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978-0-521-85751-2 - Wellbeing in Developing Countries: From Theory to Research

Edited by Ian Gough and J. Allister McGregor

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## Wellbeing in Developing Countries

In a world where many experience unprecedented levels of wellbeing, chronic poverty remains a major concern for many developing countries and the international community. Conventional frameworks for understanding development and poverty have focused on money, commodities and economic growth. This book challenges these conventional approaches and contributes to a new paradigm for development centred on human wellbeing. Poor people are not defined solely by their poverty, and a wellbeing approach provides a better means of understanding how people become and stay poor. It examines three perspectives: ideas of human functioning, capabilities and needs; the analysis of livelihoods and resource use; and research on subjective wellbeing and happiness. A range of international experts from the fields of psychology, economics, anthropology, sociology, political science and development evaluate the state of the art in understanding wellbeing from these perspectives. This book establishes a new strategy and methodology for researching wellbeing that can influence policy.

IAN GOUGH is Professor of Social Policy and Deputy Director of the ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries at the University of Bath. He is the co-author of *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge, 2004) and *A Theory of Human Need* (1991) which was the winner of both the Deutscher and the Myrdal Prize.

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# Wellbeing in Developing Countries

*From Theory to Research*

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Allister McGregor would like to acknowledge the contribution that Louise, Eoin, Ailsa and Jamie make to his wellbeing.

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G. Thiele) and *The Search for Empowerment: Social Capital as Idea and Practice at the World Bank* (West Hartford: Kumarian, 2006, with M. Woolcock and others).

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developing countries' with J. Allister McGregor in M. Ungar (ed.), *Handbook for Working with Children and Youth: Pathways to Resilience across Cultures and Contexts* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005).

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Editores, 2004) and *Public Policies and Processes in the Bolivian Andes* (IIED, 2001)

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## Acronyms

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ACLO	Acción Cultural Loyola
AEA	American Economic Association
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
APDH	Anatomy / Physiology / Dynamics / History
ASCA	Accumulating Savings and Credit Association
CCAIJO	Centro de Capacitación Agro-Industrial Jesús Obrero (Jesús Obrero centre of agro-industrial training)
CEP	Centro de Estudios y Proyectos (Centre for studies and projects)
CFA	Co-Financing Agency
CIPCA	Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado (Centre for peasant research and promotion)
CONACYT	Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (National Council of Science and Technology, Mexico)
COOP	Dartmouth COOP Dartmouth Primary Care Cooperative Information Project
DfID	Department for International Development
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of disorders
EGQLHM	European Group for Quality of Life and Health Management
EORTC	European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer
ESRC	Economics and Social Research Council
EUROHIS	European Health Interview Survey
EuroQoL	European Quality of Life Project Group
FACT	Functional Assessment of Cancer Treatment
FLIC	Functional Living Index Cancer
FoKF	Foundations of Knowledge Framework
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product



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GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GHQ	General Health Questionnaire
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HRQoL	Health Related Quality of Life
HD	Human Development
HS	Human Security
HUI	Health Utilities Index
IAA-Canas	Instituto de Apoyo Agrario Canas (Canas Institute for agricultural support)
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
ICF	International Classification of Functioning
IDPM	Institute for Development Policy and Management
IFI	International Finance Institutions
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPTK	Instituto Politécnico Tomás Katari (Tomás Katari Polytechnic Institute)
IQMSC	Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital
IQOLA	International Quality of Life Assessment Project Group
ISOQOL	International Society for Quality of Life Research
ISQOLS	International Society for Quality of Life Studies
LSMS	Living Standard Measurement Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NHP	Nottingham Health Profile
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
OWB	Objective Wellbeing
PIEB	Programa de Investigación Estratégica en Bolivia (Programme of Strategic Research in Bolivia)
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PQLI	Physical Quality of Life Index
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Qhana	Qhana Centro de Educación Popular (Qhana centre of popular education)
QoL	Quality of Life

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QWB	Quality of Well-Being Scale
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RANQ	Resources And Needs Questionnaire
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
RPF	Resource Profiles Framework
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEIQOL	Schedule for the Evaluation of Individual Quality of Life
SIP	Sickness Impact Profile
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
SWB	Subjective Wellbeing
THN	Theory of Human Need
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
VMPPFM	Vice Ministry for Citizen Participation and Municipal Strengthening (Bolivia)
WB	Wellbeing
WeD	Wellbeing in Developing Countries research group
WHO	World Health Organization
WHOQOL	World Health Organization Quality of Life Group
WONCA	World Organization of National Colleges, Academies, and Academic Associations of General Practices/Family Physicians

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## Preface

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Wellbeing is a term much in vogue. It is to be found in many diverse places: from the lifestyle pages of newspaper supplements; to health food and spiritual healing shops; to government policy documents. For some it is a broad and attractive term, for others it is messy, imprecise and conceptually dangerous. The arguments contained in this book suggest that ‘love it or hate it’ the social sciences globally must confront the challenges it poses. Wellbeing is now commonly used by governments and politicians in developed countries as the policy documents and legislation of the UK, Europe and North America indicate. In England, the Local Government Act of 2000 charges local authorities with the responsibility of ‘promoting well-being’, while in Scotland the Local Government Act of 2003 grants local authorities new power to ‘advance well-being’. The term features less commonly in our thinking and policy in relation to developing countries. For some it may appear that wellbeing is a luxury that developing countries, and particularly the poor men, women and children who live in them, could do without. We argue not.

Experiences of living and working with people in a wide range of developing countries tell us that they have as vivid and valid notions of wellbeing as do people in wealthier countries, where it appears more possible to buy one’s way to wellbeing. The things that bring different people wellbeing in many different societies around the globe can take many shapes and forms, but many of them are familiar across a wide range of quite different cultures: the love of friends and family, of music and verse, of dancing, of food, of a good joke. The list could go on.

Our challenge, however, is to reconcile this everyday observation with a professional concern for understanding why poverty persists and for the design of policies to eradicate it. In this respect it was felicitous that our attention was drawn to a call from the UK Economic and Social Research Council for research into ‘poverty, inequality and quality of life in developing countries’. These themes had been the focus of work by members of the Centre for Development Studies at Bath for a

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number of years. They had also been the topic of discussion in a forum of debate between colleagues from different research traditions and disciplines. It was this cross-disciplinary exchange which provided the basis for the proposal to the ESRC for the establishment of the 'Wellbeing in Developing Countries' (WeD) Research Group at the University of Bath. The Group was granted funding to run for a five-year period from 2002 to 2007. This is the first volume output of the WeD group and the members of the group would like particularly to acknowledge not only the generous funding that the ESRC has provided but also their enthusiasm and support for the work of the group.

WeD seeks to develop a more holistic vision of wellbeing to inform our understanding of social change and international development. The principal goal of WeD is *to develop a conceptual and methodological framework for understanding the social and cultural construction of wellbeing in developing countries*. While stated primarily in academic and conceptual terms, the intention is for the research to be policy relevant and for it to highlight the practical value of the knowledge that such a framework and methodology can produce. To do this WeD is applying this framework in detailed empirical studies of twenty-six communities in four developing countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Thailand.

The programme of work has been divided broadly into three stages: conceptual and methodological development, fieldwork, and analysis. This volume reports on the first of these phases. It is about conceptualising development through the novel lens of human wellbeing and about proposing new research agendas to study it, improve our understanding and guide policy. Its aims are to synthesise perspectives from the key social science disciplines and also to bring notions from diverse and non-development literatures into engagement with viewpoints and experiences from developing countries.

This volume took shape at an international workshop held at the Hanse Wissenschaftskolleg in Delmenhorst, near Bremen, Germany, in July 2004. There members of the WeD research team from Bath and the four research countries were joined by international experts from all continents except Australasia. The three days of lively exchanges were crucial in exposing our emerging ideas to a jury of peers, and in learning about state-of-the-art developments across a range of disciplines. This book reflects that origin in combining chapters by WeD members and outside scholars. We are grateful to the Hanse Institute for generously hosting and co-funding the workshop. We would like to thank those participants at the Hanse workshop who contributed to discussion but who are not authors here. Thanks to: Zulfqar Ali, Teo Altimirano, Ashebir Desalegn, Joe Devine, Marion Glaser, Wolfgang Glatzer,

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Charles Gore, Monica Guillen-Royo, Dennis Huschka, Awae Masae, Andy McKay, Fara Mee-Udon, Heinz-Herbert Noll, Alula Pankhurst, Becky Schaaf, Hetan Shah, Virginia Williamson and Katie Wright. Particular thanks go to Des Gasper not only for his valuable contributions to the workshop, but also for his detailed and helpful comments on subsequent chapter drafts.

Not all members of the WeD research team were present at the Hanse meeting and we recognise the contributions that both past and present members of the team have made to the development of ideas within the group. Occasional visitors to WeD have also provided stimulus and provoked discussion, so thanks are due to Raymond Apthorpe, Janet Billson, Hartley Dean, Danny Ruta, Nasrin Sultana, Feleke Tadele and Solomon Tesfaye for their visits during the first two years of WeD. In Bath, the WeD administrative support team of Jane French, Diana Duckling, Mark Ellison and Becky Lockley all made valuable contributions to the success of the Hanse meeting. In producing this volume Tom Lavers and latterly Emer Brangan have expertly marshalled the drafts, converted them into a unified text and guided the whole volume through to publication. We are immensely grateful to them for their dedicated work.

Lastly, we reserve special thanks for two groups: the WeD field research teams in all four study countries who have worked hard to meaningfully ground the research methodology that we discuss here; and also the people of the communities in which the research has been carried out. Despite the challenges of their own daily lives they have engaged patiently with our time-consuming schedule of enquiries.

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