WELL-BEING AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Well-being and Sustainable Living

November 2007

Manchester Metropolitan University

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RIHSC: Research Institute for Health & Social Change

RIHSC: Research Institute for Health and Social Change:

RIHSC is a centre of international excellence and innovation in critical research and consultancy on social change, social inclusion, community participation, well-being, work and leisure, health and social care practices and policies, and the clinical biomedical, behavioural and forensic sciences.

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Note. This document can be accessed on the website <u>www.wellbeing-esrc.com</u>
The site has links to several others important for the area

**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

Well Being and Sustainable Living Event
The Council Chamber
Ormond Building, All Saints, Manchester
24th May 2007

Hosted by the Centre for Research in Social Change and Well Being,
Research Institute for Health and Social Change, Manchester
Metropolitan University

Programme

10:00- 10.30 Reception

11.00 – 11:05 Welcome
                Professor Judith Sixsmith. RIHSC, MMU

11.05- 11.50 Presentation
                Dr. Sam Thompson. New Economics Foundation

12:00 – 1:00 Roundtable

1:00 – 2:00 Lunch

2:00 – 2:45 Sustainable Communities
                Sharon Kemp. Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods).
                Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
                Professor Carolyn Kagan. Director RIHSC, MMU

2:45– 3:55 Knowledge Café

3:55 – 4:00 Final remarks
                Dr John Haworth. MMU

Well Being and Sustainable Living

PREFACE

The event was organised by Dr John Haworth, Dr Rebecca Lawthom, Dr Ilana
Mountian and Professor Judith Sixsmith, from the Centre for Research in Social
Change and Well Being, Research Institute for Health and Social Change, Manchester
Metropolitan University.

Participants were invited to the transdisciplinary event, with each being sent as
background the introduction to the book 'Well-Being: individual, community and social
perspectives' edited by John Haworth and Graham Hart, published by Palgrave
Macmillan 2007.
Alan Carr, University College Dublin, reviewing the book, noted that it
'...is an important contribution to positive psychology. John Haworth and Graham
Hart have brought together a panel of international experts to authoritatively
outline the state of the science of well-being and the implications of this for
research, policy and practice'.
Several of the contributors are from Manchester Metropolitan University.

The transdisciplinary book complements the harm-based focus of much social
scientific research into health. The chapters present a new dynamic view of well-
being, one that will be crucial for the way in which we will cope with the twenty first
century.
Several key concepts relating to well-being are identified in the book. These include
the following:
➢ Well-being is complex and multifaceted. It is considered as a state and a process.
It is a contested concept.
➢ Well-being includes personal, interpersonal, and collective needs, which influence
each other.
➢ Well-being may take different forms, which may conflict across groups in society,
requiring an overarching settlement. Well-being may also take different forms over
the life-course of an individual.
➢ Well-being is intimately intertwined with the physical, cultural and technological
environment, and requires a global perspective.
➢ Interventions to enhance well-being may take different forms. They should be
conducted at individual, community, and societal levels, ideally in concert.
Interventions need to recognise diversity and socio-economic inequalities in society,
and be concerned with the unintended as well as the intended consequences of action.

Dr. Sam Thompson from the New Economics Foundation was invited as a keynote
speaker on Well-Being and Sustainability. He outlined the recent research done by
Nef, commissioned by Defra. The roundtable discussion which followed emphasised
the importance of developments in positive psychology for well-being and
sustainability, and also the necessity for focussing on socio-economic inequalities and
social justice in society. Several participants provided abstracts of their research,
which are included in these proceedings along with the keynote presentations.

A keynote presentation was made by Sharon Kemp, Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods), Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. She outlined the '100 Voices Initiative' concerned with community cohesion, which has received considerable praise. This was followed by a keynote presentation by Professor Carolyn Kagan, Director RIHSC, emphasising the importance of empowering the community, and the importance of sustaining the well-being of public sector workers undertaking this.

In the Knowledge Café exercise participants formed into four groups. Each group spent approximately 15 minutes discussing each of four questions relating to well-being and sustainable living. One question was presented by a rapporteur at each of four tables, groups of participants circulating from table to table. From the notes taken a summary has been compiled by Judith Sixsmith of the answers to the four questions. This can be seen in the proceedings.

The day event showed that well-being is complex and crucially linked to sustainability. A range of approaches to practice and development of understanding is required. It is also important to monitor both the intended and unintended consequences of policy decisions for well-being and sustainable living.

John Haworth.

Do good lives have to cost the Earth?
Some thoughts on well-being and sustainability

Dr Sam Thompson, Centre for Well-being, **nef** (the new economics foundation)

Introduction

In *Securing the Future*, the UK's much-vaunted sustainable development strategy (DEFRA, 2005), sustainable development itself is conceptualised in terms of two components:

1. "Living within environmental limits. Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations."

2. "Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all."

As such, the notion of well-being lies right at the heart of the UK's sustainable development policy. Arguably, in fact, this is not so new – whilst sustainable development has often been conceptualised as a challenge to orthodox economic development, it has always been a challenge to pursue a different pathway towards the same goal: maximising human well-being. In the familiar Brundtland formulation (WCED, 1987), this goal is cast in terms of needs satisfaction; sustainable development is that which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In the UK's 1999 strategy, it is expressed in terms of the quality of life; sustainable development *is* "ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come" (DETR, 1999). An explicit commitment in the strategy was, "In order to get a better understanding and focus on wellbeing, by the end of 2006 the Government will sponsor cross-disciplinary work to bring together existing research and international experience and to explore how policies might change with an explicit wellbeing focus" (p. 23). **nef** (the new economics foundation) was commissioned to undertake one of four research projects, exploring the relationships and tensions between well-being and sustainability (Marks *et al.*, 2006a) (Editor's note. This can be seen at the following web address. It is summarised in this presentation).

http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/project_data/DocumentLibrary/SD12007/SD12007_4606_FRP.pdf

What is SD for?

The very need to have a "sustainable development" policy implies that the current development model is unsustainable. In other words:

1. we are using the planet's resources faster than they can be replaced through natural processes, and

2. current high levels of material throughput and resource consumption (i.e. the incumbent model of "development") are chiefly responsible for this

From the perspective of well-being, this seems to place us in an unenviable position. Conventional economic theory assumes that rising consumer expenditure is strongly (or, at least, monotonically) related to individuals' WB. This partially accounts for the enduring popularity of using income and GDP as proxies for welfare, despite many well-rehearsed arguments about why they may not be satisfactory for this end.

Nonetheless, if the assumption is true and current material consumption really is unsustainable, we seem to have a bleak choice. Either we carry on consuming and developing in the unsustainable manner we have done so far, in which case we compromise WB for future generations due to resource depletion and environmental damage, or else we seriously curtail our current levels of consumption and so, by implication, compromise our WB now.

How to understand WB and sustainability

This analysis has some striking implications for how we should conceptualise the relationship between environmental sustainability and individual well-being. Of course, it is important to consider how a changing environment might impact – positively and negatively – on the well-being of future generations. This involves considering links between the environment and the individual – i.e. the ways in which climate change, air pollution, resource degradation and so on will impact on people's day-to-day living.

But as well as exploring the impacts of a changing environment on well-being, it is also necessary to explore how changing the current, *unsustainable* model of development might affect well-being. Would curtailing consumption now really compromise our well-being in significant ways, or is it possible that there could be a "double dividend"? In other words, could we live better by consuming less, or at least differently? To understand this, we argue that it is necessary to consider how individuals' behaviour is mediated by the current socio-economic system.

We suggest drawing a distinction between three broad levels or "pathways" between WB and environmental sustainability:

o *transparent* in which the relationship between environmental sustainability and well-being is direct and immediate. Some examples of transparent pathways might be evidence of the negative impacts of increasing levels of ambient air pollution on physical and psychological well-being, or risks to health associated with changes in

the distribution of disease vectors. Also here would be some psychological findings such as research which suggests subjective well-being might be increased through merely being exposed to green space.

o *semi-transparent* pathways where the same action or behaviour has direct relevance for both the individual's WB and the environment. Here we are thinking of issues like driving, flying, recycling – where there are direct environmental consequences flowing from the individual's choices, but also direct consequences for their well-being.

o *opaque pathways* in which the relationship which exists is wholly or largely indirect. Here we are primarily thinking about two categories of things:

1) values and attitudes associated with unsustainable consumption, and hence the impact not of consumption itself, but of actually holding these values and attitudes on individuals. These is, for example, an extensive literature showing detrimental effects of holding strongly materialist values – clearly, the prevalence of such values is also a factor in unsustainable consumption at the macro level.
2) the impact of a consumption-based economy on social structures and institutions. Here we are thinking of things like decline of social institutions such as marriage and family, rise in various social and psychological pathologies, many of which can be traced to a structural need within the system for individualist, consumption-focused values.

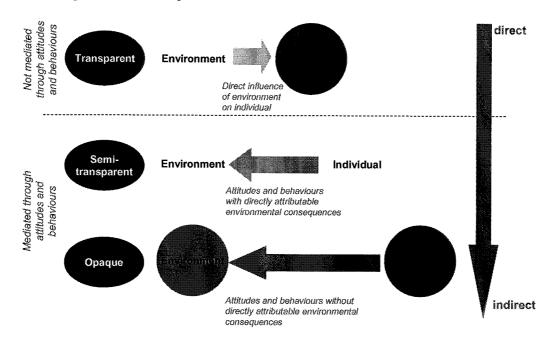## Figure 1: Pathways between the environment and the individual

Where this leads
Clearly it would be neither easy nor sensible to simply abandon the incumbent socio-economic model in the developed world. On the other hand, because consumption

behaviour ultimately mediates the key pathways between environmental sustainability and individual well-being, the potential need for dramatic changes in the way that we consume must be taken seriously.

In our view, policy-makers should take seriously the suggestion that, in some significant respects, modern society is adrift in its pursuit of well-being. Not only are we compromising the well-being of future generations though the pressure our lifestyles exert on the environment, some evidence suggests that the incumbent, individual-focused consumption model has detrimental impacts for individuals and society.

This raises the question of whether people could make significant changes to their current consumption behaviour and reap benefits in terms of how they feel about themselves and their lives? There are at least three key tensions that would need to be negotiated. Firstly, people feel threatened by anticipated losses, even though evidence suggests that they would adapt to lifestyle 'downshifting' more quickly and more completely than they anticipate. Secondly, many of the potential gains to well-being from behaviour change are likely to be lagged: i.e. only realised in the relatively long term. Thirdly, individuals rationalise (not unreasonably) that changing their own behaviour will not have any impact unless others do likewise; this implies prescriptive, top-down policies. However, these in turn risk compromising individual autonomy and thus negating potential benefits to well-being.

Conclusions

The challenge for sustainable development policy is to manage the transition to a materially lighter and more sustainable economy in a manner that:

1. minimises short-term detriments to well-being that result from reduced consumption opportunities, whilst persuading people of the need to change their behaviours; and,

2. maximises the possibility of long-term well-being benefits by ensuring that positive attitudes and beliefs about the value of the environment and the true routes to personal well-being are the cultural norm.

This is no small task.

References

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Exploring Geographies of Happiness and Well-Being in Britain

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Dimitris Ballas is currently working on an ESRC mid-career research fellowship project (in the context of the "Understanding Population Trends and Processes" programme; see http://www.uptap.net/), which aims at investigating different definitions of happiness and well-being and explore the degree to which happiness varies over time and space. In particular the research aims at extending existing work (from Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, to more recent work conducted by economists, such as the research reported by David Blanchflower and Andrew Oswald in a paper entitled "Well-Being Over Time in Britain and the USA", published in 2004 in the Journal of Public Economics, vol. 88, pp. 1359-1386) on the perception of happiness by providing a detailed explanation of the factors and life events that make different types of individuals happy and how these affect the overall structure and cohesion of society.

Recent theories and methodologies of providing measurements of happiness are critically being discussed and their advantages and limitations are thoroughly investigated. Further, new possibilities for testing these theories, in the light of recent advances in socio-economic data availability, are being highlighted. One of the main objectives of this research is to add a geographical dimension to the existing research on happiness. The research is building a geographical simulation model of happiness that will be capable of providing information on the different degrees of happiness attained by people in different regions and localities, under alternative scenarios and happiness definitions. The factors and life events affecting happiness during the lifetime of different types of individuals are also thoroughly being examined in order to build a model capable of predicting future trends in happiness and prosperity for different geographical areas. Further, the project explores the relationship between what defines happiness and socio-economic phenomena such as unemployment and income inequalities will be explored by addressing questions such as: "would society be more equal, if people were prepared to pay higher taxes, in order to ameliorate socio-economic inequalities?". In this context, the degree to which an individual's happiness is affected by other people's happiness is examined and on that basis a projection of alternative futures for British society will be attempted, under different scenarios and definitions of happiness.

The research conducted so far has added a little more evidences to the mounting case being made that there is a relationship between inequalities and well-being that needs to be examined in more detail. It can be argued that on the basis of the literature reviewed and data analysed so far, that it becomes clearer that public policy that is aimed at income and wealth re-distribution and societal equality would probably lead to higher overall levels of happiness and well-being. In particular, the analysis carried out so far argues that the relationship between inequalities, happiness and well-being has long been identified, even though there has been considerable debate about the strength of this relationship. This research project has so far reviewed and presented clear evidence that there is an increasing socio-economic polarisation and widening of inequalities in Britain and argued that this polarisation has a geographical dimension at various

geographical levels. In particular, there is a clear and growing "North-South" divide in Britain, but there is also local socio-economic polarisation within regions and cities. Given the evidence and recent research on the determinants of happiness and well-being, it is reasonable to assume that widening income and wealth inequalities and the resulting polarisation has a detrimental effect on the overall happiness and well-being of the population. Nevertheless, there is a need to have a closer examination of the data that include measurements of happiness and well-being. Sophisticated analysis (based on multi-level modelling and spatial microsimulation methods) of secondary data is currently under way to provide a better understanding of the geographical distribution of happiness and well-being and of the relationship between happiness and income and wealth inequalities and by extension a wide range of social justice issues. The final research outputs will include thematic maps of happiness (defined in alternative ways and under different assumptions) in Britain at different geographical scales, under various scenarios. In particular, the publications will include projections of how British society will look in the next 10 and 20 years, under alternative assumptions on social values.

Project Title: **The Impact Of Regeneration On The Well-Being Of Local Residents: The Case Of East Manchester**

Judith Sixsmith and Ryan Woolrych, Research Institute for Health and Social Change Manchester Metropolitan University.

Aim

To explore and understand the impact of a major regeneration programme in East Manchester on the Well-Being of the local residents.

Objectives

1. To identify existing qualitative and quantitative well-being data pertaining to the regeneration in East Manchester
2. To provide an overview of the concept and develop a model of well-being
3. To identify key regeneration activity within the Beacons regeneration and its perceived impact upon well-being
4. To identify how regeneration professionals articulate and understand well-being within regeneration policy and practice
5. To identify areas of best practice within regeneration which seek to address well-being through case study analysis of specific projects
6. To identify how residents perceive their well-being within the overall context of the regeneration

Methodology

A multi-methods approach was adopted which encompassed:
- Analysis of existing survey data
- Case study analysis of two regeneration projects
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews with 18 regeneration professionals
- Three focus groups conducted with local residents

The quantitative components of the study were analysed using statistical methods. The qualitative components of the study were analysed using thematic analysis.

Key Findings
(i) Measurement and Understanding of well-being
- Regeneration professionals reported that it was difficult to measure and evaluate the concept of well-being due to its complex and subjective nature. Professionals typically collect and analyse quantitative data and key performance indicators for project evaluation, much of which is defined and dictated through funding bodies. Despite the availability of survey data collected regularly across the region there are little resources factored in to individual regeneration initiatives that allow for the collection of qualitative data and the measurement of well-being or quality of life parameters.

(ii) Importance of well-being to Local Residents
- Residents identified the importance of 'softer' aspects of the regeneration to their quality of life. 'Soft' regeneration programmes included aesthetic improvements such as the provision of hanging baskets, parks and green areas and the 'alleygating'

schemes. 'Hard' changes were defined as the provision of civic centres, new housing and other physical infrastructure. Residents supplied evidence to suggest that environmental improvements can provide overwhelming benefits to residents' quality of life through an aesthetically pleasing environment, which is spiritually uplifting and provides residents with a sense of community pride and spirit.

(iii) Improvements to Residents well-being
- Residents identified aspects of their life which they felt were important to their well-being, the improvement of which would have substantial benefits to their quality of life. This included (i) crime and safety (challenging residents' perceptions concerning perceived fear of crime and safety) (ii) community participation and consultation (requiring more effective means of engaging with the community) and (iii) local shops and amenities (importance of 'hubs' and social sites within the community as a place to network and socialise). This was supported by the strong association identified in the statistical analysis phase, which identified crime and safety together with community participation as key aspects of residents' well-being.

(iv) Sustainability and Mainstreaming
There were issues concerning the future sustainability and mainstreaming of specific regeneration programmes and initiatives. Regeneration professionals felt that it was important for the future well-being of local residents that projects which have had a positive effect on well-being are maintained in the long-term through effective partnership working and self-sustainability. Already there are cases within the regeneration where specific projects and initiatives had been mainstreamed or self-sustained.

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Project Title: Understanding Health and Well-being within an Area of Regeneration: An Action-Research approach

Judith Sixsmith and Ryan Woolrych, Research Institute for Health and Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University

The 'Understanding Health and Well-being within an Area of Regeneration' study commenced in mid-February 2007 funded by HEFCE as part of the 'Urban Regeneration: Making a Difference' programme of work. It is due to be completed in mid-April 2008 and involves cross-collaboration between Manchester Metropolitan University, New East Manchester Regeneration (a community partner) and two other academic institutions (University of Central Lancashire and the University of Northumbria).

This study will seek to understand the concepts of (i) health and (ii) well-being from the different perspectives of professionals working within regeneration arenas and local residents. In particular, the research will investigate the role of 'healthy settings' in promoting good health and well-being at a community based level. The use of the 'healthy settings' approach requires that communities are better understood as places for promoting better health. In terms of the current research project, this will involve the articulation of health and well-being within people's everyday cultures, structures, processes and routine life (Doherty and Dooris, 2006). Health interventions are assessed in these terms as being borne from 'convenient places', typically where people live, communicate and their immediate environment. It is therefore necessary to explore the role of local people within the 'community', importantly how local people can interact with each other and engage within community 'hubs' to sustain health and well-being improvements.

To interpret residents' subjective views of their own communities and how this affects their health and well-being, a wider appreciation of what local people understand by the concepts of 'community', 'health' and 'well-being' in the context of regeneration is sought, and how local people positively engage within their communities. Structural changes in the way in which people live, such as using supermarkets rather than local shops, has fundamentally changed the shape of communities; the places where people meet, the way they interact and how they perceive 'community'.

This study aims not just to understand what health and well-being means in relation to professionals and residents but to do this in respect to an area undergoing rapid socio-structural change; focusing on how new facilities may act as community 'hubs' with consequent implications for community involvement; identifying the processes of social change within community settings; and how certain community facilities can increase well-being. In addition, the study will attempt to encapsulate how processes of engagement within the community can improve the psycho-social, economic and environmental well-being of residents within their communities. Long-term sustainability and continuous service improvement can only be fully achieved when local people, working together with professionals, are engaged in active participation to help to shape the future of their communities.

Methodology

(i) Interviews

Interviews will be conducted with a broad range of professionals, which include regeneration officers and key personnel from local service providers. Interviews will also be undertaken with local residents. It is anticipated that local residents be empowered as interviewers (if desirable) to interview other local residents.

(ii) Visual Perceptions

Interviews often give rise to data concerning remembered past experiences. Such memories tend to be described broadly and contain little contextual information. In order to ground resident's perceptions of health and well-being and regeneration within their everyday community context, the study will capture video and/or visual (eg photographs) data from local residents who will record local places in which they feel comfortable/uncomfortable, describing their experiences within them.

(iii) Observations

Observations will involve the researcher observing how local residents interact with their environment. This will involve recording observations at places traditionally seen as the main 'hubs' of the community such as the 'marketplace', 'local shops' or 'community centres' to assess the importance of a variety of informal ways in which local people interact to support their own health and well-being.

(iv) Workshops

Workshops will bring together regeneration professionals, academics and local people to discuss the issues which will have arisen as a result of (i) and (ii). This may involve, for example, local people presenting their photographic/visual work from (ii) and having an open, informal discussion with key stakeholders about the findings. The workshops and analysis of the data from (i), (ii) and (iii) can be used to make recommendations concerning the role of local residents in sustaining health and well-being improvements within their communities.

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Well-being and sustainable living

Jane Henry
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Above a certain minimum amount of income and/or capital, non-monetary factors such as relationships, social support, engaging work, control over one's activities and a sense of meaning appear more central to a sense of well-being than increasing pecuniary advantage. This is fortunate in a world where sustainable development is now an imperative in the face of climate change, a steadily climbing population and limited resources. The study of well-being should help social scientists, policy makers and others move in a direction designed to enhance satisfaction levels and more sustainable modes of living. The recent lowering level of satisfaction at work and increasing rates of depression suggest social change is needed. However, given temperament provides a good predictor of long-term levels of well-being, psychological factors are clearly important. There is evidence that different strategies are needed to effect an improvement in well-being in different people (Fordyce 1983, Henry 2006.)

Further reading

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Global is the New Local.

John Pickering, Warwick University.

Jeffery Sachs, the 2007 Reith lecturer, in addressing the geopolitics of globalised world, began his series of lectures by declaring the way we live is unsustainable. Here 'we' means us, the rich, those who live in North America, Europe and the developed parts of Asia.

For once, though, the picture is not one of doom and loss. A more hopeful message is to be taken home: we can, and must, do what's necessary to make it sustainable. In the process, an economic system will emerge which will bring to an end the grotesque disparities in the quality of life which now disfigure the present world order. It all sounds rather rosy, and a refreshing change from the scare tactics and guilt trips of the past couple of decades.

My contribution to the workshop will begin with a look at what the Reith lectures had to offer by way of practical, collective tasks that face us – and they had a lot. I will then explore what effect these tasks may have on our sense of wellbeing, where 'our' now means those people of most concern to the ESRC, namely, the population of the UK.

If these tasks are perceived to be too great, there will be impotent despair. If they are seen as misguided, there will be indifference. If they are seen as a realistic then they offer the chance for lifestyle change, for new educational objectives and as a means for refreshing a jaded polity. These alternative all have strong implications for wellbeing.

Older People, Regeneration and Health and Well Being

Eileen Fairhurst, Manchester Metropolitan University.

The health and well-being of older people, is occupying an increasingly prominent place on the policy and political agenda. Partnership Boards for Older People are part of a wider move in public services to ensure services provided meet the needs of individuals rather than 'one size fits all'. The involvement of older people in this kind of decision making is an integral feature of the establishment of Partnership Boards. Their membership, in addition to older people, is drawn from a range of stakeholders from the statutory (local government and health) and third sectors.

The project aims to map out the processes of older people's involvement in partnership activities with the intention of using their experiences to inform learning relating to the sustainability of formal mechanisms such as boards.

The *Better Government for Older People* (1998) initiative from central government not only raised the profile of older people but also pinpointed partnership working as an appropriate mechanism for involving older people in local decision making. Whilst this matter has begun to be studied, we know little about the *processes* of older people's involvement, in general, (Barnes 2005) and little about this in the context of regeneration and health and well-being. The proposed project is timely as Older People's Partnership Boards are in the early stages of their development. Identifying older people's routes into board membership may reflect those found in other parts of the population which are characterised by 'community activists' (Skidmore et al's 2006 report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) with the possibility of 'burn out' (Kagan 2005 and Raschini et al 2005). In addition the project will examine the roles and expectations that board members have of each other. Specific research questions will be:

1. What have older people and statutory and third sector stakeholders learnt about the process? What would be done the same or differently?
2. How do older people themselves recognise stereotypes of 'older people' held by stakeholders?
3. What strategies/courses of action do older people adopt in response to 2 above

The project is a collaborative study between Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford and the University of Northumbria and community partners in Manchester, Salford and Newcastle. The project will add to the relatively sparse knowledge of older people's contribution to social aspects of regeneration and redress the balance from an overemphasis on younger people and economic development.

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100 Voices Initiative

Sharon Kemp
Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods)
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Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

A pioneering forum to create greater social cohesion in Blackburn with Darwen has been praised by all sections of the community.

The 100 Voices project, launched by the Council, held its first meeting at King George's Hall with 100 local residents in December 2006. Men and women aged 17 upwards and from different ethnic backgrounds were invited to take part and debate issues such as parallel lives, single faith schools, the wearing of the veil, how sport can bring people together, the impact of drugs, how sport can bring communities together, and discrimination in the workplace.

The meeting brought together 100 residents who were independently selected by a market research company to reflect the demographics of the Borough. The Leader of the Council sent a letter to participants outlining the reason for the debate. (Attached at Appendix A). There have been three 100 Voices events to date each on similar schedules with the Leader, Chief Executive and 100 residents engaging in robust discussions facilitated by Jim Hancock in the morning and smaller group work in the afternoons to identify actions that could be taken to promote cohesion.

At the first two events the ideas discussed were more joint school trips so children from different backgrounds can mix, more mixed sports leagues including one where teams have to be racially diverse to enter, and whether the erosion of family and social values contributes to segregation.

The third event was a culmination of the previous two, with Jack Straw MP and Sir Trevor Philips engaging in the discussion and listening to the views of local people.

The Leader of the Council at the time Kate Hollern stated after the events "Mr Straw's comments had started the debate about what makes people feel comfortable, and about mutual respect and understanding between local people from different cultures and faiths''.

She added: "The 100 Voices debates aim to find out what makes people united and what separates them. It is a real opportunity for us all to discuss our concerns and bring our opinions into the open. It's also a chance to promote our shared values of the importance of strong families and good, safe, clean neighbourhoods''.

"The Council, other public and private sector partners, and local voluntary, community, and faith groups all work hard in Blackburn and Darwen to promote understanding and togetherness. Seventy-two per cent of local residents said they feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together in last year's borough MORI survey. But there is still much to do to make all residents feel that they belong to Blackburn with Darwen."

She continued: "The Council and its partners have been running a 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' campaign. Lots of local people from all walks of life have been involved in the campaign and its community activities. The Belonging campaign is all about pride in place, recognising what we all have in common rather than focussing on our differences, and about how we should all make sure we don't stereotype any group in the community. "

And she urged all local residents to consider taking part in the community debates.

"Developing strong neighbourhoods and good relations between all local residents is not about what we wear, how we worship, what language we speak or where we were born; it's about how well we understand and respect each other. Please help the Council promote that understanding and respect," she said.

Sir Trevor Philips stated "I am incredibly impressed with the honesty of the people here. This is probably one of the closet thing to what we need to be doing that I have seen, I will be going round the Country saying 'go to Blackburn with Darwen to see what they are doing"

From the workshops held at the three 100 Voices events it is planned that residents and services will work together on delivering a project to bring schools together more, a shared charitable sports event and a series of social and cultural occasions.

Appendix A : Message From Kate Hollern, Leader Blackburn with Darwen

We need an intelligent discussion not about the veil, but about the current climate across the country caused by the non Muslim British Public being fed for so long a regular diet of misinformation about Muslims, and the Muslim community feeling angry and isolated and under threat.

The London Bombers not only managed to cause death and destruction by their actions but they also played right into the hands of those looking for scapegoats. Muslim people have been looked upon with caution and some mistrust. This stereotyping has led to an increase in people being racially abused.

Jack's attempt to start a debate stirred up media frenzy. What people fail to realise is that when the media train moves on, we all continue to live and work in Blackburn with Darwen. Let's keep all this in proper context and discuss the issues in a calm and considered way. Don't let others set the agenda. Muslims throughout Blackburn have

the opportunity to use this situation to tell others about their religion and culture and how it fits into a British society.

The indigenous population also needs the opportunity to discuss their religion and culture and how diversity has had both a positive and negative effect on their lives and neighbourhoods. The indigenous people of the Borough tend not to talk about their religion; it is generally a private matter, but that does not mean they have no religion or that their religion deserves any less respect than Islam, or that they deserve any less rights to respect.

Muslim people are far more open about their beliefs and like to openly display their commitment to Islam and quite rightly demand rights. With those rights comes responsibility. This responsibility is to accept that some traditions are different. It should not be seen as negative if someone asks a question on a tradition (whether religious or cultural). But should be seen as an interest to gain an understanding.

Now is the time for positive role models and positive exemplars from all communities to work together and discuss the real issues. We all like humour, sport, and television. We all want decent housing, good education, clean streets, but most importantly to feel safe and comfortable in our surroundings. We all need to feel a sense of belonging.

Now is the time for all sections of the communities to engage. It is a real opportunity to discuss our fears and concerns. This is also a real opportunity to promote shared family values, decency, and honesty. This Borough is a colourful mix of different traditions, opinions and arguments. Let's bring the opinions and arguments out into the open and don't let people create and use divisions for their own purpose. We cannot be defeatist in dealing with issues, otherwise we all will be defeated. Heated debates or even friendly banter has been overshadowed by a sense of paranoia.

What we must do is debate it out to the end, and raise either the legitimacy or the illegitimacy of the concern, or else we will all be tainted with intolerance.

We now intend to start the debate.

Pillars of support for wellbeing in the community: the role of the public sector

Carolyn Kagan, Social Change and Wellbeing, RIHSC, Manchester Metropolitan University

Summary

In this discussion I am concerned with the experiences of those living in areas of multiple deprivation in England, and what explorations of wellbeing might imply for the role of public services.

I will draw attention to some of the paradoxes in linking wellbeing and participation for those living in areas of multiple deprivation. I will use the stress and burnout metaphor to describe some of the experiences of people who live in, and are active in areas of multiple deprivation in England. I will discuss some of the ways in which 'participation' enhances wellbeing but also some of the ways it undermines and threatens wellbeing. In particular I will examine the role that public sector workers, often at the point of engagement with 'participating' local people, play in enhancing or undermining wellbeing. I will argue that in the English context, with public and welfare agencies controlling and restricting people's lives, it is the public sector that is placed to support wellbeing. It is also placed to jeopardise it. Instead of constantly calling for capacity building and the development of personal responsibility for wellbeing by those living in areas of deprivation, we would do well to attend to the capacity building for responsibility for wellbeing of public sector workers.

UK Policy Context

In the UK, an Act of Parliament, The Local Government Act, 2000 (Part I) provided local authorities in England and Wales with a new power of 'well-being', which entitles them to do anything that might achieve:
- *The promotion or improvement of the economic and well-being of their area;*
- *The promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area;*
- *The promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.*

As a result, each authority has a *Community Strategy* outlining ways in which they will move to improving the economic, social and environmental aspects of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. Indeed, WWF (2004:2) suggest that, in the context of this power to promote or improve well-being, "Community Wellbeing" is increasingly becoming synonymous with the term sustainable development. This overlapping use of the two terms has led to an emphasis on environmental and economic factors, with the 'social ' factors referring to the more

objective aspects of cost effective service delivery and objective indicators such as life expectancy, and levels of crime. The role of perceived life satisfaction, sense of autonomy and purpose, happiness, stress and so on remains relatively under-developed, as is the link between objective indicators and subjective ones. Yet, it is people who are both the beneficiaries of and the means to achieving wellbeing, and it is essential to understand the complex relationship between other forms of development and personal and social development.

This is particularly so for people living in areas of (objective) multiple deprivation. The UK Government produces Indices of Deprivation (ODPM, 2004). Thus it is possible to uncover the relative, objective deprivation of local authorities, wards and parts of wards within these authorities. Yet, the subjective experience of living in areas with either high or low objective deprivation will often be different. Raschini, Stewart and Kagan (2005:17) draw attention to this issue when they put objective indicators of deprivation alongside subjective assessment of quality of life (linked to, but not the same as wellbeing).

> *Sometimes, residents seem to not be aware of the deprived conditions and their level as well as their effects on their lives. This lack of awareness may come from a lack of experience of different conditions. This may limit expectation and aspirations of the residents. After living for a long time in such areas, residents seem to not notice the signs and symptoms of deprivation existing in their areas and as a result they do not aim for better conditions of life. The national indices say that residents of those deprived areas die 10 years earlier than people living in other parts of the country although they report that their health is quite good. A high level of crime affects their neighbourhood but they say they are happy about it. They seem to be used to those conditions and to consider them normal. This attitude towards their reality probably influences the residents' attitude towards changing it. The involvement in the area's administrative decisions is consequently perceived as impossible or useless.*

The relative high perceived satisfaction in the midst of objective deprivation may be due to lack of comparisons with elsewhere, limiting ideas of what could be and thus of what is. Alternatively it might be that there is a real separation of subjective well-being from objective conditions of living. Thus there may be a need to help people develop a sense of collective identity and understanding of the social conditions in which they live; and for studies of wellbeing to include explorations of this. However, Shah and Peck (2005:2) remind us:

> *..there is much more to life than satisfaction: people also want to be leading rich and fulfilling lives - developing their capabilities and fulfilling their potential. They propose two dimensions of personal well-being:*
> * *peoples satisfaction with their lives, which is generally measured by indicators which capture satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment;*
> * *people's personal development, which includes being engaged in life, curiosity, 'flow', personal development and growth, autonomy, fulfilling potential, having a purpose in life and feeling that life has meaning.*
> *For people to lead truly flourishing lives they need to feel they are personally satisfied and developing.*

For Shah and Peck, then, eudemonic wellbeing (personal development and fulfilment) is as important as hedonic wellbeing (satisfaction and happiness) (see Ryan and Deci (2001) for a discussion of the two approaches). Indeed this two dimensional approach to personal wellbeing forms the core of an influential *wellbeing manifesto for a flourishing society* (Shah and Marks, 2004).

A community psychological perspective, however, would suggest that both the hedonic and eudemonic well being of people who are socially excluded, are inseparable from not only their economic position, the environmental conditions in which they live and the political and ideological messages that confine them to poverty whilst enjoining them to break free and better themselves, but also from the human services that exist to both assist and to regulate them. (See Burton and Kagan,(2006) for discussion of how human service policy plays this paradoxical role in relation to learning disability services). In other words, well-being in and of communities must be viewed in terms of human systems, not just as individual responses to circumstances.

Wellbeing in and of community

Edge, Kagan and Stewart (2004) remind us that, for some people, living poverty has continued for generations. For others, though, rapid economic change throws people into poverty and social marginalisation. With social marginalization, identity and being is threatened. Charlesworth (2000) wrote a moving phenomenological account of working class life in a former steel-manufacturing town in England that had, over a short space of time undergone mill closures and the consequent mass unemployment and loss of income. One of the local people in his book describes the hopelessness that such marginalization engenders:

> *"Ah get up some times an' it's just too much fo' mi, yer know, it creeps over yer, it just gets too much an' tha can't tek no mo'ore [...] It's heart breakin', it's just a strain all time an' tha just wants t' not live, tha just can't see n' point in thi' life..."* (p. 160)

Such hopelessness and despair clearly undermines well-being.
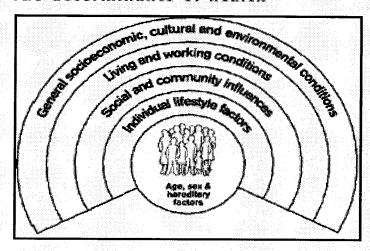
Well-being refers, amongst other things, as we have seen, to people's physical, emotional and psychological health. It includes the presence of social-emotional coping skills to maintain that health and happiness. As such, well-being is closely linked to health in its broadest sense. Well-being includes the development of identity, attainment of personal goals, pursuit of spiritual meaning, prevention of maladaptive behaviours, development of competencies and skills and the existence of social support. Well-being is closely linked to quality of life and to fulfilment of the fundamental human needs of health and what is known as 'autonomy of agency' or control over events in one's life (Doyle and Gough 1984, 1991).

So, what is the well-being of those who live in areas of social deprivation? There is substantial evidence to suggest that those who live in poverty experience poorer health, and are likely to die earlier than other people. The existence of health inequalities and the political commitment to reduce them is well established (DoH, 2003). Similarly, the wider context of the determinants of health and well-being is recognised, even if it nearly always takes second place to individual perspectives on health behaviours

(Wanless, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the different layers of influence on health and well-being.

Figure 1. The Determinants of Health (from Wanless, 2004 p.25)

Chart 2.1 — The determinants of health

Source: Policies and strategies for promoting social equity in health. G. Dahlgren and M. Whitehead, 1991.
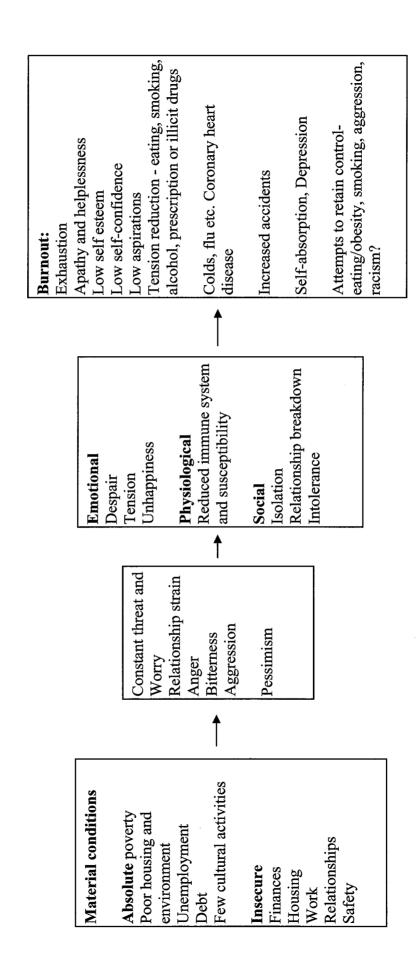
Most Government documents emphasise individual lifestyle factors as the means to change health and well-being, rather than the wider context.

Figure 2 summarises the relationship between poor and insecure material conditions, lack of contact with others and isolation, psychological distress and poor health behaviours.

The situation people find themselves in is very similar to what is known in the context of stress, as burnout. Thus we can argue that people living in areas of deprivation, with little in the way of community activity, live their lives in a constant state of exhaustion from the daily grind, hopelessness and despair. They are prone to ill health, accidents and relationship breakdown. Their attempts to gain greater 'autonomy of agency' has to be understood in the context of facilities available to them, and often appears in unhealthy, sometimes anti-social behaviours. For example, where there are fresh food 'deserts', high carbohydrate and fatty foods are eaten, which also serve a short term anxiety reducing purpose (see GONW/NWRDA, 2003 for the North West food strategy, which includes the links between food and healthy communities). Similarly, alcohol, tobacco and prescribed or illicit drugs all reduce tension and enable control to be exercised. Self harm, abuse, violence and aggression towards others can also be seen as indicators of tension reduction and the exercising of control.

Figure 2. Socio-economic stress and its impact on health.

Material conditions… leads to lack of engagement which …….leads to emotional, social ……..with negative health outcomes and physiological effects

Material conditions

Absolute poverty
Poor housing and environment
Unemployment
Debt
Few cultural activities

Insecure
Finances
Housing
Work
Relationships
Safety

Constant threat and
Worry
Relationship strain
Anger
Bitterness
Aggression

Pessimism

Emotional
Despair
Tension
Unhappiness

Physiological
Reduced immune system
and susceptibility

Social
Isolation
Relationship breakdown
Intolerance

Burnout:
Exhaustion
Apathy and helplessness
Low self esteem
Low self-confidence
Low aspirations
Tension reduction - eating, smoking, alcohol, prescription or illicit drugs

Colds, flu etc. Coronary heart disease

Increased accidents

Self-absorption, Depression

Attempts to retain control-eating/obesity, smoking, aggression, racism?

A sense of desperation, anger, bitterness, learned helplessness or aggression are all wholly understandable responses to various social economic and materiel difficulties. Prolonged stress from any of these sources is often all it takes to damage health. (Wilkinson, 1996, p. 184)

Wilkinson goes on to clarify the further damage done to those living in areas of deprivation.

To feel depressed, cheated, bitter, desperate, vulnerable, frightened, angry, worried about debts or job and housing insecurity; to feel devalued, useless, helpless, uncared for, hopeless, isolated, anxious and a failure: these feelings can dominate peoples whole experience of life ... it is the chronic stress arising from feelings which matter, not exposure to a supposedly toxic material environment. The material environment is merely the indelible mark and constant reminder of the oppressive fact of one's failure and of the atrophy of any sense of having a place in a community and of one's social exclusion and devaluation as a human being. (Wilkinson, 1996. p. 215)

It is worth noting that low self-esteem is not related to psycho-social stress in a straightforward way (Emler, 2001) – indeed high self-esteem can accompany self-centred, confident, anti-social, aggressive, or racist behaviour.

Participation is one of the remedies proposed for poor wellbeing for those from areas of multiple deprivation. Participation in what is often rather blurry

Participation can contribute to positive well-being

We know that social isolation leads to misery, and at the very least, participation in social life, helps prevent it. More specifically, participation in collective action will sometimes lead to increased social support, which in turn acts as a buffer against the damaging effects of stress. In this case, participation contributes to less stress and better well-being.

Participation may also lead to increased confidence and skills. These gains are particularly important for young people who either are, or are at risk of getting involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. There is some emerging evidence that involving young people in regeneration projects helps divert them from anti-social behaviour whilst at the same time strengthening their confidence and skills and improving their well-being.

With participation goes the development of responsibility and sense of positive citizenship. These are only possible if well-being is also strengthened.

Diamond (2004) draws attention to the ways in which participation-consultation and involvement that is based on external requirements to involve local people, will often proceed too rapidly, missing the preliminary stages of listening to local people, or failing to build in to the consultation process ways in which people can discuss and develop their own awareness and ideas. This results in local needs being defined by the professionals and regeneration workers, often who live outside the area, and who have labelled a particular neighbourhood as lacking in some way. This is often at odds with how local

people see their neighbourhood, and takes little account of invisible strengths, networks groups and economic activity. In this process, he suggests:

> *The needs of individuals and communities are re-defined in the interests of welfare and policy professionals. The power relationships are set and not open to negotiation or change. In part this is because professional agencies are resistant to change and can contain changes to their status and power. (p.183)*

This is particularly the case when participation becomes a requirement of the operation and development of public services.
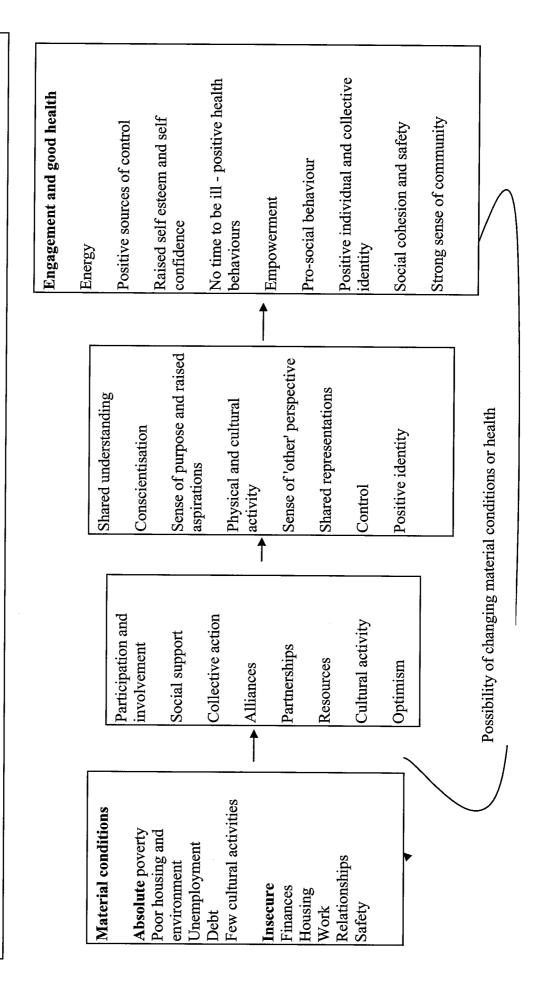
So, we have seen that general participation certainly acts as a buffer to stress, largely because of the social contacts and physical activity involved, and as we have seen, many of the participative processes are enjoyable. However, whilst important to people, and reflecting the most widespread forms of participation, general participation, such as one to one contact with neighbours, or attendance at local cultural festivals, for example, is unlikely to have a direct impact on the material conditions in which people live, or the degree to which they have control over important resources. General participation may, though, contribute to social cohesion and both individual and collective well-being.

It is bottom up participation and collective action, or those participation-consultation practices that include bottom up processes, that are likely to have the greatest impact both on well-being and potential for changing the material circumstances of life. This type of participation does several things (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Campbell & Murray, 2004).

Firstly, through a process we can call *conscientisation*, the group's critical awareness and development of critical thinking is developed. Secondly, members of the group re-negotiate their collective social identity and associated perspectives and views of the world that shape the likelihood of adopting more healthy behaviours. They do this by people developing shared understanding, information and ways of talking about themselves and others. Lastly, peoples' confidence and ability to take control of their lives is reinforced, - particularly in relation to their health. People are *empowered* to make changes to their lives.

Figure 3: Participation contributing to positive health outcomes

Material conditions... with increased participation ....leads to emotional, social ....with positive health outcomes and physiological effects

Material conditions

Absolute poverty
Poor housing and environment
Unemployment
Debt
Few cultural activities

Insecure
Finances
Housing
Work
Relationships
Safety

Participation and involvement
Social support
Collective action
Alliances
Partnerships
Resources
Cultural activity
Optimism

Shared understanding
Conscientisation
Sense of purpose and raised aspirations
Physical and cultural activity
Sense of 'other' perspective
Shared representations
Control
Positive identity

Engagement and good health

Energy
Positive sources of control
Raised self esteem and self confidence
No time to be ill - positive health behaviours
Empowerment
Pro-social behaviour
Positive individual and collective identity
Social cohesion and safety
Strong sense of community

Possibility of changing material conditions or health

With this type of participation it is necessary to have access to power, and resources, and this is the role of the supporting projects and linked professionals. Figure 3 outlines how participation might improve health and thereafter people's ability to change their material circumstances.

Participation as a threat to well-being

In practice, however, for many people, bottom-up, active participation and collective action is exhausting. It takes time and energy, and if it includes trying to encourage others to participate, perseverance. Not all those who are willing to participate in community activities are 'resource strong' themselves and they have different degrees of resilience (often born of their life experiences living in hardship). Community leaders and other activists sometimes find themselves not only trying to motivate others and get people interested in participating, they often have to give hours of emotional support to other group members: people who will often, themselves, have struggled throughout life against addictions, abuse, violence and surviving in poor and uncertain material conditions. The pressures are considerable and unrelenting. They have no supervision (despite working in complex human systems often with people with extensive personal difficulties). They have no colleagues to share the load when the going gets tough, no working hours, time off or holidays; no development activities built into the role. And they do not get paid.

The Community Psychology Team at Manchester Metropolitan University, which includes staff and students, have been working closely with residents who participate in tenants' groups in north Manchester. They do not live in an area with regeneration projects other than housing renewal projects, and yet live in one of the most deprived areas of the country, according to the Government's indices of multiple deprivation (SDRC, 2004). They are all working hard to improve their areas, reduce anti-social behaviour and to get more and more people actively involved. We are not measuring residents' well-being. We are listening to, and recording their own and each other's stories, observing what happens at meetings with professionals involved and, in seeing how their community participation affects their lives in different ways. (See Edge, Stewart and Kagan, 2004; Kagan, Castile and Stewart, 2005; Raschini, Stewart and Kagan , 2005 for some reports of the work.)

At various times, and in lots of different ways, those that actively participate get satisfaction, a feeling of well being and pride in what they do and what they manage to achieve. Their community involvement 'fills their lives' and they cannot imagine any other way of living. However, they often struggle to get information and resources necessary to support their work. If they liaise (as they have to) with professionals, they are often treated with suspicion and sometimes, what they consider intimidation. Other community members view their involvement sometimes with suspicion and sometimes with hostility, at other times with gratitude and praise. Community activists are at one and the same time seen as the problem solvers of the community, and as part of the authorities.

There is extensive media coverage of how some peoples' lives are destroyed by anti-social behaviour, so-called yobbish behaviour, crime and vandalism. All these things affect our community activist partners, and their well being is diminished by these

behaviours. However, many of the battles the community activists have are with are with professionals and agencies. It adds considerable pressure to activists' lives, for example, for authorities to encourage the formation of residents' groups, only for them to then use these groups to identify problems, collect 'evidence' against their neighbours, and expect them to take action too. The following examples illustrate some of the pressures on the activists.
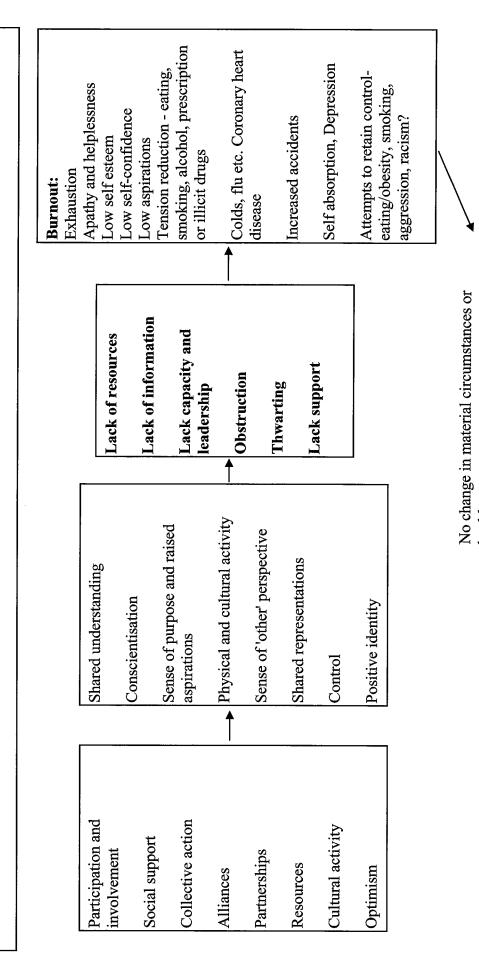
We hear of the different ways in which residents voices are silenced. The catalogue includes:

♦   *'they don't listen'; '*
♦   *we speak but aren't heard'; '*
♦   *we go to the meetings and our contributions aren't even minuted'*
♦   *'never mind dealing with the yobs on the street, can't you deal with the yobs from the council - they cause us more hassle?' '*
♦   *they never made it clear my house would be up for demolition'; '*
♦   *they just lie, we never get the truth';*
♦   *'it's like we've never been here before - nothing has been learnt from the last 15 years, we're just starting all over again, lobbying the same people, they haven't heard and haven't learnt'.*

Friendships have been fractured, amidst misunderstandings about who says what to whom, and some people have found little time for their families because they are so busy. We know about the effects of emotional labour (being 'nice', pleasant and supportive all the time), hassles, stress and burnout for highly paid executives, and I have suggested above for people living in areas of deprivation. Far less is known about the emotional labour hassles, stress and burnout in community participation, but we have seen, in our work, community activists being overloaded and thwarted in their attempts to improve things, leading to burnout and the spread of low well-being (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: If participation is unsupported – burnout still occurs

Increased participation leads to social, emotional and physiological effects, if thwarted, people return to hopelessness

Participation and involvement

Social support

Collective action

Alliances

Partnerships

Resources

Cultural activity

Optimism

Shared understanding

Conscientisation

Sense of purpose and raised aspirations

Physical and cultural activity

Sense of 'other' perspective

Shared representations

Control

Positive identity

Lack of resources

Lack of information

Lack capacity and leadership

Obstruction

Thwarting

Lack support

Burnout:

Exhaustion

Apathy and helplessness

Low self esteem

Low self-confidence

Low aspirations

Tension reduction - eating, smoking, alcohol, prescription or illicit drugs

Colds, flu etc. Coronary heart disease

Increased accidents

Self absorption, Depression

Attempts to retain control-eating/obesity, smoking, aggression, racism?

No change in material circumstances or health

In order to decrease the likelihood of burnout, and improve health and well being, top down and bottom up participation in regeneration must be supported through information, hard resources, professional attitude change and openness and social support. Every effort must be made not to overload particular community activists and to ensure people's energies and enthusiasms are renewed.

Public services are, then, a key part of supporting and contributing to wellbeing (Figure 5a) but they can also jeopardise it (Figure 5b)

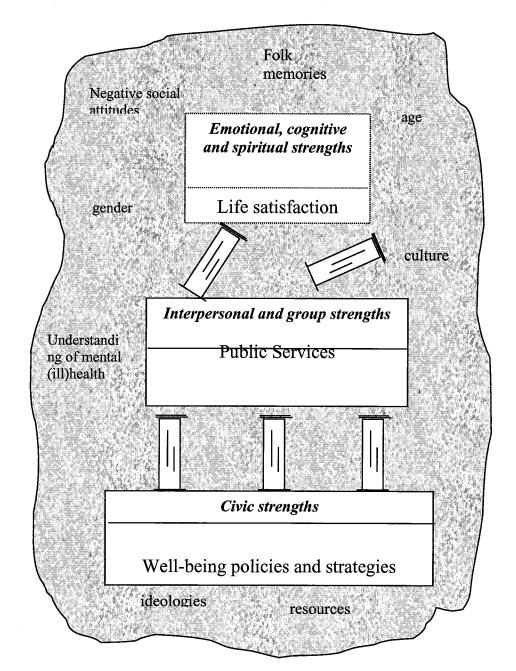Figure 5a: Public services as pillars supporting wellbeing
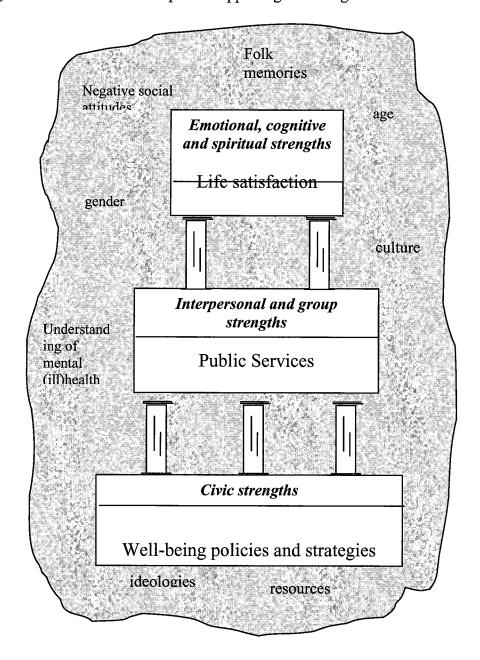
Figure 5 b Public services undermining wellbeing

Folk memories

Negative social attitudes

age

Emotional, cognitive and spiritual strengths

Life satisfaction

gender

culture

Interpersonal and group strengths

Public Services

Understanding of mental (ill)health

Civic strengths

Well-being policies and strategies

ideologies

resources

Public services and the ways in which they work with, listen to, silence or deflate residents are in the position of supporting and enhancing wellbeing, or undermining and jeopardising it. Instead of developing capacity amongst community residents, it is necessary to develop the capacity of those in public services to relate to and involve their clients and local residents in new and different ways (Kagan, 2007, in press). And of course this will be difficult to do if they, themselves, are undervalued, under stress and with wellbeing that is threatened by their working conditions and the unrelenting organisational changes, in the name of neoliberal efficiency, to which they are subjected.

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Well-Being and Sustainable Living Event
May 24ᵗʰ, 2007

Notes from the KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ

The following represents some meaning-making from facilitator notes from the four café tables at the Knowledge Café. This is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of discussions, nor does it present a coherent argument around well-being and sustainable living, rather this paper is a place in which different thoughts and feelings are represented in order that we can think more about our own and others positions.

1. *STARTERS:* If a lifestyle was truly sustainable, what would it look like?

A truly sustainable lifestyle would be one where everyone works together in collective action to give more than they take, both at individual and family level. This would require changing individual behaviours as well as addressing the macro-economy, staring with industrial emissions and big business. Unless this happens, changes in individual behaviours (towards more 'green' options) are less likely to produce any sustainable impact.

Nevertheless, the sorts of individual behaviour change suggested were:

- Walking and cycling rather than driving
- Buy energy efficient products for the home
- Cut down on air travel
- Move towards a more agrarian lifestyle
- Grow own organic produce
- Recycle waste
- Change attitudes towards a more conscious awareness of the impact of personal action on the world around you

The message is that everyone can have a more sustainable lifestyle whether they are living in the countryside or in urban environments. Adopting a sustainable lifestyle might be more difficult depending on the stage a person is at in their life course. Is it more difficult when bringing up small children, or much later in life?

Despite the possibilities of individual change, change at industrial/commercial level is more important. This would include local community as well as global foci in relation to:

- Improvements in public transport to make this more attractive than driving
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles such as cycling
- Improve social housing towards 'green' buildings where any new housing should be energy efficient with substantial discounts for people that move into them
- Indeed, all new buildings should be 'green' buildings no matter for what purpose
- Investment in technology and innovation
- Provide the sorts of infrastructural supports to recycle with ease and without punishment.

Governments need to take a lead here in providing the policy context in which such change is unavoidable. A change of thinking throughout all levels of society is imperative, underpinned by social policy for more sustainable lifestyles. In this sense, direct change was also suggested with adding further tax to air fares and car fuels and imposing quotas on those using air miles and 4x4 cars – each could have an ecological footprint. The implication here (which may not be accurate) is that people won't adopt more sustainable lifestyles unless forced to do so and that they can be forced by financial sanctions. We should ensure that sustainable policy meets practice and that its not just rhetoric.

But it is not all about what governments can promote; it is also about how powerful social institutions can work towards sustainability as a priority. For instance, there is a need for education about sustainability in schools, built on solid knowledge. In general, people need to be more consciousness about food miles, although this is slowly happening as the media is raising awareness of issues of sustainability in a range of different domains. The idea here is to prevent a top down approach that alienates at community and individual level, but, instead addresses the middle ground collectively. Without the appropriate knowledge and incentives, people can't hope to be self-sufficient, engage with the concept of environmental limits, understand their own carbon footprint and impose quotas on themselves.

Ultimately, we are at the stage in societal and global development where serious discussion needs to be taking place about 'what really matters' in the present and for our futures. Can we really progress with the notion of well-being built on ever increasing patterns of consumption or on environmental sustainability?

2. *MAIN COURSE:* Are we moving into a post economic society?

Much of the discussion under this question revolved around: What does post economic mean? How does it involve money, power, employment, education? Are we really moving into late modernity rather than post-modernity?

There needs to be a fundament shift in thinking, moving away from making money, enjoying material wealth, acquiring a better house, car, more holidays and so on, towards a vision of well-being built on collective happiness, togetherness, friendships, social networks, work for social development, equality, justice. Of course, economic development is required to underpin this vision but with a movement away from an emphasis on GDP and materialism to Gross Domestic Happiness. It is difficult to imagine what a post-material economy would look like as we are confined by our own experience of our capitalist world.

Currently, there is little chance of a real paradigm shift since government policy is focussed on maximising economic growth at all costs and people have been sold a dream of wealth creation to fuel individual happiness via acquiring the best car and a new TV. Resistance to the consumerist path does happen and is beginning to get beyond the margins. In this way, new social movements might make some difference but have little power to sustain change on a societal level. Understanding how and why such resistance is taking place amongst some sectors of society and not others is a critical question as we all need to buy into post-modern sustainable communities.

Being green will be expensive in the short term, possible the long term as well and it may be that not all sectors of society will have an equal chance of embracing the new

way of being. There is also the notion of chosen social segregation – people who exclude themselves from norms of society because they are wealthy enough. Those less well off, those living in deprived communities, those most marginalised within society will be left behind and won't see the real benefits of 'the good life'.

3. *DESSERTS:* If policymakers had a free hand how might they promote sustainable lifestyles?

Interestingly, many of the discussions advocated 'involvement' of everyone, a situation where government/policy makers listen to what people really want. There needs to be a bottom up collaborative approach to defining societal priorities and practices for change. However, not all people (at individual, social or community level) want the same things, making collaboration a tough option, and consultancy without teeth an easy option to rubber stamp government led change. Currently, there is a general feeling throughout the population that consultation is all about talking and not about 'doing' and that essentially policy-makers have a free hand and that often, what they propose is not achievable and in the end nothing changes.

Initially, there is greater need for think tanks and lobbyists like the New Economics Foundation who have the ear of the government.

Where discussion did touch on the ways in which policy makers might promote sustainable lifestyles suggestions were:

- Policy-makers should go back to the Thatcher taxation policy:
    Reminder to sustainability vs more growth
    Progressive taxation would stifle growth
    Tax revenue put into public resources, eg public services
- The nuclear consultation has been made in the wrong way.
- Less focus on individuals – focus more on multinational companies.
- Put regeneration and sustainability on the curriculum.
- Promote sustainability through incentives not sanctions
- Focus on individual v social freedoms including discourse on 'freedom for whom and to do what?' This should include freedom not to 'be green', would we want a society in which vegetarianism is compulsory?

4. *DRINKS:* How can communities be made sustainable?

Should we be talking about 'How can communities be made sustainable' OR 'How can communities be enabled to be sustainable?' This is an important difference because it shifts the focus from enforcement to empowerment. The state is not a benign beast, but has it's own agenda in which enforcement is a lynchpin.

One key issue relates to the ways in which policy might provide the supports for more sustainable communities, if such a concept is a reasonable one. Policy-makers should be engaging with communities more on a genuine basis whereby those engage in policy development and change listen (on an equal basis) to what ordinary people living everyday lives feel is achievable in relation to sustainability..

In addition, if communities are to change and well-being to improve, then government needs to engage more fully (and openly) with social enterprise so that community

based initiatives are not foisted on communities but are designed and led more by a variety of community members/stakeholders.

There needs to be bottom up approach to 'listening to' and 'engaging with' in the first instance, and to continued involvement throughout decision making and implementation of change. However, change can only go so far and there will always be the issue that true and effective sustainability is too optimistic an endeavour.

Recipes for sustainable communities included:

-   The need for more open spaces – trees and parks
-   Preserving social networks and personal relationships
-   Focus on emotional needs
-   Focus on the needs of more marginalised groups such as the elderly
-   Less TV and more leisure opportunities whereby opportunities for leisure are designed for people not for consumption; not for function, but for interaction.
-   Look at the role of virtual communities – email; online forums etc. need to embrace new technology
-   Ban all supermarkets, ban all caravans
-   Look at how transience affects the local population and the negative effects that this can have on the community

The role of community champions re social agency was discussed. Some felt the need for local people with knowledge and experience to champion the ideas of a sustainable community. This might include children and young people developing a personal stake in sustainable communities and developing the conditions for greater well-being. At the moment, while a European survey has suggested that UK young people have the poorest well-being, teenagers are generally seen as a separate species, and derided as a nuisance rather than a resource for change. However greater community based engagement and commitment should be available for all community members, no matter their age or status. The key is for people to be accountable to one another and to communicate well rather than to become entrenched in 'side taking'. It is only when people feel they belong to a community that such commitment takes place.

Sustainability Day

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APPENDIX

WELL-BEING:

Individual, Community and Social Perspectives

Edited by John Haworth and Graham Hart

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
John Haworth and Graham Hart

We are all interested in well-being, consciously or sub-consciously, as together we create well-being. In recent years, researchers, educators, policy makers and politicians have been directly concerned with well-being, which has been viewed variously as happiness, satisfaction, enjoyment, contentment; and engagement and fulfilment, or a combination of these, and other, hedonic and eudaimonic factors. Well-being is also viewed as a process, something we do together, and as sense making, rather than just a state of being. It is acknowledged that in life as a whole there will be periods of ill-being, and that these may add richness to life. It has also been recognised that well-being and the environment are intimately interconnected. Certainly, well-being is seen to be complex and multifaceted, and may take different forms.

The book has its origins in a series of transdisciplinary seminars on well-being funded by grants from the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK.[1] The objective of the seminars was not to replace, but provide an alternative to, and to complement, the overwhelming harm-based focus of much social scientific research into health. Well-being offers a paradigm that allows those in the academic, policy and user fields to focus on positive outcomes, and how best to realise them. The series, and related publications, show the importance of societal, environmental, and individual factors for well-being.[2] Contributors to the seminars, and others eminent in their field, were commissioned to write in-depth chapters for the present book. Each

chapter is important for well-being in its own right. Together they present a new dynamic view of well-being, one which will be crucial for the way in which we will cope with the 21st Century.

In recent years in the USA there has been a focus on 'Positive Psychology' concerned with factors leading to well-being and positive individuals (e.g. Kahneman, Diener & Schwartze, 1999; Special Edition of the American Psychologist, January 2000: Snyder and Lopez, 2000; Keyes and Haidt, 2002; Seligman, 2003; Sheldon, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi 2006; website www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu) Positive psychology is seen as concerned with how normal people might flourish under benign conditions -- the thriving individual and the thriving community. Positive Psychology changes the focus of psychology from preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life to building the best things in life. In the USA, the field of Positive Psychology at the subjective level is about positive experience: well-being, optimism, hope, happiness, and flow. At the individual level it is about the character strengths--the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, and genius. At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: leadership, responsibility, parenting, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

In discussing 'Positive Psychology', Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) distinguish between pleasure and enjoyment. They note that

'Pleasure is the good feeling that comes from satisfying homeostatic needs such as hunger, sex, and bodily comfort. Enjoyment on the other hand, refers to the good feelings people experience when they break through the limits of homeostasis – when they do something that stretches them beyond what they were – in an athletic event, an artistic performance, a good deed, a stimulating conversation. Enjoyment, rather than pleasure, is what leads to personal growth and long term happiness'.

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006), in an edited book on what makes life worth living, highlight the importance of personally meaningful goals, individual strengths and virtues, and intrinsic motivation and autonomy, in what makes people happy and life meaningful. Positive emotions and the development of personal resilience are also important in optimal functioning (Fredrickson, 2006)

A European positive psychology net work has also been established (www.enpp.org) This promotes regular conferences and publications (e.g. Linley and Joseph, 2004; Delle Fave, 2006). In Europe, a World Data Base of Happiness Research is freely available on the internet at http://www.eur.nl./fsw/research/happiness

The positive psychology programme is very praiseworthy, and is stimulating much needed research in many countries. However, it focuses primarily on individual influences on well-being. The programme could be enhanced by the study of the influence of social institutions on behaviour and well-being (eg Jahoda (1982). Prilleltensky (2001, 2006) argues from extensive studies that wellness is achieved by the simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of personal, interpersonal and collective needs.

In the UK, the study of well-being is now a key element in the Economic and Social Research Council's Lifecourse, Lifestyle, and Health Thematic Priority 2000. UK perspectives on well-being and happiness include psychological (Argyle 2002), psycho-biological (Huppert el al 2005), social (Halpern 2005), and economic approaches

(Oswald, 2003, Layard 2003, 2005, New Economics Foundation :
www.neweconomics.org). Layard reviewed evidence showing that above a certain level,
economic growth (GDP) does not increase overall societal well-being, as people evaluate
their income in relation to changing standards. Research by Wilkinson (1996, 2000)
shows that increase in socio-economic inequalities in developed countries is associated
with health inequality; which is likely to be detrimental to the well-being of individuals
and communities. Doran and Whitehead (2004) also show from research in the UK that
social policies and political context matter for health. The UK Cabinet Office has
produced a report on Life Satisfaction (Donovan, Halpern and Sargeant, 2002). This
found strong links between work satisfaction and overall life satisfaction, and also
between active leisure activities and overall satisfaction, concluding that there is a case for
government intervention to boost life satisfaction, by encouraging a more leisured work-
life balance. Another approach emphasises a set of practices, rather than a state of
happiness. For example, Perri (2002) argued that well-being is about what people
recognise, within particular institutions, as a shared life – a life well lived and worth
living together.

The study of both work and leisure has contributed significantly to the broader
approach to well-being (e.g. Jahoda 1982; Warr 1987, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi and Le
Fevre 1989; Roberts 1999; Taylor 2001, 2002; Haworth 1997; Haworth and Veal, 2004;
Haworth and Lewis, 2005; Iso-Ahola and Mannell, 2004; Stebbins 2004; Kay 2001,
2006). Warr (1987) in his concept of mental health from a Western perspective, advocates
the measurement of affective well-being, competence, autonomy, aspiration and
integrated functioning. However, it is the measure of affective well-being which has
received the greatest empirical attention (Warr, 1990). Delle Fave and Massimini (2003)
note that creative activities in leisure, work, and social interaction can give rise to 'flow'
or 'optimal' experiences. These experiences foster individual development and an
increase in skills in the lifelong cultivation of specific interests and activities. Taylor
(2002) in a report on the ESRC funded Future of Work programme advocates that a
determined effort is required to assess the purpose of paid work in all our lives, and the
need to negotiate a genuine trade-off between the needs of job efficiency and leisure. The
report considers that class and occupational differences remain of fundamental importance
to any understanding of the world of work. Arguably, class is also important in
understanding the world of leisure. Critcher and Bramham (2004) state that 'Where access
to leisure increasingly rests on the capacity to purchase goods and services in the market,
the distribution of income becomes an important determinant of leisure life chances'. A
recent European Union funded qualitative research project, Transitions,
(www.workliferesearch.org/transitions), examined the transition to parenthood among
employees in changing European workplaces. It found a drive for more efficiency and an
intensification of work across all the countries studied; a widespread implementation gap
between policies to support the reconciliation of work and family, and actual practice; and
persisting gender differences in work-life responsibilities and experiences. The study also
highlighted the important role in well-being played by managers and work colleagues.
The research showed that the study of well-being benefits from being located in a life
domain.

Many of the chapters in this book arise from this milieu of research on well-being.
They both develop and challenge existing concepts and approaches. Other chapters bring
fresh perspectives to research on well-being from different disciplines. In Part 1 of the
book the chapters have a primary focus on individual and community approaches to well-
being. They show how these are inevitably intertwined, and that both homogeneity and
diversity (or what may be termed 'constrained diversity') exist in society. In Part 2

individual and community perspectives are combined with a societal dimension, set in a global environmental context. Each chapter in the book is important for its own domain of enquiry, while reflecting the interconnectedness of domains. Summaries of the chapters are provided for each part, and presented together. These indicate not just the desirability, but the necessity for addressing well-being from individual, community and societal perspectives, in an integrated manner; not least in tackling increasing social inequalities in societies (Navarro, 2004).

Considered together, the chapters show the emergent influence on research into well-being of the experiential model of consciousness and being proposed by Merleau-Ponty, (1962) This model emphasises the intertwining of experience and being, and the importance of both pre-reflexive and reflexive thought (see Haworth, 1997 chp 7). The chapters also reveal the importance of recognising 'constrained diversity' in the human condition, and the necessity to consider the implications of this for research and policy in complex, uncertain situations, with associated unintended consequences of action. Such an approach to well-being could be used to implement several types of interventions or enhancements for well-being (Pawelsky 2006), including empowerment, which is a relatively neglected approach in positive psychology. The approach would also sit comfortably with the analysis and call for a Social Policy for the 21st Century (Jordan 2006)

The introduction concludes by summarising several key concepts relating to well-being identified in the book.

PART 1 INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON WELL-BEING

Jane Henry in Chapter 1 on 'Positive Psychology and the Development of Well-being' notes that Positive psychology focuses on the positive side of life, and that despite an espoused concern with institutions in the sense of a concern with civic values, for example, the majority of positive psychology studies to date have focused at the level of the individual. In her chapter she gives an illustration of some of the positive psychology research on well-being, positive style and positive experiences. Both simple and multi-dimensional measures of well-being have been used effectively. Positive style includes important research into an individual's natural talents or strengths, though difficulties are associated with searching for a universal list of strengths. A positive explanatory style, such as optimism is generally beneficial, though this may not always be the case for different personality types. From her research, Henry advocates that both working to accentuate the positive and to cope better with the negative have their place. She also notes that there is some evidence that positive and negative affect are two separate variables, not a unipolar one; thus reducing negative affect and increasing positive affect may be separate enterprises.

Research into the experience of 'flow' is recognised as important, though Henry notes that there are probably many other states of optimal experience other than flow, notably varieties of contentment and other low arousal states of satisfaction. These types of experiences have been more thoroughly examined in spiritual practice than psychology. She considers they deserve further research.

Henry discusses her research into what people thought had accounted for any long term improvement in their own well-being. These studies suggest that intuitive, physically active and social approaches have been valued by more people than reflective routes. Henry considers that they challenge not only the dominance of talking therapy as the favoured route to self-improvement but the rather individualistic and goal–oriented route to well-being emphasised by many positive psychologists and other caring professionals.

Antonella Delle Fave in chapter 2 on 'Individual development and community empowerment: suggestions from studies on optimal experience' emphasizes the role of individuals as active agents in shaping their cultural environment and in promoting its complexity. In cultural evolution, psychological selection is important, with optimal experience playing an important role, fostering personal growth and cultural empowerment. Cross cultural research on optimal experience by the author using a questionnaire showed that the activity categories associated with the most pervasive optimal experience were productive activities (work or study) and structured leisure (sports, arts and crafts, hobbies). Social and family interactions and the use of mass media followed with lower percentages. The findings also showed that optimal experience comprises a stable cognitive core (focus of attention, control of the situation) across activity categories, though wider variations across categories were detected in the values of affective (e.g. excitement) and motivational (e.g. wishing to do the activity) variables. While work can be important for optimal experience, the study showed that none of the blue collar and white collar participants in the present study (around 200 people) associated assembly line work or routine office tasks with the most pervasive optimal experiences.

The author considers that the extent to which a society provides its members with long-term meaningful, intrinsically rewarding and engaging activities can be indicative of a successful cultural transmission, in that it facilitates the preferential replication of such activities through psychological selection. The author advocates that information on people's perception of opportunities for optimal experiences in the daily domains is essential to design intervention programs grounded in individual potential for empowerment. This can facilitate an effective match between individual needs and values, on the one side, and society development and integration, on the other side. Also, from a broader perspective, in order to promote empowerment, the introduction of any cultural information – be it represented by an artifact, a law, a value, a philosophical outlook, an educational or organizational strategy – has to take into account its consequences for the well-being of individuals, of the ecosystem, and of other societies at the same time.

Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky in chapter 3 discuss 'Webs of Well-Being: The Interdependence of Personal, Relational, Organizational and Communal Well-Being'. The main premise of the chapter is that what happens in any domain of well-being – collective, organizational, relational or personal – affects the others. They argue that to minimise the importance of contextual factors on well-being has adverse consequences for understanding psychological processes and efforts at social change.

The authors present a model of well-being consisting of sites, signs, sources, strategies and synergy, which captures the interdependence of personal, relational, organizational and communal well-being. The sites are where well-being takes place, for example, personal, indicated by signs such as personal control. A clean environment, freedom from discrimination, safe neighborhoods, good schools, and employment opportunities are signs of community well-being. These are communal goods that benefit everyone. Well-being at the different sites is dependent on a variety of sources. For example, nurturance and early positive experiences of attachment influence relational well-being. The fourth S is for strategies. To promote well-being in each one of the sites of interest -- persons, relationships, organizations and communities –a plan of action is needed. Synergy, the fifth S, comes about when an understanding of sources and strategies is combined. In accord with the concept of webs, the best results for any one site of wellness come about when work is done on all fronts at the same time.

The authors argue that the key to successful strategies is that they must be specific enough to address each one of the sites, signs, and respective sources of well-being at the same time. Interventions that concentrate strictly on personal sites neglect the many resources that organizations and communities contribute to personal well-being. Paradoxically, strategies that concentrate exclusively on personal well-being undermine well-being because they do not support the infrastructure that enhances well-being itself. The authors believe that this has been a major gap in previous efforts to sustain individual well-being through strictly psychological means such as cognitive reframing, positive thinking, information sharing, and skill building. Individuals cannot significantly alter their level of well-being in the absence of concordant environmental changes. Conversely, any strategy that promotes well-being by environmental changes alone is bound to be limited. The authors consider that there is ample evidence to suggest that the most promising approaches combine strategies for personal, organizational, and collective change. It is not one or the other, but the combination of them all that is the best avenue to seek higher levels of well-being in these three sites.

Judith Sixsmith and Margaret Boneham in chapter 4 on 'Health, Well-being and Social Capital' examine the concept of social capital focussing on the key components of participation, trust and reciprocity, and social networks of bonding, bridging and linking ties. They review qualitative work which has begun to map out the different processes and mechanisms through which social capital is fundamental to an understanding of community relations and has implications for health and well-being.

Social capital may operate in different ways, reflecting heterogeneous community groups. Thus any analysis of social capital needs to pay attention to marginalized groups and how everyday lives are lived in diverse community contexts. Sixsmith, Boneham and Goldring's (2001) study of the relationship between social capital, health and gender in a disadvantaged community, found that intimate social bonds offered important opportunities for social support, paralleling Kagan's (2000) conclusions that, "The poor neighbourhood may have weak and inward looking networks, which nevertheless offer strong support in adversity". However, the relationship between bridging capital and individual well-being was more complex with advantages for the community as a whole in the establishment of bridging ties to professional help but less benefit for individual community leaders whose expectations were poorly aligned to professional methods of communication. The lack of accessible bridging and linking capital to professional advice meant that more inventive ways of perceiving health and illness were not aired (Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003) Sixsmith and Boneham's research also indicates that an understanding of the relationships between social capital, health and well-being must involve an appreciation of issues of gender and place.

The authors note that whilst poverty, discrimination and deprivation may exert their negative influence through undermining stocks of social capital, simply bolstering communities stocks of social capital is no panacea. Indeed, it could be argued that emphasis on the role of social capital in enhancing health might divert attention away form the more urgent need to improve health through reducing income inequalities. They advocate that if the Government is serious about reducing health inequalities and improving people's quality of life, there needs to be a genuine three way partnership between people, local communities and the Government (DoH, 1999). Social structures that cater for individual and social well-being need to be strengthened which empower people and local communities in the face of an increasingly centralising government agenda. It is only when people, communities and the Government work equally together that social policy can make a real positive change in peoples health and well-being.

Carolyn Kagan and Amanda Kilroy in chapter 5 on 'Psychology in the community' outline the key principles of community psychology, look at how community well-being is understood, and explore the role of boundary critique as a means of developing critical awareness about community interventions designed to enhance well-being. Community psychology is seen as a value based practice that focuses its attention on those most marginalised by the social system The underlying principles of a radical community psychological praxis are seen as: articulation of an explicit value base (a just society and its underpinning values); use of ecological metaphor; adoption of a whole systems perspective; interdisciplinary working; understanding and working with the dialectic relationship between people and systems; and practices enhancing peoples' critical consciousness. The concept of well-being in the community, and of the community, is multifaceted. It recognises that for people to lead truly flourishing lives they need to feel they are personally satisfied and developing; that eudaimonic well-being (personal development and fulfilment) is as important as hedonic well-being (satisfaction and happiness). At the same time a community psychological perspective, however, would suggest that both the hedonic and eudaimonic well-being of people who are socially excluded, are inseparable from not only their economic position, the environmental conditions in which they live and the political and ideological messages that confine them to poverty whilst enjoining them to break free and better themselves, but also from the human services that exist to both assist and to regulate them. Yet few attempts have been made to explore the interconnections.

The authors and colleagues have been exploring the impact of participation in the arts on health and well-being from a community psychological perspective. They have drawn on critical systems thinking (CST) in their work on evaluation. In this chapter they discuss one aspect of this, namely, boundary critique. A particular brief was to examine how participation in arts projects leads to changes in well-being and mental health and to make recommendations for project improvement. The evaluations were to involve close collaboration between the artists and researchers. Early on, a number of boundary disputes became clear. For example, artists and researchers had different ways of understanding well-being, which led to an inability to agree how best to conceptualise well-being and describe it within the evaluation. Artists and researchers also disagreed about the relative importance of the aesthetic product and the processes of creation and creativity used within the projects, which meant that agreement could not be reached about a relevant evaluation framework. Discussing these boundary disputes just served to strengthen the impasse. An Appreciative inquiry (AI) approach, described in the chapter, was chosen to encourage a deeper and more meaningful means of communication. The chapter discusses the concept of boundary and boundary critique, a topic of considerable importance to issues of communication and negotiation in community well-being.

David Haley in his contribution to chapter 6 on 'Art, health and well-being' argues that an expanded dynamic notion of art could provide the creative dialogue needed to value disparate readings of well-being. He notes that art, freedom and democracy mean different things to different people and are "essentially contested"; and that these and other concepts, such as well-being and health, cannot, therefore be defined in terms of formal, analytical philosophy. He cites George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought (1999), who argue '... for an experientially responsible philosophy, one that incorporates results concerning the embodiment of mind, the cognitive unconscious, and metaphysical thought.' His text explores some aspects of art, health and well-being to try to understand how they may resonate with each other to generate understandings of what a 'better quality of life' might

be. Art in its broadest sense is seen as virtuous ways of making and understanding the world. It recognises that art can be integral to everyday life, that there is an embodied need for all organisms to engage with their evolutionary development and participate in creative processes, and that the environment is part of our being and identity. Denial of this embodied ecology and these therapeutic creative activities can be experienced as chronic forms of personal, community and societal neuroses - an intrinsic lack of well-being.

Haley highlights an alternative to rationally based problem based learning, termed 'question based learning'. Here the premise is that we don't know, and that we have to listen and learn from a situation before acting. This approach informs a constantly evolving notion of well-being, achieved as a dynamic creative process. He cites scientists and artists advocating a form of free exchange of ideas and information fundamental for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated.

Peter Senior in his contribution to this chapter summarises the important part played by the arts for health and well-being in the UK and elsewhere. He notes that the arts today can bring many benefits to the healing environment. They assist recovery by encouraging feelings of well-being and alleviating stress. They can improve the quality of healthcare environments by linking art, architecture and interior design. Through their involvement in the arts the lives of patients, visitors and staff can be enriched. Closer links between the health services and the community can be developed through arts and cultural activities. A wide range of arts activities in Britain's health service is now provided by partnerships between the health service and arts organisations from the State and voluntary sectors, and between artists, healthcare staff and local communities. Activities include performances of music, theatre, puppetry, poetry, environmental and decorative arts schemes, and participatory arts projects for patients, staff and public.

In 1988 Peter Senior established Arts for Health as a national centre, located in the Faculty of Art and Design at the Manchester Metropolitan University (www.mmu.ac.uk/artsforhealth/). Its aim was to unite artists, designers and health authorities in establishing arts for health projects as an integral part of the nation's healthcare culture. He advocates that just as the purpose of medicine is to restore the human being to a state of well-being, so the aim of art within healthcare should be to reflect beauty, harmony and delight in ways that echo that purpose. Research studies are referenced which indicate the important work done by artists of all kinds working in health settings to raise awareness of the effect of the physical and social environment on staff, public and patients.

Perri 6 in chapter 7 on 'Sense and solidarities: politics and human well-being' notes that well-being encompasses a wide range of subjective and objective measures, and that, typically, it is treated as a variable to be optimised. The chapter argues that this understanding of well-being is misguided. It proposes an alternative account which includes the following three propositions:
Well-being is about what people will recognise, under particular institutions, as shared life well lived and worth living together over the life course.
Well-being is achieved as much by the ways in which people, under different institutions, make sense of their lives and their social world as it is by material resources.
Well-being is a set of practices, not a state. Some ill-being may be necessary to wellbeing, understood as a richer process than mere contentment.
The author considers that well-being is something that we do together, not something that we each possess. An adequate account of well-being is thus seen to require

a theory of the range of basic institutions of social organisation, within which people can make viable sense of their lives. This chapter uses a neo-Durkheimian institutional approach. It argues, contrary to post-modern conceptions, that the forms of social organisation – and hence of well-being – are not indefinitely various. Rather, there is a limited plurality of basic institutional forms, which support several hybrids or coalitions. In each form, quite distinct styles of sense-making and therefore of well-being are to be found. These basic forms of social organisation are in perpetual conflict with each other. Each springs up in response to the others. None can be eliminated from any viable society: attempts to do so will result in the return of the suppressed form, often in corrupt, illicit or violent forms. The central challenge for policy and politics of well-being, then, is to find ways in which the basic commitments of each of the forms can be articulated in an overarching settlement.

Well-being is thus seen as plural, complex, even unstable. The author argues that Social Science can provide understanding of the institutional framework within which policy makers must work. But it cannot promise, and policy makers should not demand, any universally valid, apolitical prescriptions. Social science can provide invaluable tools with which to support – but never substitute for – political judgment, and it can identify some pitfalls. It can tell the policy maker what to think about and how to think about those things, rather than telling them what to think.

One general maxim is given for policy makers –where all good things do not go together, where complex trade-offs must be struck between the four institutional orders that yield different value systems and capabilities for well-being, each with its own weaknesses and risks, one can reasonably suggest that policy makers ought to focus on the control of harms – accepting that there are always trade-offs between different harms – as a general priority before pursuing benefits.

An example is given of the practical use of the approach to public policy implied in the theoretical apparatus. The author suggests that the "social capital" argument has misread and misconstrued the empirical literature; and that there is not a sound base of evidence upon which to make robust assessments of the efficacy of interventions, and the balance of intended and unintended consequences, for different forms of social organisation. He advocates that policy makers need to engage in iterative design, evaluation and redesign, in reaching for accommodations.

PART 2 SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES ON WELL-BEING.

The chapters in this section show the importance of the links between the individual, society and the environment for well-being, which itself is complex and multifaceted. Culture, social institutions, and technological developments can influence well-being in both deleterious and beneficial ways. It is vitally important that research and analysis is undertaken at this level. Equally the chapters show that diversity permeates the relationship between the individual and society, requiring continued investigation in relation to well-being.

John Pickering in chapter 8 brings a perspective from ecopsychology on well-being. Ecopsycholgy considers there to be an emotional bond between human beings and the environment. Well-being means the feeling of having a place in the world, of being at home in the world, and of living in balance with the trials of life. Pickering argues that our relationship with the environment is increasingly violent and destructive. We are beginning to realise that the effects of our technologised lifestyles are leading to damage

on a global scale that we may not be able to repair. The unease that this creates is fundamentally detrimental to well-being. The effects may not be close to the surface of our conscious lives, but they are important nonetheless. In one sense, "today's job" is what it has always been: to seek well-being and to feel whole, secure in a stable identity. But this is made more difficult when identity itself is open to indefinite redefinition. Selfhood is constructed using what the culture around it provides. What we take our selves to be is in turn taken from what our cultural context defines a self to be. In the wealthy world selfhood is closely bound to the variety of lifestyles a rich and abundant culture can offer.

Pickering considers that a satisfying and sustainable relationship with the natural world has been, over the history of human kind, the basis of well-being. This is not a static condition but depends on a healthy balance between met and unmet needs. Yet advertising creates artificial needs which are designed to be permanently un-met. They act as an irritant, undermining our sense of balance between what we have, what we need and what we want. Much of what threatens well-being arises from the massive over-consumption required to meet pathological needs inflamed by media technology.

What some ecopsychologists have called the 'All-consuming Self' is a narcissistic condition in which selfhood becomes too strongly defined by possession, having been detached from its more natural supports by a barrage of consumerist images in the media. If this need to possess is pathologically inflated, the self/world boundary becomes a moving frontier of greed. Cultures in which it has taken hold will violently wrest what they want from the environment and from other cultures. This violence can be concealed within hyper-reality to some extent, but preconsciously the news leaks out. Combined with preconscious needs for self-actualisation that cannot be met, it makes for a powerful degradation of well-being. Pickering argues that well-being depends on a life in balance. He advocates that if our way of life is being driven deeply out of balance by artificial and unsustainable needs, this has to be addressed if we are to carry out research that is appropriate and useful.

Ballas et al in chapter 9 on 'Societal inequality, health and well-being' consider well-being at the ecological level and investigates the relationship between happiness and inequality across Britain. The chapter briefly reviews the theoretical background of happiness research and also considers its relevance to public policy. It can be argued that societies that are extremely polarised and divided are less desirable, and less 'well' than those which have elements of equity and communitarianism as their core values and principles. The chapter presents evidence for the recent widening of the gap between the rich and the poor leading to unprecedented post-World War II socio-economic polarisation and income inequalities in Britain. The geographies of income and wealth in Britain also show spatial dimensions of socio-economic polarisation. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey the geographical distribution of happiness in England and Wales shows similarities to the spatial dimensions of income distribution. The authors consider that, on the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, it becomes clearer that public policy that is aimed at income and wealth re-distribution and societal equality would probably lead to higher overall levels of happiness and well-being.

Hatch et al in chapter 10 discuss a life course approach to well-being. They see well-being as characterized by the capacity to actively participate in work and recreation, create meaningful relationships with others, develop a sense of autonomy and purpose in life, and to experience positive emotions. Well-being varies with age, and with personality and age-related attributes such as educational attainment and health status that are known

to be shaped by early life experience. They cite evidence from the 1946 British birth cohort study and other longitudinal studies, that developmental factors, the early social environment, early behaviour and temperament have long-term effects on adult physiological, cognitive and psychosocial well-being. An active pursuit of well-being over the life course implies a considerable amount of individual agency, which operates within the context of social structure that regulates access to fundamental resources (Link and Phelan 1995). They argue that a life course framework offers a dynamic model of the interplay over time between the individual and the environment that can be used to understand the factors that develop and maintain well-being and successful adaptation over the life course. They identify several theoretical constructs and processes concerning well-being that could be operationalised in longitudinal studies; with one objective being to develop social policy interventions.

Michael White in chapter 11 on 'Organisational Commitment: A Managerial Illusion?' examines one of the main ways in which working life can become more fulfilling: through a sense of involvement with and commitment to an organisation. This type of commitment, and the committed experience it can offer, is in principle available to most working age people, and there is a widespread belief that it can be effectively fostered by certain kinds of management practice that are becoming increasingly prevalent. Organisational commitment (OC) vies with job satisfaction as the leading current indicator of well-being at work. By being committed, we demand more of ourselves and express more of our potential. Through our commitments taken as a whole, we also express the values that we wish to shape our lives. Our commitments define our selves, and so commitment is closely linked to two other foci of contemporary desire: personal choice, and identity.

The chapter examines OC by means of two sample surveys of employed people, the Employment in Britain survey (EIB) of 1992, and the Working in Britain survey (WIB) of 2000/1. The surveys were nationally representative of people in paid work aged 20-60; the information was collected by means of personal interviews in the employed people's homes. The surveys show that while an increased number of employees experienced High Commitment Management (HCM) practices over the period aimed at increasing OC, the average level of OC expressed by employees decreased. Some practices in some companies increased OC, but the response to HCM practices were variable. A detailed examination of the findings suggest that the managerial model of OC, whereby the employer can 'produce' or 'generate' OC by taking certain actions, is misconceived. A model that better fits the findings is one where employees actively look for what they can engage with and commit to because it matches their preferences. What attracts them towards a commitment at one time may attract them less at a later time, or vice versa. For some people, for example, the issue of work–life balance can influence OC. The author argues that in important respects people construct their own well-being, and one of the ways in which they do so is by choosing commitments which make them more fully or more actively the people they want to be. The chapter recognises that HCM practices have some positive effect on OC, and suggests they may be linked with a 'diversity policy' that recognises the diversity of personal circumstances and values among employees, which may possibly provide a more nurturing environment for employees' spontaneous commitments.

Susan Lewis and Christina Purcell in Chapter 12 focus on 'Well-being, paid work and personal life'. Positive well-being is increasingly conceptualised in terms of the satisfactory integration or harmonisation of work and family – often referred to as "work-

life balance". The authors draw on data from an EU Framework Five study, (Transitions) which examined how young European women and men negotiate motherhood and fatherhood and work-family boundaries, and how this impacts on their well-being. This chapter draws on one case study of a finance sector organisation in the UK, although the discussion of this case is contextualised within the wider study. The study shows the crucial role played by managers. Workplace policies and practices are shaped by national and local regulations, but are also increasingly a matter of daily and informal negotiation with managers in local organisations. Well-being for parents varied across departments, highlighting the discretionary application of informal, trust-based policies. However, even when managers and their working practices did enhance parents' flexibility and autonomy over work and family boundaries, this tended to be undermined by other factors, particularly long hours and the intensification of work. The study also showed that social comparison and sense of entitlement are important in determining expectations and subsequent well-being; and that the transition to parenthood reinforces traditional gender identity and roles within couples - women being under more pressure to be carers and men to be main wage-earners.

The study showed the important role of context on well-being. Access to high affordable quality childcare is crucial to attitudes to, and experience of, employed parenthood, although this concerned mothers rather than fathers. Finance was also a real issue for the lower paid employees in the context of high house prices and child care costs. There was much evidence across all the case studies of an intensification of the expectations of parenting, which includes aspiration to provide not only more time and attention but also more material goods. To some extent the parents' sense of well-being reflected their expectations of work and of their ability to attain their aspirations for themselves and their children – based on consumerism rather than citizenship (Sointu, 2005). However, the finance sector participants were very different in their expectations and ambitions than the social services participants in the UK public sector case study.

The study argues that well-being is complex, multi-faceted, fluctuating over time and influenced by the many layers of context in which individual's lives are embedded, which indicates the need for a multi-layered approach to policy. Changes in legislation alone are of limited value for enhancing well-being of new parents without shifts in organisational, family and community values and practices. The authors advocate a life-course approach to research into well-being

John Haworth in chapter 13 on 'Work, leisure and well-being in changing social conditions' notes that the meanings and concepts of work and leisure are being re-appraised; and that the relationships between work, leisure, social structure and well-being have emerged as challenging concerns for researchers, educators and policy makers. A recent Government report in the UK on 'Life Satisfaction: the state of knowledge and implications for government' cited strong links between work satisfaction and overall life satisfaction, and also between active leisure activities and overall satisfaction. Yet many people feel stressed because of financial difficulties and the dominance of work, and in such situations leisure is used primarily for recuperation from work.

Research into work and leisure has significantly informed the study of well-being. Jahoda (1982) has made a crucial case for the importance of the social institution of employment for well-being. She identified five categories of experience which employment automatically provides. These are: time structure, social contact, collective effort or purpose, social identity or status, and regular activity. Jahoda emphasises that in modern society it is the social institution of employment which is the main provider of the

five categories of experience. She considers that since the Industrial Revolution employment has shaped the form of our daily lives, our experience of work and leisure, and our attitudes, values and beliefs. Jahoda regards dependency on social institutions not as good or bad but as the sine qua non of human existence.

The categories of experience identified by Jahoda have been incorporated in the nine environmental factors proposed by Warr, (1987) as important for well-being. These features of the environment, such as opportunity for control, are considered to interact with characteristics of the person to facilitate or constrain psychological well-being or mental health. Research by the author and colleagues shows strong associations between each of the nine factors and measures of mental health. An important development of the model is the inclusion of the role of enjoyment.

Extensive research shows that enjoyment in both work and leisure is important for well-being. Using the experience sampling method, the author and colleagues found that experiences which are challenging, met with equal skill and enjoyable (enjoyable 'flow' experiences), were associated with higher levels of well-being, measured by standard questionnaires. Enjoyable flow experiences come from both work and leisure. It has been argued that it is not possible to say what is a healthy work life balance, and that a range of affective experiences should be examined in daily life.

Taylor (2002) considers that class and occupational differences remain of fundamental importance to any understanding of the world of work. Class is also important in understanding the world of leisure (Critcher and Bramham (2004).Haworth concludes with the following points: It is important to monitor the distribution of resources available for work and leisure in different groups in society. The social and economic institutions of work and leisure also need to be more in balance. Equally, in societies characterised by diversity, research is needed into the experiences and motivations of individuals with varying work and leisure life-styles, as there is no one correct policy for work and leisure.

Ray Pahl in chapter 14 on 'Friendship, Trust and Mutuality' notes that the importance of friends for well-being has long been understood. He also identifies the central paradox in the sociological theory of friendship. On the one hand there are those, such as Simmel and Bauman, who argue that the institutions and values of market society and consumerism destroy the conditions in which the true ideal of friendship can flourish. Yet, on the other hand, Silver argues that it is only under the conditions of modern society that the distinctive ideal can possibly emerge.

Pahl considers that if we limit ourselves to ideals and dispositions we are getting little understanding of the actual empirical reality of the friendly relationships most people have in their everyday lives. He draws on research undertaken by Liz Spencer and himself over the past decade concerned with 'Rethinking Friendship'. The research design was rigorously qualitative and at its heart was the exploration and analysis of the people whom respondents considered 'were important to them now'. The research showed the diverse nature of friendship in Britain today. For example, some of the friendly relationships were so close that they could be described as being quasi-family. Other friendships, by contrast, were casual, shallow and short-lived. Certain kinds of friends – associates, neighbours, 'fun friends' - may fade when people move, or follow different life-course trajectories. Yet such fun friends can be immensely affectionate and last a life-time. The research also showed the suffusion of family and non-family forms of relationship, and distinctive personal communities. Family based communities were found to have less

poor well-being than 'partner-based' and 'professional-based' personal communities. The author concludes that not only is friendship essential for our individual and collective well-being, its disciplined study and exploration can help us as a society to be more conscious of the processes of which we form a part. The author suggests that friendship should be studied in schools.

CONCLUSION

Several key concepts relating to well-being have been identified in the book. These include the following:

➢ Well-being is complex and multifaceted. It is considered as a state and a process. It is a contested concept.

➢ Well-being includes personal, interpersonal, and collective needs, which influence each other.

➢ Well-being may take different forms, which may conflict across groups in society, requiring an overarching settlement. Well-being may also take different forms over the life-course of an individual.

➢ Well-being is intimately intertwined with the physical, cultural and technological environment, and requires a global perspective.

➢ Interventions to enhance well-being may take different forms. They should be conducted at individual, community, and societal levels, ideally in concert. Interventions need to recognise diversity and socio-economic inequalities in society, and be concerned with the unintended as well as the intended consequences of action.

NOTES

[1]The co-ordinators for the seminar series were: Dr John Haworth and Professor Graham Hart; and Professor Sarah Curtis from the Department of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London.

[2]Papers from the seminars, and links to other research on well-being, can be found at the project website http://www.wellbeing-esrc.com

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