do not have before that the policies to support the family and the fight against poverty in general, a guaranteed minimum income, a solidarity component for the elderly, employment policies and active job search. (Participant 1)	DNA
Housing and environment	Overcrowding	On the other hand. It is true that poor families have, on average, more children than families that are not poor and we do not even know when the problem will begin. If families have more children because they are poor and people have less competence to deal with things such as, for example, the control of their descendants, or if families are poor precisely because they wanted to have more children, then they made a choice instead of having fewer children, they had more but found themselves in a situation of poverty. (Participant 1)	DNA
	Environment	no mention	DNA

| | Housing problems | The Parish Council and food support to the municipality, namely the Lisbon City Council, have the Program for granting social housing to families in situations of poverty. They are normally called the houses of the Chamber in common parlance (Participant 2) | Social residency program for families in situations of poverty |

Categories	Subcategories	Quotes
Gaps in child social policies system for child poverty	**Lack of human resources**	There are not enough technicians to meet the needs of the services. That's where we see that the ratio between technicians is the procedural number. The procedural volume is not coincidental because even in terms of commission, for example, we have a technician for how many cases, right? And what do they weigh on the scale? He's a technician for 80 processes. I won't be able to because it's humanly impossible for me to reach every family. (Participant 2)

Lack of projects on Health and Mental Health	But basically there are some areas, namely the area of health and mental health, which is still undiscovered and therefore there are not sufficient answers to the necessary search. And therefore, we also fell into a pandemic situation in which the issue intensified the issue of mental health in children and young people. It worsened with the parents, but it also worsened that for children and young people, due to the fact that they were closed for a long time, because they were in families that grew up in the context of the pandemic, while being at home, the number of domestic violence also increased of family conflict and therefore, these young people. In these cases they were exposed to a high level of stress and toxic stress , it also had an impact on their mental health. And we are currently witnessing many situations in which we have young people who are on the brink of life when it comes to the issue of suicide, self-allusive behavior, and being on that limit, it is very linked here to the need for intervention in the area of mental health, in which we have no answer. In Portugal, there is little response in the area of mental health to the demand that we currently have and, therefore, it is an area that needs to be worked on. (Participant 4)
Policies as paliatives strategies rather than preventive	There are public policies. How can these policies reach these families? Yes, they arrive, especially when there is a problem. And it is often difficult to disassociate one of several problems, because families sometimes bring a multitude of problems. A Multiplicity, as I often say. And it's in this multiplicity where public policies make themselves felt. (Participant 2)

Non finantial strategies for tackling child poverty are mostly integrated in the social protection system/ rather than a targeted measure	Basically, we are talking about two circles that have the space of intersection and, in fact, we know that there is a share of children and young people at risk who are children and young people who are in a situation of poverty. But one thing cannot be confused with another and we should not consider that all poor families are families that place their children in poverty. (Participant 5) / We talk about Social Security in the context of combating poverty, because we also have to see, for example, reinforcing that income device (participant 3)
Differences between regions in Portugal	And, in addition to that, there are asymmetries in the country that are very large in Lisbon. Being a child in Lisbon, Porto, Setúbal, is different from being a child in Portalegre or Lousã or anywhere else, with a childhood dimension. (Participant 3)/ Processing health in the north, that is, in the interior, is not the same. If not the same access to health on the coast. Access to a set of other rights is also not the same. What is the same does not fit inside. This creates, in fact, different forms of approach and different forms of intervention and different ways of thinking about the territory that is often not well thought out from this perspective. When a social policy is made, it is for everyone. But this social policy must have principles of equity, whether horizontal or vertical, it must have principles of effectiveness. (Participant. 3)/ Because around here, nuances. In other words, we are talking about a fringe, for example, in the Greater Lisbon area we already have free kindergartens, public private kindergartens, in this case that can access part of the free part and therefore there is a greater offer for families in

rural areas, where there are no private kindergartens, there is no possibility for families to access and therefore there is no answer from social policies (Participant 4)

Categories	Subcategories	Quotes
Multidimensional approach	**Work with the child in its various systems**	When we talk about children and young people, we, as CPCJ, have this audience as the center of our intervention, that is, the child at the center in its various dimensions, that is, the needs that this child has when it comes to a committee for the protection of children and young people. And when we talk about needs, they are needs of various kinds. Therefore, I often say in my experience of the field that children, the man, the human being, must be seen from an always holistic perspective, which falls as a whole and often in human sciences. We also use the term systemic child at the center, in their various needs system, family, system, health, system, education, system, system, community, neighborhood network, system, society. It's a whole and it's a system in constant interaction. (Participant 2)/ any of them come from very complicated situations, such as precariousness, where children are held in arms without immediate protection, in situations of school absenteeism and school failure, which goes through various contexts, many favorable factors. (Participant 3)
	Work in multiple disciplines	which seems to me to be the most important key to improving public policy for the protection of children, protecting their risk of poverty, and keeping alive the community forces that work to strengthen what is the vivacity that is the agency of each territory. In this sense, it seems to me that programs such as the Social Network program, which basically means that in each territory the actors relevant to social intervention are interconnected with each other, that they are linked by joint and collaborative work in the identification of common problems, but above all in the construction of common and group work objectives and in the

cooperative co-construction of the approach to solving these problem (participant 5)/

Social policy should connect various dimensions of wellbeing	In the same way as long as we have social policies that close in on themselves. We don't have social policies that are effective in responding to problems. Social policy, which is social policy measures, are only effective if they are connected with economic policy, housing policy, public education policy, health policy. (participant 5)

ANNEX 3 – Results: Quotes extracted from the interviews by categories

Policy making process

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal > Family support teams
Quotes:

For example, Santa Casa has family support teams that effectively work on parenting skills, which channel families to the needs of needs to have income support and social income from the session, for example. In the community there must be these services at the reception center. We also have a team that evaluates parents in order to understand what parenting skills exist so that the child has access to the parents, so that the affective and relational bonds that exist between the child and the parents and vice versa are not severed. Participant 2: 27 - 27 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal: Nutrition
Quotes:

school food are given free of charge to these families that have no income. Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0) the Santo António Parish Council and the Parish Council has a series of support programs for families in need, namely the Food Bank, which is a service that provides dietary support Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal: employment strategies
Quotes:

Then we work on the child to overcome school absenteeism, but we also refer the mother, for example, to the employment center, in order for her to enroll. At the Employment Center, take a vocational training course to increase your education. Or else the Employment Center itself ended up making referrals for the active search for it as well. The Employment Center does that. Articulate with the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, which will work on the mother's skills. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0)

at the Employment Center, there were policies aimed at the public to create their own jobs for families in situations of need. Participant 2: 17 - 17 (0)

The Professional Employment Institute had a program to increase education and convert these professional practices to equivalent, often to double certification. But the workers, the workers, attended targeted training courses in the area and were left with an increase in education. This is also a good example of a policy to combat poverty, because there was obviously a ninth-grader father who is not going to compete with his father with higher education in the search for a specialized job, for example. But the father, who was a fourth year old and who has already taken a professional training course at the Institute of Employment and Professional Training and whose course allowed him to have a double certification, obviously already has better personal and professional skills to have a better job Participant 2: 35 - 35 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal : integration of multiple systems
Quotes:

How are public policy in Portugal and the services that implement it sufficiently or insufficiently aimed at combating child poverty, which is measured by the capacity to guarantee the access of children and young people to basic social integration systems? So health, education, housing, something to well-being and a healthy diet to a healthy lifestyle. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

It is important to say that it is a system based on a logic of multidisciplinarity, intersectoriality and a logic of the primacy of what is the natural environment of life of children. This means that the system is designed in a pyramid in which, at the base of the pyramid, at the bottom, are all the entities with competence in matters of childhood and youth. And the second level of the pyramid is the level of the Child and Youth Protection Commissions. And the third level of the pyramid is the level of the courts and the judicial approach, the protection of children, the pyramid base, which is the place where most of the intervention should take place. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

Entities with competence in matters of childhood and youth are all entities in the community that have contact with the child. First of all, the health system, the housing, the social intervention system. All teams work with children, families in the community, but they are also the living forces of each social fabric. Therefore, community organizations, sports clubs, security forces and, therefore, all of these actors are actors who must be aware and aware of what children's rights are, of what it is the duty to protect children under any circumstances, and of the primacy of the best interests of the child. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

In our intervention, when creating an intervention plan with the child and the family, we also build bridges with the community, namely with the formal community, that is, with the services that exist in the community, namely the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, with the municipalities, the Chamber, the Parish Council, with the Hospital, with the Health, with the health centers. So, our intervention is not an isolated intervention, it is an integrated intervention, with several services that exist on the network and that is where we effectively see the weight of public policies to cover all those audiences in situations of poverty given vulnerability. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0) So there must be a bridge here, an articulation of all services, in order to understand the needs of this child integrated into this family. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal: acess to public equipments
Quotes:

In our intervention, when creating an intervention plan with the child and the family, we also build bridges with the community, namely with the formal community, that is, with the services that exist in the community, namely the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, with the municipalities, the Chamber, the Parish Council, with the Hospital, with the Health, with the health centers. So, our intervention is not an isolated intervention, it is an integrated intervention, with several services that exist on the network and that is where we effectively see the weight of public policies to cover all those audiences in situations of poverty given vulnerability. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal: acess to public equipments > housing
Quotes:

The Parish Council and food support to the municipality, namely the Lisbon City Council, have the Program for granting social housing to families in situations of poverty. They are normally called the houses of the Chamber in common parlance, but it is not the program that the City Council has to create housing for people who cannot afford to purchase real estate in the book market. Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal: acess to public equipments > Education
Quotes:

Then, books, school supplies, school food are given free of charge to these families that have no income. Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0)

But now we also have the free day care centers too, which they are, that they support. Although it is not universal, it is not universal in the sense that it is not for all children and only children who were born in free daycare starting in 2021 have 2020. Participant 4: 9 - 9 (0)

But it is a policy that, in this case, protects and promotes and that access to education or equipment to make the greatest number of children is what will reduce the level of poverty, and the more it is not also in terms of social exclusion. Because these children are included in childhood equipment. Participant 4: 9 - 9 (0)

All of us currently have education, which is practically free until college. In addition, we have been teaching for a year, which are daycare centers and kindergartens and everything else that practically reach a very large free grade level, which means that some families that before did not have the resources to be able to have the children in a socialization space, a space in the community that today they are able to do. Participant 3: 8 - 8 (0)

Free daycare, Participant 3: 8 - 8 (0)

But we also have the equipment that is in the area of social security, day care centers, kindergartens. Participant 1: 5 - 5 (0)

Scholarships, for example, are only available after three new levels of study, namely higher education, because up to secondary education and secondary education, all education is free. Participant 1: 7 - 7 (0)

Certain educational structures are very important, such as now, for example, free daycare centers, which are very important from the point of view of the future of children and their possibility of having Preschool Education Participant 1: 19 - 19 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal: Financial policies
Quotes:

Then there are policies to combat poverty, which are generic. We have Social Integration Income, we have the support measures and the income supplement, such as the Solidarity Supplement for the Elderly. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

And we have the benefits, as I mentioned earlier. We currently have the guarantee for children, which is a surveillance measure that comes from the European Commission, to which has been added a benefit that is precisely called the guarantee for children and which, in the end, is an increase in family allowance for low-income families living in situations of severe poverty. That means that families. That they are in a situation of poverty. The family allowance they receive for each child increases to a maximum limit of 100€ per child upon proof of this situation. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

I will give the example of Social Insertion Income. I don't know if you've ever heard of it in Brazil. Sorry. Here, the parallels in Brazil are similar to Bolsa Família, Bolsa Família and this is not the case in the State. Provide certain financial or monetary support to meet the needs of families that are at or below the poverty line. In Portugal, there is also the Social Integration Income, which is for those families that do not have sufficient income to meet the needs of daily life. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0) In the case of a child who is in a situation of poverty, Social Security has the allowance, food allowance, school social action allowance Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0)

This means that the family is in a situation of lack of income or extreme poverty and therefore has the right to benefit from social action allowance for school Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0)

Social Integration Income, on the other hand, is a policy that I could say of financial attribution, of the pecuniary amount that the family is entitled to on a monthly basis. Participant 2: 13 - 13 (0)

In terms of social policies, it could be family allowance. Participant 4: 9 - 9 (0)

Then there is social security, transfers, we have family allowances, in short Participant 1: 5 - 5 (0) because when it comes to income, there are basically social protection areas. Participant 1: 5 - 5 (0) Take, for example, the family year. A family depends on a family; it depends essentially on the economic status of the family. We also have the levels that pay families differently depending on their economic status, both the issue of their possessions. Participant 1: 7 - 7 (0)

The overwhelming majority of children have the social condition that their families have and, therefore, policies to combat poverty are policies to combat poverty for families, including children. And when we say that we use the concept of child poverty, we are actually talking about families that have children and that are poor. Participant 1: 9 - 9 (0)

Policies to support the family and the fight against poverty in general, a guaranteed minimum income, a solidarity component for the elderly, employment policies and active job search. Participant 1: 19 - 19 (0)

There are pensions, both other measures aimed specifically at poverty, such as Social Integration Income, solidarity supplement for the elderly, and then other measures such as those that are socially sensitive, such as family allowances and others that depend on the family income brack. Participant 1: 68 - 68 (0)

Policies to reduce child poverty in portugal > Financial policies > Fund of communitie's projects

We are talking about a specific community project. We are talking, for example, about the Escolhas project. It is a project that is being promoted or the sponsoring entity and the CM, which is the High Commissioner for Migration and that has, that receives, that has a fund. Participant 4: 15 - 15 (0)

For entities that are in the community, social organizations can apply for funding to be able to develop projects in the area of childhood and youth, on the streets, in their institutions, in their communities, and this, as it is, projects and applications won those that are enrolled based on the criteria of this application. It is one of the application criteria. It means being located in municipalities with a bank with an index with a high rate of social exclusion in the area of childhood and youth and, therefore, it may be that one of the one of the criteria that they end up supporting as well, that is, this community project also ends up supporting the community because it does not have any type of cost. Participant 4: 15 - 15 (0)

Poverty perspectives: Multidimensional poverty perspective

Quotes:

When we talk about children and young people, we, as CPCJ, have this audience as the center of our intervention, that is, the child at the center in its various dimensions, that is, the needs that this child has when it comes to a committee for the protection of children and young people. And when we talk about needs, they are needs of various kinds. Therefore, I often say in my experience of the field that children, the man, the human being, must be seen from an always holistic perspective, which falls as a whole and often in human sciences. We also use the term systemic child at the center, in their various needs system, family, system, health, system, education, system, system, community, neighborhood network, system, society. It's a whole and it's a system in constant interaction. Participant 2: 3 - 3 (0)

In our intervention, when creating an intervention plan with the child and the family, we also build bridges with the community, namely with the formal community, that is, with the services that exist in the community, namely the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, with the municipalities, the Chamber, the Parish Council, with the Hospital, with the Health, with the health centers. So, our intervention is not an isolated intervention, it is an integrated intervention, with several services that exist on the network and that is where we effectively see the weight of public policies to cover all those audiences in situations of poverty given vulnerability. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0)

I think that policies aimed at children are not watertight, static policies. Furthermore, they are multidirectional policies Participant 2: 29 - 29 (0)

 I think that policies alone, when they are, when they suffer, which are defined and executed, have, as I have been repeating, must meet the needs of children with the objective of safeguarding the well-being of the children. Participant 2: 31 - 31 (0)

But the most comprehensive thing is that sometimes there are those who argue that the total abdication of poverty is a utopia. But when these policies are made solely with the macro objective of safeguarding and promoting the full well-being of a child, in this holistic, systemic perspective with a child, an individual is not an isolated being in and of itself. It brings with it a range of problems, a range of skills, a range of needs. So we cannot see a being purely solely from the perspective of an isolated being. By working and applying these policies, we are working on the child as a whole, from a systemic and holistic perspective, with the child at the center of our intervention. Participant 2: 31 – 31 (0)

The child with their psycho-emotional need, with their need for subsistence in terms of providing parental care for them, of the purchase of food to which the child has the right of the right to grow up in a healthy container environment, in a living space, the right to school, the right to have a health vaccination plan appropriate to their age and needs Participant 2: 31 – 31 (0)

Child poverty is multidimensional, in other words, basically, we are now witnessing, here in Portugal and also in Europe, a new increase in vulnerability in the sense that people work but are unable to pay their expenses and, therefore, with the new configurations of families, single-parent families, families that basically intend to live alone, end up not being able to pay and meet the expenses, even though they are middle class and, therefore, single-parent families, in which there is a child who has one or two children in the household, Then they are also exposed to a type of poverty, because currently, as ordered, parents who work with a friend cannot afford the housing expenses, the food expenses, all the education expenses that are necessary and, therefore, are a fraud and will always be the most vulnerable age groups, that is, the children will always be, because they are under the purview of their parents. Participant 4: 23 – 23 (0)

It's not about the income earned by your parents, it's about your parents' ability to meet expenses and needs. Participant 4: 23 - 23 (0)

Social policies in Portugal exist and there is now a new strategy in the National Strategy for the promotion of the rights of children and young people. And there is also now this strategy to guarantee childhood that ends up trying to safeguard a part of it, doesn't it? Participant 4: 25 - 25 (0)

Many of them come from very complicated situations, such as precariousness, where children are held in arms without immediate protection, in situations of school absenteeism and school failure, which goes through various contexts, many favorable factors. Participant 3: 24 - 24 (0)

If we have a policy that if we owe policies that allow the family to have space to be with the children, that have income that allows them to have that space, that security, there was also an educational project that responds to the needs of the children and of society itself. Participant 3: 26 - 26 (0)

I think that policies could improve that feeling if there were an educational project that accompanies this child from beginning to end and that would help them to endure with this great one Participant 3: 26 - 26 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: need of a change on policy making for bottom to top
 Quotes:

I would say that I would say that the formalization of policies in Portugal takes place in various ways, but it may be possible for ministries that today are already doing interesting things with some of the policies, some of the measures to have public consultation. Participant 3: 10 - 10 (0)

In some way, people can also make them give their opinion, their idea. Participant 3: 10 - 10 (0)

 I would say that when formalized policies or conditions are made or are developed from the bottom up, they normally, by norm, happen. The way in which schools take place from top to bottom, which most of the time I would say that we don't always measure. Participant 3: 10 - 10 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: Lack of projects on Health and Mental Health

 Quotes:

But basically there are some areas, namely the area of health and mental health, which is still undiscovered and therefore there are not sufficient answers to the necessary search. And therefore, we also fell into a pandemic situation in which the issue intensified the issue of mental health in children and young people. It worsened with the parents, but it also worsened that for children and young people, due to the fact that they were closed for a long time, because they were in families that grew up in the context of the pandemic, while being at home, the number of domestic violence also increased Participant 4: 25 - 25 (0)

And we are currently witnessing many situations in which we have young people who are on the brink of life when it comes to the issue of suicide, self-allusive behavior, and being on that limit, it is very linked here to the need for intervention in the area of mental health, in which we have no answer. In Portugal, there is little response in the area of mental health to the demand that we currently have and, therefore, it is an area that needs to be worked on. Participant 4: 25 - 25 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: policies as paliatives strategies
 Quotes:

There are public policies. How can these policies reach these families? Yes, they arrive, especially when there is a problem. And it is often difficult to disassociate one of several problems, because families sometimes bring a multitude of problems. A Multiplicity, as I often say. And it's in this multiplicity. Where public policies make themselves felt. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: strategies for child poverty are in social protection system
Quotes:

Another thing is the system for the promotion and protection of children and young people that seeks to promote children's rights and protect them from risk and danger. And we cannot confuse the risk and danger that children and young people may be subject to with the issues of poverty and deprivation, in which families often find themselves Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

Basically, we are talking about two circles that have the space of intersection and, in fact, we know that there is a share of children and young people at risk who are children and young people who are in a situation of poverty. But one thing cannot be confused with another and we should not consider that all poor families are families that place their children in poverty. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

So to say the protection and protection system is made like a pyramid, that is, we have at the base of the pyramid the entities with competence in matters of childhood and youth, in the end, with what we call first-rate entities. And those first-line entities are schools, hospitals, health hospitals, some health entities and PMs, which are social organizations that provide care to children and young people and families. Participant 4: 7 - 7 (0)

We talk about Social Security in the context of combating poverty, because we also have to see, for example, reinforcing that income device. Participant 3: 3 - 3 (0)
but considering what poverty did in the study, to say the law on the promotion of protection also effectively gained strength over the years, which is not exactly support, but it is an idea of child protection and protection that any child who is at risk Participant 3: 8 - 8 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: stagnation in the educational system
  Quotes:

But then, the educational project itself still has many gaps and lost quality time, from elementary school to the 12th year of compulsory schooling. Therefore, the policy to combat poverty also focuses on health, national law, the right to education, and I think that from elementary school, from the first year of school to the 12th, I have not lost the quality of education itself. Many reforms were poorly done, the result of a set of factors. It has indeed been, but I would say that the last ten years have been a disaster from an educational point of view. It is also the result of a lot of ineptitude on the part of governments, a lot of the incapacity for dialogue with the union structures. Participant 3: 8 - 8 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: differences between regions in Portugal
Quotes:

Because around here, nuances. In other words, we are talking about a fringe, for example, in the Greater Lisbon area we already have free kindergartens, public private kindergartens, in this case that can access part of the free part and therefore there is a greater offer for families in rural areas, where there are no private kindergartens, there is no possibility for families to access and therefore there is no answer from PS. Participant 4: 27 - 27 (0)
we are creating, creating a social exclusion of children who are outside the large metropolitan areas Participant 4: 27 - 27 (0)

And, in addition to that, there are asymmetries in the country that are very large in Lisbon. Being a child in Lisbon, Porto, Setúbal, is different from being a child in Portalegre or Lousã or anywhere else, with a childhood dimension. Participant 3: 3 - 3 (0)
Processing health in the north, that is, in the interior, is not the same. If not the same access to health on the coast. Access to a set of other rights is also not the same. What is the same does not fit inside. This then creates a country at various speeds. We have a country at various speeds, where poverty up there, in the north, in child poverty, in the municipalities of the North, is not the same as child poverty in Lisbon. Participant 3: 3 - 3 (0)
This creates, in fact, different forms of approach and different forms of intervention and different ways of thinking about the territory that is often not well thought out from this perspective. When a social policy is made, it is for everyone. But this social policy must have principles of equity, whether horizontal or vertical, it must have principles of effectiveness. Participant 3: 3 - 3 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: system's not interconnected
Quotes:

From the Social Security point of view, there are things of measures, as I said that they are the transfer of income, namely family work, support for the family of several, in various ways, but normally they are transfers of money. As far as they come from a children's policy, so to speak, from thread to wick, there is a set of strategies, many of which are not aligned with each other. The services themselves do not work interconnected, that is, they do not work as we do. Participant 3: 3 - 3 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: Judicial system for social issues
 Quotes:

Then, directed towards our work, we worked with the Law for the Promotion and Protection of Children and Youth. It wasn't us Protection Commission that made those laws. These laws exist in the legal sphere. It was the legislator that did them. And, therefore, in terms of legal, promotion and protection measures, we have several measures that, if it were at the level of the Criminal Code, we are not talking here about criminal practices, but we are talking about children who are, who have a problem and who are in danger Participant 2: 25 - 25 (0)
Then the legislator constructed the policy in such a way that we, the executors, put this policy into practice and defined measures. These are called measures for the promotion and protection of children's rights Participant 2: 25 - 25 (0)
  The focus cannot be on justice. The focus must be on social conditions and, therefore, this system is a practice that exists, which is not one of financial transfer, of protection. Participant 1: 29 - 29 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system > Gaps: Family or child is not assisted unless there's a problem
 Quotes:

But other classes and laws continue to exist. You know poverty and therefore I think the. The difference between one thing and another is also not very well established. The risk of poverty is a risk for child and youth protection committees or not only. It's just a matter of looking at other problems, because if we see problems, it's not like a family where the father works very well, the mother stays at home, takes care of the children and so on, they go to Mass every day and they all behave very well and things are hopeless, even if there is hunger at home, if it is a family where there is domestic violence, where there is structural unemployment, the phenomena of alcoholism, drug use, of course, and I know that they are already considered a major problem. Participant 1: 33 - 33 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system> Subjetive poverty: the poors don't complain
 Quotes:

 The consistently poorest groups don't complain, they just wait for help, they reach out, they don't complain, they don't demand, they don't hold demonstrations, they don't go to the newspapers, they don't even know how to do it for everything, not even for televisions. Participant 1: 37 - 37 (0)
The poor don't complain and those are the ones who participate least in the definition of policies. Participant 1: 37 - 37 (0)

Gaps in child social protection system:Policy making process
 Quotes:

Policies in Portugal are basically defined by the problem, by the parties, but in particular by the government itself. Participant 3: 10 - 10 (0)
There is a set of proposals that we know a lot through the medium, that is, there is a bill, the proposal that links a previous policy that always begins. Participant 3: 10 - 10 (0)

Policy making process
Policy making process > Social work role in the policy making/implementation
Quotes:

And, therefore, there is also a whole phase of work here that must be done with those who are on the front line, on the ground, to ensure an alignment between what was and what deserved public attention as a problem, as a social phenomenon. What was thought and conceived is that what was decided in the context of decision-making and what then actually happens on the ground and everyone has a word to say. We currently have social workers in key places in the production of public policy. We have a social worker who is the national coordinator of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. We have a social worker who is the national coordinator of the Children's Guarantee. We have a social worker who is president of the National Commission of the National System for Early Childhood Intervention. We have a social worker who is the executive manager of the National Intervention Strategy for people in situations of homelessness. And we have a lot of social workers in top positions in the Portuguese public administration. This means that Social Work is strategically placed in the production and implementation of public policy. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

Therefore, since those who have the power to lobby and influence the scheduling of policies, where do we also have social workers working in activism from the phase in which the political decision is made to the implementation phase. All of these moments are crucial moments for the smooth and smooth execution of public policy. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

And at all these moments, for the terms social workers, who should sometimes be more aware of what their power is, of what their room for maneuver is in order to be able to use it in a logic of policy practice, Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

In the same way as long as we have social policies that close in on themselves. We don't have social policies that are effective in responding to problems. Social policy, which is social policy measures, are only effective if they are connected with economic policy, housing policy, public education policy, health policy. That's the only way they can produce. So putting your finger on this wound is important. And this requires a very broad macro effort, which is beyond what the specific job of the social worker is, but which the social worker must not neglect and must not give up his share. Participant 5: 2 - 2 (0)

Many times in the family context, situations of neglect in terms of the provision of care have been identified. Parents often come home unaware of what social policies have, unaware of what exists outside. It is our role as CPCJ. In addition to looking, the problem is also that we try with the parents to make a path to inform them about the rights. Participant 2: 5 - 5 (0)

It really is the technicians in the social area who provide the services. In the community that carries out social action, like us here in Portugal, they carry out every level of social action that supports families that then have their children and young people and the others, the other age groups, another type, another type of population, and therefore, the social workers are the ones who execute and who carry out and monitor the measures, which are the social measures and policies that are implemented, important and have a central role in what it is. (Participant 4)

ANNEX 4- Informed consent

App.4 *Declaration of informed consent for fieldwork*

Informed consent

The following is a presentation of how I will use the data collected in the interview.

In order to ensure that projects meet the ethical requirements for good research I promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project.
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether they will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.
- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as this makes it easier for me to document what is said during the interview and helps me in the continuing work with the project. In my analysis, some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. After finishing the project, the data will be destroyed. The data I collect will only be used in this project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor in case you have any questions (e-mail addresses below).

Student name & e-mail   Supervisor name & e-mail

Tainna Souza   Jolanta Pivorienė (Mikolas Romeris University)
tpsaa1@iscte-iul.pt   jolantapiv@mruni.eu

Interviewee