"All's well that ends well!" subjective wellbeing: an epistemic enquiry

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Subjective Wellbeing: An Epistemic Enquiry

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Abstract

Wellbeing in general is represented in terms of the quality of life of an individual or group. The different objective and subjective indicators that go into the composition of quality of life leave its definition and measurement elusive, despite its global recognition as a policy goal. Attempts at an objective measure have brought out two basic methodological alternatives. The first, objective, measure has come out as the famous Physical Quality of Life Index, supplanted now by the Human Development Index. The second one, dealing with subjective wellbeing, focuses upon self-reported levels of happiness, pleasure, fulfillment etc. The present study, divided into five sections, is an epistemic enquiry into subjective wellbeing. After the introductory remarks, section 2 presents the recent discussions in the theory of subjective wellbeing, especially in terms of life satisfaction and domain satisfaction and their relationship. Section 3 introduces the concepts of Hedonism and Eudaimonia in the notion of wellbeing; one's life goes well to the extent that one is contented with it (hedonistic element); at the same time, it is the term wellbeing', not the term 'happiness', that denotes the notion of what makes life good for the individual living that life (eudaimonia). Section 4 traces the development of the concept of wellbeing in terms of Utilitarian philosophy in the 18th century and section 5 discusses wellbeing in the context of the theory of justice. The next section presents the capabilities approach of Sen and Nussbaum in the wellbeing framework. While Rawls limited his analysis of social welfare to the 'social primary goods' that rational humans need or desire, and 'negative freedoms' that involve the absence of interference, the capabilities approach of Sen and Nussbaum expanded on the base of Rawlsian philosophy to include 'positive freedoms' as well, like freedom from being constrained by poverty or a lack of education.

"Nora: That is just it; you have never understood me. I have been greatly wronged, Torvald—first by papa and then by you.

"Helmer: What! By us two—by us two, who have loved you better than anyone else in the world?

"Nora (*shaking her head*): You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me.

"Helmer: Nora, what do I hear you saying?

"Nora: It is perfectly true, Torvald. When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinions; and if I differed from him I concealed the fact, because he would not have liked it. He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. And when I came to live with you—

"Helmer: What sort of an expression is that to use about our marriage?

"Nora (*undisturbed*): I mean that I was simply transferred from papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as yours, else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which—I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as if I had been living here like a poor woman—just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.

"Helmer: How unreasonable and how ungrateful you are, Nora! Have you not been happy here?

"Nora: No, I have never been happy. I thought I was, but it has never really been so.

"Helmer: Not—not happy!

"Nora: No….. "

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (1879).

“Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death.

…….

“There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

“Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

…….

“ “Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

…….

“Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

……

“When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.”

Kate Chopin, *The Story of An Hour* (1894)

"All's Well That Ends Well!"

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1 Introduction

The question "What is good?" has always puzzled man and his quest has convinced him that being well is good for him; hence his wish for the whole world to be well ("*Lokā samastā sukhino bhavantu*!"). However, the question "What does wellbeing consist in?" has evoked different responses, including welfare (how a person is faring in general, whether well or badly), and happiness, from the utilitarians to the recent positive psychologists. The terms welfare and wellbeing are thus often used interchangeably; however, a definite distinction is applied in economics by denoting welfare for the public provision of a social minimum, and wellbeing for the condition of faring well of an individual or group. Thus the latter in general is represented in terms of the quality of life of an individual or group, including not only income, but also education, physical and psychic health, recreations, conducive environment, social belongingness, security, and so on. In contrast to this has earlier stood the concept of standard of living, based only on income, popularised by the mainstream economics in the name of basic needs approach, wherein basic human needs are equated with the demands (or preferences) for economic goods and services in the market (Doyal and Gough 1991; Etzioni 1988; Goudzwaard and deLange 1994; Max-Neef 1991). Called welfarism by Sen and Williams (Tomer, 2002), this approach has postulated that wellbeing increases as individuals consume more of the market goods they prefer. Welfarism has reduced wellbeing into a result of

human choice behaviour, "especially the individual welfare or profit maximizing choices of autonomous rational agents" (Nelson 1993: 25), having nothing to do with the real persons in a real objective world (Max-Neef 1991). Again welfarism has denuded wellbeing from all value judgments on the argument that consumer choice itself is normative, as it is the freedom to make choices that is of ultimate value (Etzioni 1988; Taylor 1991): "What is good is whatever is preferred." (Tomer 2002:25). Notable critics of this consumption (income)-wellbeing equality have been Sen (1985) and Nusbaum (1995) and recently those in psychological research such as Diener and Lucas (1999) and Easterlin (2003).

The different objective and subjective indicators that go into the composition of quality of life leave its definition and measurement elusive, despite its global recognition as a policy goal (Costanza, et al. 2008). Attempts at an objective measure have brought out two basic methodological alternatives. The first, objective, measure has come out as the famous Physical Quality of Life Index, developed by the sociologist Morris David Morris in the 1970s, based on the indicators of basic literacy, infant mortality, and life expectancy, and supplanted now by the Human Development Index. The second one, dealing with subjective wellbeing, focuses upon self-reported levels of happiness, pleasure, fulfillment etc. (Diener and Lucas 1999; and Easterlin 2003).

The present study is an epistemic enquiry into subjective wellbeing. What follows is divided into five sections. The next section presents the recent discussions in the theory of subjective wellbeing, especially in terms of life satisfaction and domain satisfaction and their relationship. Section 3 introduces the concepts of Hedonism and Eudaimonia in the notion of wellbeing; one's life goes well to the extent that one is contented with it (hedonistic element); at the same time, it is the term wellbeing', not the term 'happiness', that denotes the notion of what makes life good for the individual living that life (eudaimonia). Section 4 traces the development of the concept of wellbeing in terms of Utilitarian philosophy in the 18th century and section 5 discusses wellbeing in the context of the theory of justice. The next section presents the capabilities approach of Sen and Nussbaum in the wellbeing framework. While Rawls limited his analysis of social welfare to the 'social primary goods' that rational humans need or desire, and 'negative freedoms' that involve the absence of interference, the capabilities approach of Sen and

Nussbaum expanded on the base of Rawlsian philosophy to include 'positive freedoms' as well, like freedom from being constrained by poverty or a lack of education.

2 What is Subjective Wellbeing?

Wellbeing has always eluded definition. Diener (1984) groups the definition of wellbeing into three categories. First, wellbeing is defined by external criteria such as virtue or holiness. In this normative definition, wellbeing is not thought of as a subjective state but rather as one possessing some desirable qualities. Secondly, social scientists have focused on the question of what leads people to evaluate their lives in positive terms. This definition of wellbeing has sometimes come to be labeled 'life satisfaction' and relies on the respondents to determine what is non-instrumentally or ultimately good *for* a person, what a good life is. Thirdly, the term wellbeing denotes a preponderance of positive affect (experiencing pleasant emotions and moods) over negative affect (experiencing unpleasant, distressing emotions and moods), a positive hedonic balance, which emphasizes pleasant emotional experiences. Later on, Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith (1999) also included satisfaction in specific life domains (for example, satisfaction with health) in the definition of subjective wellbeing. Diener and Suh (1999) provide convincing evidence that subjective indicators are valid measures of happiness and well-being. The researchers often distinguish between cognitive and affective components of subjective wellbeing (Diener, 1984; (Diener et al., 1999). Life satisfaction and domain satisfaction are considered cognitive components because they are based on evaluative beliefs (attitudes) about one's life. In contrast, positive affect and negative affect assess the affective component of subjective wellbeing, the pleasant and unpleasant feelings that people experience in their lives. It should be noted that these definitions do overlap, since a good life cannot go without pleasant emotional experiences, without being happy.

There are mainly two theories of subjective wellbeing: bottom-up and top-down theories (Diener 1984). Bottom-up theories assume that life satisfaction judgments are based on an assessment of satisfaction in a relatively small number of life domains (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Brief, Butcher, George, and Link, 1993; Heller, Watson, and Hies, 2004; Schimmack, Diener, and Oishi, 2002). Thus, these theories assume that

correlations between life satisfaction (LS) and domain satisfaction (DS) reflect a causal influence of the latter (DS) on the former (LS). For example, an individual with high marital satisfaction has high life satisfaction because her marital satisfaction is an important aspect of her satisfaction with life as a whole. In contrast, top-down theories postulate the reverse direction of causality (i.e., life satisfaction causes domain satisfaction). Somebody who is generally satisfied with life may also evaluate life domains more positively although general satisfaction is not based on satisfaction with particular domains. The nature of the causal processes that link the two (DS and LS) has great practical importance. Only bottom-up theories predict that changes in domain satisfaction (for example, an increase in financial satisfaction) produce changes in life satisfaction. All other theories predict that changes in domain satisfaction have no consequences for individuals' life satisfaction.

3. Hedonism and Eudaimonia

Over the last few decades, positive psychology has immensely contributed to our understanding of the notion of 'happiness', understood in terms of contentment or 'life-satisfaction', and usually measured by means of self-reports or daily questionnaires. It is fairly assumed that one's life goes well to the extent that one is contented with it – that is, that there is some kind of hedonistic element in the notion of wellbeing. At the same time, it should be noted that we have to use the term 'wellbeing', not the term 'happiness', to denote the notion of what makes life good for the individual living that life.

Aristotle in his search for the *highest* good (in *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book 1) made an insightful distinction between two classes of happiness, that derived from pleasure, '*hedonia*', and that derived from a life of virtue and meaning, '*eudaimonia*'.

According to hedonism, well-being consists in the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. This view was first, and perhaps most famously, expressed by Socrates and Protagoras in the Platonic dialogue, *Protagoras* (Plato 1976 [circa 4 BC]). And the Classical Utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham, began his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* thus: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign

masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do." (Bentham 1996 [1789]). The two central aspects of these two experiences that help us measure their value, according to Bentham, are their duration, and intensity.

Aristotle, on the other hand, focussed on '*eudaimonia*' and equated it with 'living well'. To be *eudaimon* is to live in a way that is well-favoured by a god. Aristotle assumed that the highest good, whatsoever it is, has three characteristics: it is desirable for itself, it is not desirable for the sake of some other good, and all other goods are desirable for its sake. According to him, no one tries to live well for the sake of some further goal; rather, being *eudaimon is* the highest end, and all subordinate goals – health, wealth, and other such resources – are sought because they promote wellbeing, not because they are what wellbeing consists in.

To complete his theory, Aristotle then brought in 'function' or 'task' of a human being, and argued that the good consisted in functions of the rational soul in accordance with virtue. What differentiates humanity from other species, giving us the potential to live a better life, is our capacity to guide ourselves by means of reason. If we use reason well, we live well as human beings; or, to be more precise, happiness consists in using reason well over the course of a full life. Doing anything well requires virtue, and therefore living well consists in functions of the rational soul in accordance with virtue. At the same time, he made it clear that such wellbeing entails that one must possess other goods as well, such goods as friends, child, wealth, power, beauty and so on. One's happiness is endangered if one is severely deprived of such goods; that is, one's virtuous activity will be to some extent diminished or defective, if one is in some deprivation, if one is friendless, childless, powerless, weak, or ugly.

4. Wellbeing and the Utility Theory

The dominant European perspectives on wellbeing changed over time from this Aristotelian idea to the medieval metric of heavenly rewards and punishments determining our earthly wellbeing, to Calvinist predetermination, and finally to the scientific aestheticism of the Renaissance, which lasted until the dawn of Utilitarian philosophy in the 18th century (Segal 1991). Jeremy Bentham's (1789) *Introduction to*

the Principles of Morals was not the first, but is the best remembered discussion of the philosophy of Utilitarianism, in which human behavior is described as motivated by pleasure and pain – their net satisfaction being the 'utility'. Society's wellbeing was the sum of these utilities, such that an ethical course of action was that which led to 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number'. This formulation of social welfare was meant to be both egalitarian and individualistic: each person's utility was counted equally and each person got to determine what her own level of satisfaction was (Ackerman 1997a). In theory, utility could be summed across individuals to determine the 'social welfare', but utilitarianism did not offer any practical way to actually measure either individual or social wellbeing. Bentham also posited what would eventually come to be known as the diminishing marginal utility of goods, and, by extension, income or wealth: the idea being that each new unit of anything adds to your utility a little bit less than the last one. Later on, John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism (1861) allowed for a hierarchy of different qualities or types of pleasure, recognized the importance of social influences on individual attitudes, and acknowledged that individuals are not always the best judges of their own interests (Ackerman 1997a).

The basic precepts of Utilitarianism became the foundations of the Marginalist Welfare Economics that upheld two related ideas: first, that the goal of individuals was to maximize utility, and, second, a formalization of Bentham's idea that utility was concave, or diminishing on the margin. These ideas were independently formulated, using mathematical tools of marginal analysis, by Willam Stanley Jevons, Carl Menger, Leon Walras, and Alfred Marshal in the 1870s (Ackerman 1997a; Cooter and Rappoport 1984). Of these marginalists, Marshall (1890) is the best known for promoting the idea of 'satiable wants': though there is an endless variety of wants, each separate want has a limit. This familiar and fundamental tendency of human nature came to be stated in the law of satiable wants or of diminishing utility: the additional benefit which a person derives from a given increase of her stock of a thing, diminishes with every increase in the stock that she already has.

Interestingly, interpersonal comparisons were assumed to be impossible by proponents of the Marginalist Welfare School, but these comparisons were conducted nonetheless between large groups, like the rich and the poor (Cooter and Rappoport 1984). Following

the work of Arthur Cecil Pigou, the marginalists restricted their analysis to the necessities of life, using money as a 'measuring rod'. Focusing on the most material aspects of welfare led to the insight that additional income was more useful to the poor than the rich. Pigou and Marshal, in particular, were explicitly in favor of income redistribution because it would lead to more material wants being satisfied. Vilfredo Pareto – who was against redistribution– clarified the by now murky waters of utility by pointing out that there were really two concepts of utility, not one: usefulness was one form of utility, and *ophelimity*, or subjective desire, was the other. The Marginalist Welfare School was concerned only with the material wants of the former (Cooter and Rappoport 1984; Ackerman 1997b).

In 1932 the British economist Lionel Robbins critiqued the Marginalist Welfare School for having too narrow a focus on usefulness utility (e.g., bread) to the exclusion of ophelimity utility (e.g., opera tickets). Unlike material necessities, ophelimity cannot be observed or compared either between individuals or between groups of people. Robbins argued that cardinal measurement and interpersonal comparisons could never capture unobservable utility or satisfaction of others, and that it, therefore, could not be demonstrated or assumed that the marginal utility of income for the poor is greater than the marginal utility of income for the rich. The success of Robbins' rejection of cardinal measures of utility led to the so-called 'ordinalist revolution' in economics, and the birth of the neo-classical economics as we know it today (Robbins 1932; Cooter and Rappoport 1984).

The ordinalists noticed that if one were to combine the utilitarian concept of social welfare (defined as the sum of individual welfares) with another important marginalist assumption, diminishing marginal utility of income, the logical outcome is a very subversive result: Social welfare reaches its maximum when income was distributed equally across the population. Robbins (1932) took pains to reject this conclusion: according to him, the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility implies that the more one has of anything the less one values additional units thereof. Therefore, it is said, the more real income one has, the less one values additional units of income. Therefore, the marginal utility of a rich man's income is less than the marginal utility of a poor man's income. Therefore, if income were both concave in welfare and unequally distributed,

you could always increase social welfare by redistributing some income from the rich to the poor. This claim, he argued, rests upon an extension of the conception of diminishing marginal utility into a field in which it is entirely illegitimate and begs the great metaphysical question of the scientific comparability of different individual experiences.

Ian Little (1955) elaborated on Robbins critique and argued that individual satisfactions cannot be summed up, that satisfaction is never comparable among different individuals, and that the field of welfare economics up until that time had been – to its detriment – entirely normative. The utilitarian definition of social welfare was gradually replaced in welfare economics by the idea of 'Pareto optimality', a situation in which no one can be made better off without making someone else worse off. In the concept of Pareto optimality, individual welfare is still in terms of utility, but social welfare is defined by the absence or presence of Pareto optimality. In reality, this is a somewhat empty concept of social welfare since a very wide array of distributional situations can be Pareto optimal, and the only real opportunities for 'Pareto improvements' – when someone is made better off while no one is made worse off – occur when there are unclaimed or wasted resources.

The applied economics of social welfare has taken the form of cost-benefit analysis (CBA), a practical tool for making decisions about whether a project will improve social welfare (and should therefore be carried out) or reduce it (and should not be carried out). According to CBA, we should carry out the project only if the net present value of the future stream of benefits and costs of a project is positive. Abstracting from the vexing question of discount rates (by which future costs and benefits are translated into present values), this means that any addition to the size of the 'economic pie' is good, regardless of the distribution of costs and benefits (in that changes that improve the welfare of some while diminishing that of others somehow qualify as social welfare improvements). This decision rule runs counter to that of Pareto optimality, but it is similar to Bentham's social welfare as the sum of all individual welfares, the only difference being that what is summed is money rather than utility. Thus in applied neo-classical welfare economics, inter-personal comparability re-enters through the back door, while the diminishing marginal utility of income drops out of sight. However, the practice of adding up costs and benefits, and concluding that any positive net present value is good overlooks

problems of unequal distribution: who gets the benefits and who pays for the costs?

Bridging CBA back to ordinalist neo-classical welfare economics needed some conceptual leaps by means of what is called the 'compensation test'. If a project results in a positive net present value, then the economic pie gets bigger, and with a bigger pie potentially we could make everyone better off, or at least we could make some people better off while making no one worse off: a 'potential Pareto improvement'. Such a compensation test, introduced by Nicholas Kaldor and John Hicks, is a method for determining whether or not there has been a potential Pareto improvement (Cooter and Rappoport 1984; Jackson 1992). Those who receive net benefits (the winners) could *in principle* compensate those who bear net costs (the losers) and still be better off. However, note that the winners do not actually have to compensate the losers in CBA – there just has to be the *potential*. But when the costs accrue to one group and the benefits accrue to another, can it be said unequivocally that a positive net benefit is an increase to society's wellbeing?

CBA marries Pareto optimality to the compensation test at the microeconomic level. At macroeconomic level, Pareto optimality combined with the compensation test leads to GDP per capita as a measure of development and social welfare. It requires the same conceptual leap that CBA makes on the microeconomic level. Unless one assumes that there is a constant marginal utility of income, maximizing the sum of dollars is not the same as maximizing the sum of utility. But with a bigger dollar pie, it would be possible to distribute the additional dollars such that no one has less – a potential Pareto improvement that evades the problem posed by diminishing marginal utility of income. The practice of conflating per capita GDP with social welfare is, of course, subject to the same criticism that Sen levels against CBA.

5. Wellbeing and the Theory of Justice

All theories of justice (for example those of Hobbes, Locke, and Mill) conceptualise citizens as free and equal; political liberalism considers them reasonable also. Reasonable citizens have the capacity to abide by fair terms of cooperation, even at the expense of their own interests, provided that others are also willing to do so. John Rawls

(1971) calls this reasonableness the capacity for a *sense of justice*. He conceives citizens not only as free, equal and reasonable, but also as rational: they have the capacity to pursue and revise their own view of what is valuable in human life. He calls this the capacity for *a conception of the good*. Together these underlying capacities constitute the *two moral powers*. For Rawls, what are essential for developing and exercising these two moral powers, and useful for pursuing a wide range of specific conceptions of the good life are *primary goods*. These are:

> The basic rights and liberties;
> Freedom of movement, and free choice among a wide range of occupations;
> The powers of offices and positions of responsibility;
> Income and wealth;
> The social bases of self-respect: the recognition by social institutions that gives citizens a sense of self-worth and the confidence to carry out their plans. (Rawls 1971)

Citizens have some basic interests in getting more of these primary goods for their wellbeing. A good life also presupposes social cooperation in some form. Rawls' theory of justice embodies the central liberal ideas that cooperation should be fair to all citizens regarded as free and equal. His interpretation of these concepts can be seen in broad terms as a combination of a negative and a positive thesis.

The negative thesis is that citizens do not deserve to be born into a rich or a poor family, to be born naturally more gifted than others, to be born male or female, to be born a member of a particular racial group, and so on. This negative thesis does not in itself say how social goods should be distributed; it merely clears the decks. His positive distributive thesis is equality-based reciprocity. All social goods are to be distributed equally, unless an unequal distribution would be to everyone's advantage. These strong requirements of equality and reciprocal advantage are the hallmarks of Rawls' theory of justice.

These guiding ideas of justice as fairness are expressed in its two principles of justice (Rawls 1971):

First Principle: Each person has the same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all;

Second Principle: Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions:

(i) They are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of *fair equality of opportunity*;

(ii) They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the *difference principle*).

The first principle of equal basic liberties is to be used for designing the political constitution, while the second principle applies primarily to social and economic institutions. Fulfillment of the first principle takes priority over that of the second principle, and within the second principle fair equality of opportunity takes priority over the difference principle.

The first principle affirms for all citizens familiar basic rights and liberties: liberty of conscience and freedom of association, freedom of speech and liberty of the person, the rights to vote, to hold public office, to be treated in accordance with the rule of law, and so on. The second principle of justice has two parts. The first part, fair equality of opportunity, requires that citizens with the same talents and willingness to use them have the same educational and economic opportunities regardless of whether they were born rich or poor. The second part of the second principle, the difference principle, requires that social institutions be arranged so that inequalities of wealth and income work to the advantage of those who will be worst off. Starting from an imagined baseline of equality, a greater total product can be generated by allowing inequalities in wages and salaries: higher wages can cover the costs of training and education, for example, and can provide incentives to fill jobs that are more in demand. The difference principle requires that inequalities which increase the total product be to everyone's advantage, and specifically to the greatest advantage of the least advantaged.

These principles taken together form what he called the "maximin" rule for choice under

uncertainty: “the two principles are those a person would choose for the design of a society in which his enemy is to assign him his place. The maximin rule tells us to rank alternatives by their worst possible outcomes: we are to adopt the alternative the worst outcome of which is superior to the worst outcome of the others.” (Rawls 1971). Thus a Rawlsian notion of society’s well-being is one in which social welfare is said to be equal to the well-being of the society’s least well-off member.

6. Wellbeing and the Capabilities Theory

While Rawls limited his analysis of social welfare to the ‘social primary goods’ that rational humans need or desire, and ‘negative freedoms’ that involve the absence of interference, the capabilities approach of Sen and Nussbaum (as already explained earlier) expanded on the base of Rawlsian philosophy to include ‘positive freedoms’ as well, like freedom from being constrained by poverty or a lack of education (Sen 1987a; Rawls 1971; Crocker 1992, 1995). Like Aristotle, Sen and Nussbaum considered what human beings can do, instead of what they have. Moving the discussion away from utility and towards capabilities allowed them to distinguish means (like money) from ends (like well-being or freedom) (Crocker 1992, 1995).

While the neo-classical economists considered wellbeing in terms of individual utility, a mental state, Sen and Nussbaum took both wellbeing and agency as important, and utility inadequate as a measure of wellbeing: “Welfarism in general and utilitarianism in particular see value, ultimately, only in individual utility, which is defined in terms of some mental characteristics, such as pleasure, happiness, or desire. This is a restrictive approach to taking note of individual advantage in two distinctive ways: (1) it ignores freedom and concentrates only on achievements, and (2) it ignores achievements other than those reflected in one of these mental metrics.” (Sen 1992)

The capabilities approach, drawing on a rich history of economic and philosophical thought regarding social welfare, highlights the role of human beings as agents of their own wellbeing, and the centrality of human agency both as an end in itself, and as a means to other important capabilities or freedoms. As a critique of the theoretical neo-classical welfare economics, it brands down GDP per capita and CBA as inadequate

measures of social welfare to refute Pareto optimality's standing as a basis of making value judgments. In this light, the UNDP's human development index and other indices are an attempt to develop an applied measure of social welfare.

Appendix 1: Measurement of Subjective Wellbeing –

Web based resources

1. **Australian Centre on Quality of Life**
   http://acqol.deakin.edu.au/instruments/instrument.php

   Index of a few hundred quality of life and well-being related scales. This site gives a brief description of the scale, along with key references to scale development and relevant psychometric research.

2. **Positive psychology Centre, University of Pennsylvania**
   http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/ppquestionnaires.htm

   Useful measures linked from this site include:
   Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)
   Psychological Well-being Scales
   Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

3. **Authentic Happiness web-site**
   http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu

   Scales are available for self-completion, but key references and copy right information is given. Scales include those tapping into emotion, engagement, meaning and life satisfaction. Useful measures available at this site include:

PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule)

CES-D

Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Approaches to Happiness Scale

Some widely used recent measures

Mental health

Positive mental health

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)
http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/1467.aspx

Still under development and psychometric testing.

Currently 14 positively worded items, each with 5 response categories.

Covers most aspects of positive mental health (positive thoughts and feelings);

Currently in the literature, including both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives

Mental health scales, used within SWB literature

GHQ-12
http://www.webpoll.org/psych/GHQ12.htm

Originally consisted of 60 questions about mild somatic and psychological symptoms, later condensed to 30- and 12-item questionnaires.

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) Quick Depression scale

http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/40025272/

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)
http://www.chcr.brown.edu/pcoc/cesdscale.pdf

20-item scale, 4 response options based on frequency of experiencing specified emotional states during the last week.

Scored from 0 to 60.

Measures of affect

PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule).

10 positive affects (interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, determined, attentive, and active) and 10 negative affects (distressed, upset, guilty, scared, hostile, irritable, ashamed, nervous, jittery, and afraid).

Participants are asked to rate items on a scale from 1 to 5.

Summed scores for each scale: 6-30.

Bradburn's Affect Balance scale

10-item rating scale containing five statements reflecting positive feelings and five statements reflecting negative feelings.

Respondents are asked by an interviewer to focus on feelings during the past few weeks and indicate a positive (yes) or negative (no) response to each of the scale items.

Positive affect is obtained by summing the 5 positive questions (scale of 0 to 5) and negative affect by summing the negative questions. Affect Balance Scale is

scored by subtracting the negative from the positive and adding a constant of 5 to avoid negative values.

Experience Sampling Method (ESM)

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3655778

Subjects carry a beeper device that signals randomly. Each time the beeper activates, subjects fill out a survey that typically includes questions asking what the subject was doing, who they were with, and how the subject was feeling at the time of the alarm.

Day Reconstruction Method (Kahneman and Kreuger)

http://sitemaker.umich.edu/norbert.schwarz/files/drm_documentation_july_2004.pdf

A hybrid approach in which respondents first revive memories of the previous day by constructing a diary consisting of a sequence of episodes. Then they describe each episode by answering questions about the situation and about the feelings that they experienced, as in experience sampling.

Life satisfaction

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/lifesatisfactionscale.pdf

5 item questionnaire, each with 7 response scales.

This scale has been extended to incorporate a time dimension by the Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS).

Global Quality of Life Assessment.

Domain satisfactions and domain-weighted life satisfaction.

Australian Personal Well-Being Index (PWI)
http://acqol.deakin.edu.au/instruments/wellbeing_index.htm

Includes a school and pre-school version.

Needs based, flourishing and multi-dimensional measures of well-being

Basic Psychological Needs Scale (Deci & Ryan)
http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/needs_scl.html

Family of scales, one that addresses needs satisfaction in general in ones life, others than address needs satisfaction in specific domains (e.g. work, interpersonal).

Original scale had 21 items concerning needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness.

Some studies work with only 9 items (3 for each dimension).

Approaches to Happiness (ATH) Scale
http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu

Life of meaning (6 questions), life of pleasure (6 questions), life of engagement (6 questions).

Each with the response scale: 1 "Very much unlike me" to 5 "Very much like me".

Scoring for each dimension is the average of the 6 questions.

WHO-QOL (100 & BREF)

http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/research_tools/whoqolbref/en/

WHO-QOL aimed to be an international cross-culturally comparable quality of life assessment instrument.

WHOQOL-BREF instrument comprises 26 items, which measure the following domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment.

The average of each domain is taken, giving a profile of 4 separate domain scores Psychological Well-Being Scales (Ryff's).

Six dimensions: autonomy, positive relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery and personal growth.

The original scale had 20 items contained within each of the 6 dimensions. This has been reduced to 14 items per dimension, and more recently 3 items per dimension.

CASP-19

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12775399

Quality of life index for older people, developed from a needs based perspective 19 item Likert scaled index.

Questions on 4 domains: Control, Autonomy, Self-realisation and Pleasure.

Sum of all items (0 to 57)

European Social Survey. Module on well-being

http://www.cambridgewellbeing.org/Files/Well-being-Module_Jun06.pdf

A wide range of questions on feelings and functionings

Health-utility measures

EQ-5D

http://www.euroqol.org/

EQ-5D is a standardised instrument for use as a measure of health outcome.

The EQ-5D consists of 243 distinct health states across five dimensions (mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain/discomfort and anxiety/depression), each with three levels (no problem, moderate problem and severe problem).

The EQ-5D is often administered with a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) or 'feeling thermometer' requiring a direction valuation of the individual's health on a scale from worst health imaginable to best imaginable.

Utility values for each state have been elicited from respondents using the EQ-5D VAS technique in 8 European countries, and the TTO method has been used to elicit values for 5 countries Denmark, Germany, Japan, Spain and the UK.

The scoring algorithm, or social tariff, for the UK is based on preferences of a random sample of non-institutionalised adults throughout the UK (Dolan, 1997), using the Time Trade Off (TTO) method. EuroQol values are anchored by '1' representing full health and '0' representing the state 'dead' with states 'worse than death' bounded by '-1'.

SF-6D

http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/heds/mvh/sf-6d

The SF-6D is a classification for describing health derived from a selection of SF-36 items.

The SF-6D is composed of six multi-level dimensions. Any patient who completes the SF-36 or the SF-12 can be uniquely classified according to the SF-6D

The SF-6D describes 18,000 health states in total.

The SF-6D comes with a set of preference weights obtained from a sample of the general population using the recognised valuation technique of standard gamble. Members of the general population were asked to value a selection of health states from which a model has been estimated to predict all the health states described by the SF-6D

QWB

http://www.outcomes-trust.org/instruments.htm#QWB

An interviewer-administered general health related quality of life questionnaire measuring symptoms, mobility, physical activity and social activity.

Scores can be translated into utility values for quality of adjusted life years. A set of values for the QWB were derived using a VAS approach (anchored at '0' for death/worst possible and '100' for optimum health) among a random sample of 435 English-speaking residents in San Diego, California (Sieber *et al*., 2004)

HUI2 and HUI3

http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/heds/mvh/hui2

http://www.healthutilities.com/hui3.htm

The Health Utilities Index (HUI) has two versions, HUI2 and HUI3 (Feeny *et al*., 1995).

HUI3 defines 24,000 health states using seven attributes (sensation, mobility, emotion, cognition, self-care, pain and fertility) with three to five levels per attribute.

HUI2 defines 960,000 health states using eight attributes (vision, hearing, speech, ambulation, dexterity, emotion, cognition and pain) with five to six levels per attribute.

Both the HUI2 and HUI3 can be administered with a 15 item questionnaire.

The HUI3 scoring function is based on preference measurements obtained from a small random sample of the general population in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, using Standard Gamble (SG) estimated from transformed VAS.

UK valuation of the HUI2: http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/heds/mvh/hui2

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