THE GOOD SOCIETY FRAMEWORK: AN ESSAY ON UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Good societies are those in which the conditions enable their citizens to have a high standard of well-being. Traditionally, the main measures used to quantify a society's level of well-being have been financial measures, in particular 'standard of living', which is mainly a measure of people's income and spending power. More recently, attention has been focussed on wider and more far-reaching measures of well-being which look at quality of life in a broader sense. A variety of indices for measuring quality of life have been developed, but currently there is little consensus on what the key dimensions are.

This paper presents a framework, the Good Society Framework (GSF), for assessing quality of life and explains how it was developed. It is conceived as a comprehensive model of well-being incorporating all of the major factors included in the various indices and grouping them into nine dimensions:

- Relationships - the quality of people's social, family and interpersonal relationships; the extent to which society is coherent and harmonious.
- Economy - people's degree of economic prosperity and spending power; the extent to which jobs are rewarding and offer potential for growth and development.
- Environment and Infrastructure - the pleasantness and sustainability of the natural environment; the degree to which the built environment is pleasant and functions well and extent to which the infrastructure is effective and efficient.
- Health - whether people have access to good healthcare and healthy food; whether work, home and public environments are generally safe.
- Peace and Security - whether crime is low and people feel safe in their homes and public areas; whether or not society is affected by war or terrorism.
- Culture and Leisure - whether there is a rich and rewarding culture, both 'high' and 'popular'; whether there are opportunities to participate in rewarding leisure activities.
- Spirituality, Religion and Philosophy - whether there is access to religious and spiritual teachings and the opportunity to practice one's religion of choice; whether there is access to philosophical teachings and ideas about how to live.
- Education - whether there is education that enables people to function effectively in society; whether the education is intellectually enriching.
- Governance - whether there is democracy, fairness and freedom of expression; whether justice is transparent and consistent, and whether society is governed with compassion and equality.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been an increasing focus, both in government and in academia, on the subject of quality of life. Traditionally, the main criterion on which a society's level of well-being has been judged is 'standard of living'. This is essentially a measure of the wealth and spending power of a country's citizens. Quality of life (QoL), on the other hand, is a broader measure, including not only financial considerations, but also a wider definition of well-being.

So far, a wide variety of indices for measuring QoL have been proposed and, although there is some overlap in their dimensions, there is little consensus as to which is the most appropriate.

The indices differ both in terms of the dimensions that they use and in the weightings that they give to each dimension.

The Good Society Framework (GSF) was compiled through amalgamating the dimensions used in the other indices and... (Continued on next page.)
merging them into a manageable number of dimensions (nine).

The GSF is not intended as an index of quality of life as there is no attempt to score nations on its dimensions, nor are the dimensions weighted or ranked in order of importance.

Rather the GSF can be seen as a framework, model or checklist outlining the characteristics that a great society should have in order to enable its citizens to have an optimum QoL.

It was initially created as part of a project involving professional bodies who were interested in looking at how the professions that they represent could contribute to well-being in a sense that went beyond just the financial. The aim of the GSF was to help them to structure thinking about this.

Its compilation was both analytical and pragmatic in nature. The framework was put together by looking at the various indices used for measuring QoL (described in the next section of this paper), listing their various elements and then grouping them into a 'manageable' number of dimensions.

A challenge facing not only professional bodies, but also government at all levels as well as other policy makers and other organisations in both the public and private sector is how to help to improve society and improve the quality of life for people. This applies both to the most developed societies as well as the least developed, although the nature of the challenges in each case may be rather different.

The GSF is intended as a reference tool to stimulate thinking about how to improve QoL on all of these dimensions and improve life for all people irrespective of their current circumstances.

2. QUALITY OF LIFE INDICES

The GSF was developed using information and indices from a number of sources including:

2.1 Quality of Life Index

The Quality of Life Index was created by The Economist magazine's intelligence unit. It ranks countries according to quality of life based on the following dimensions: health, family life, community life, material well-being, political stability, climate, job security, political freedom, gender equality.

2.2 Gross National Happiness

This index was originally started by the government of Bhutan, but has been developed into an international collaborative project involving many academic and research institutions. It ranks countries based on how they perform on the following dimensions: economy, environment, physical health, mental health, work, society and politics.

2.3 Human Development Index

This index was created by the United Nations Development Program. It ranks countries based on a combination of life expectancy, education and wealth.

2.4 Genuine Progress Indicator

The Genuine Progress Indicator was developed by the Methodist Church in collaboration with the University of Maryland. It ranks countries based on a combination of economic conditions and environmental sustainability.
2.5 World Values Survey

This survey was founded by the University of Tilburg in The Netherlands and is now run as a collaborative project involving social scientists from all over the world. It ranks countries according to happiness based on people's subjective ratings of how happy they are.

2.6 Life Quality Index

This index also results from an international collaborative academic project having originally been created at the University of Waterloo in Canada. It ranks countries based on: wealth, life expectancy and leisure time.

2.7 Satisfaction with Life Index

Another collaborative international project, this was founded by the University of Leicester. It ranks countries based on people's subjective ratings of how satisfied they are with their lives.

2.8 Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index was created by the New Economics Foundation. It ranks countries based on: people's subjective ratings of happiness, life expectancy, and ecological footprint.

The GSF was created from a content analysis and cross referencing of these indices, followed by a grouping of the content into a manageable number of dimensions.

3. DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

This section gives more detail of each of the dimensions of the GSF.

3.1 Relationships

This category is about the relationships between the people within society.

Good societies are those that have strong communities where people know their neighbours and are friendly and supportive. They are well integrated, for example people of different races live in harmony with each other and interact fully.

They are also societies in which personal relationships can flourish. This includes people finding love and staying together, parenting children effectively and in a loving environment. It also includes having good and meaningful friendships.

Key Issues
• Communities
• Marriages
• Racial integration
• Parenting
• Romance
• Friendship

3.2 Economy

This category is about the benefits that the economy brings to the people.

Good societies are economically prosperous. They enable their citizens to enjoy a good standard of living which covers the essentials and also gives plenty of disposable income. Both essentials and luxuries are plentiful.

The jobs in good societies are highly rewarding, both financially and in terms of the fulfillment that they provide to those that do them. They also provide plentiful opportunities for personal and career development.

Key Issues
• Wealth
• Essentials
• Luxuries
• Jobs
• Personal Development

3.3 Environment and Infrastructure

This category is about the physical conditions in which people live.

Good societies have a pleasant and sustainable natural environment, free of pollution. They also have an attractive and functional built environment that is pleasant to live and work in.

They have an effective infrastructure with good transport and communication links and cheap and plentiful energy that is available to all.

Key Issues
• Natural environment
• Sustainability
• Built environment
• Transport
• Energy
• Communications

3.4 Health

This category is about how well a society supports the good health of its citizens.

In good societies healthy food and drink is plentiful and affordable for all. There is effective healthcare and the conditions in which good health can thrive. People are safe in their homes and in public, and have safe working conditions.

People have a long life expectancy and good physical and mental health.

Key Issues
• Physical health
• Mental health
• Safety from attack
• Preventing accidents
• Health and safety
• Longevity

3.5 Peace and Security

This category is about whether a society creates a peaceful, secure environment for people.

In good societies, crime is low and people and their possessions are safe. People feel comfortable in their homes and in public areas.

Good societies have civil harmony and are at peace with other nations, their citizens are not at risk from domestic or foreign conflict or from terrorism, nor do they visit war or terrorism on other nations.

Key Issues
• Crime
• Antisocial behaviour
• Terrorism
• Civil war
• War

3.6 Culture and Leisure

This category is about opportunities for rewarding activities outside of work.

Good societies have a rich culture with people having access to excellent arts, literature, music, movies and plays, TV shows, sporting events and other forms of both 'high' and popular culture.

People have a wide variety of leisure opportunities that are affordable to participate in. They also have plenty of time to pursue them.

Key Issues
• High culture
• Popular culture
• Entertainment
• Sports
• Leisure

3.7 Spirituality, Religion and Philosophy

This category is about having access to teachings which look at the meaning and purpose of life.

In good societies people have access to a wide variety of religious and spiritual teachings and the opportunity to practice the religion or belief of their choice.

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They also have access to philosophical teachings and different views about how to live. They have the opportunity to put these philosophies into practice.

**Key Issues**
- Spirituality
- Philosophy
- Religion

### 3.8 Education

*This category is about the quality of education a society provides for people.*

In good societies people have access to an excellent education. This education enables them to function and thrive within society. It also enriches them intellectually and is fulfilling and rewarding in and of itself.

This education empowers the individual, giving them choices about how they live their lives and the ability to make informed judgements and participate fully in society.

**Key Issues**
- Education
- Intellectual development
- Personal empowerment
- Judgement

### 3.9 Governance

*This category is about the way society is governed.*

Good societies are democratic with full political and civil liberties. They enable their citizens to have freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of movement and action.

They are compassionate and grant equal rights and responsibilities to all regardless of race, religion, sexuality and age (except minors). They have a fair, consistent, transparent and proportionate justice system. They also act with fairness and peaceful intent towards other nations.

**Key Issues**
- Political freedom
- Civil liberties
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom
- Justice
- Compassion
- Equality

### 6. FURTHER READING

For more detail of the indices that were used in compiling the GSF take a look at the Wikipedia entries for each index. See also the following references.

- [Quality of Life Index](#)
- [Economist Intelligence Unit 2005, The Economist Intelligence Unit's Quality of Life Index, The World in 2005](#)
- [Genuine Progress Indicator](#)
- [World Values Survey](#)
- [Life Quality Index](#)
- [Satisfaction with Life Index](#)
- [Happy Planet Index](#)
- [New Economics Foundation 2009, The (Un)Happy Planet Index 2.0: Why Good Lives Don't have to Cost the Earth](#)
- [Dr. Patrick W. Jordan is a psychologist specialising in the area of well-being. He acts as an advisor to the UK Government as well as many of the world's most successful companies and has held academic chairs at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Leeds. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.](#)

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Feedback and comments on the framework described in this article would be most welcome. Please contact Patrick at: [patrick@patrickwjordan.com](mailto:patrick@patrickwjordan.com)
HAPPINESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AS RESOURCES FOR WORK AND LIFE

As its title suggests, this book focuses on happiness in the context of work, where "work" is undefined but taken throughout as working for pay, job, or employment context. Happiness at work is defined on p. 4 as follows:

Happiness at work is a mindset which allow you to maximize performance and achieve your potential. You do this by being mindful of the highs and lows when working alone or with others.

Thinking of this definition somewhat formally, if y denotes performance and x is one's mindset, this definition can be written as y = f(x), where f is a nonlinear (e.g., quadratic) function. Then the definition states that one's mindset x can be on the low side (the lows) in which case one is not maximizing one's performance or on the high side (the highs) in which case one's performance also is not at an optimal value x_{max} (the happiness mindset) at which one's performance is maximized and one is achieving one's potential.

This approach and the subject of the entire book are based on the author's research and experience as a consultant on management and personnel issues. Jessica Pryce-Jones is the Chief Executive Officer and founder of iOpener, a consulting firm based in Oxford, England, that seeks to enable people to improve their performance and organizations to develop sustainability. She is a regular media commentator and teaches and coaches leaders at several major business schools in the UK and the US.

The book is written for a general audience, not for social scientists. Accordingly, its discourse minimizes descriptions of samples, questionnaires and other research instruments used, and the statistical analyses that underlie many of the findings reported. The research conducted by the author also has a substantial qualitative dimension, including focus groups and over 80 in-depth interviews with individuals ranging from sheep farmers and ordinary employees to business leaders and politicians. These interviews are the source of many quotations, stories, and illustrations interspersed throughout the text.

Following the definition of happiness at work quoted above, Pryce-Jones argues that psychological capital is as important in the success of an organization as the more familiar financial, human, and social capital. Psychological capital is defined (p. 8) as "...the mental resources that you build when things go well and draw on when things go badly. These resources include resilience, motivation, hope, optimism, self-belief, confidence, self-worth, and energy. All of which are key elements of happiness in a working context." And, this is one of Pryce-Jones' key points, organizations perform better when employees are maximizing performance because they are at their x_{max} happiness mindset points. She then argues that happiness is distinct from job satisfaction and engagement because the focus is on the individual, happiness is strongly connected to productivity, and happiness is a more general concept than job satisfaction and engagement.

In Chapter 2, Pryce-Jones then describes her research journey into the topic of happiness at work. Two surveys of 193 and 403 respondents, respectively, were given a validated general happiness scale (Lyubomirsky and Lepper 1999). Respondents then were divided into five groups ranging from low to high happiness levels. Those with higher levels of happiness were found to work more discretionary hours, take less sick leave, and stay longer on their jobs. In further similar research, when compared to the unhappiest group, those in the happiest at work category were found to be:

- 180 percent more energized
- 180 percent happier with life
- 155 percent happier in their job
- 108 percent more engaged at work
- 50 percent more motivated
- 40 percent more confident
- 30 percent more able to achieve their goals and to contribute 25 percent more.

This is the basis for the remainder of the book which consists of advice and guidance for increasing one's psychological capital and achieving the x_{max} cited above, that is, happiness at work. This guidance is based on the author's research and cites features that play a major role in employees' happiness, such as the 5Cs:

- Contribution-the effort you make and your perception of it,
- Conviction-the motivation you have whatever your circumstances,
- Culture-how well you feel you fit at work,
- Commitment-the extent to which you are engaged with your work, and
- Confidence-the sense of belief you have in yourself and your job.

Wrapping around these is an outer tier of three attributes: Pride and Trust in your organization, and Recognition of your work by the organization.

Comment

This book is a useful addition to the array of books published in recent years the objective of which is to help folks who are not social scientists or clinical therapists understand happiness as a concept and how the research thereon over the past few decades can be used to achieve greater levels of personal happiness and the successes in life that go therewith. Examples of such books reviewed in previous issues of SINET include Michael Frisch's 2006 Quality of Life Therapy: Applying a Life Satisfaction Approach to Positive Psychology and Cognitive Therapy reviewed in SINET, Number 85 (Winter, March 2006) and Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener's 2008 Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth reviewed in SINET (Spring & Summer, May-August 2008). As indicated, the particular angle on happiness of Pryce-Jones' book is its functions in a work or job context. The key thesis is that maximizing an individual's psychological capital will lead to more success in the work environment and, with that, in life. She marshals an array of quantitative and qualitative research to make this case. Social scientists will want more systematic research on the concepts and propositions advanced by the author-for example, observational studies that approximate experimental designs by use of propensity scores and matching-on the interaction of work environments with the biological and psychological traits of individuals. But Pryce-

(Continued on page 7.)
I have wanted to read and review this book for a while. It is an edited volume of essays by sociologists in Japan that explore concepts, issues, and analyses of the concept of happiness.

Kenji Kosaka, Editor of the volume, notes in his Introduction that sociology as a science originated from a criticism of utilitarianism: Émile Durkheim criticized Herbert Spencer's utilitarianism for its lack of attention to the "non-contractual elements of contract" and Talcott Parsons brought to the fore the Hobbesian problem—the question of social order. But Spencer himself consistently criticized Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism which led to a focus on "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" because Spencer felt it was but a step from egoism. Kosaka observes that Spencer's solution to the utilitarian problem was the proposition that happiness exists where the function of the state is limited to the prevention of injustice. While this proposition can be interpreted in a minimalist way as implying a very limited state, it also can be interpreted to support a large and activist state depending on the meaning given to the term "injustice."

In any case, Kosaka points out that, while sociology set out to confront utilitarianism on two issues—social order and happiness—and to propose alternatives, the social order issue dominated twentieth century sociology, with little attention given to the study of happiness. The rise of studies of happiness in psychology and economics—and the related notions of life satisfaction and quality of life—associated with the social indicator movement have changed this scene. In response, Kosaka and co-authors in this volume propose that new attention be focused on the "sociology of happiness" by revisiting the starting point of sociology, the critique of utilitarianism and going beyond that into new territory.

What new concepts and analyses define this new territory? Kosaka identifies two basic views of happiness: the "active view of happiness" and the "passive view of happiness." The active view pertains to the perspective that happiness can be obtained by actively searching for it and derives from the satisfaction of obtaining it. By contrast, the passive view is that happiness is transient and life is full of misfortunes. Kosaka states that until now the active view has been given priority and the passive view has not received due attention despite its real existence. He notes that modern human societies and cultures have created many desires—for wealth, comfort and security, a meaningful and joyful life, etc. These desires on the part of any one person involve others, however, and the satisfaction of some people's desires may result in the sacrifices of other people's desires. Kosaka cites the fundamentally different view, the desire to pray for buji (trouble-free), a word discovered in Japanese folklore studies. Buji denotes the absence of misfortunes, which may sound passive from the active view of happiness, but, according to Kosaka, this is regarded as the greatest happiness, as it involves concern not only for oneself for the people around, including a trouble-free community, home, and family. Kosaka observes that the two views of happiness must coexist in any society in any age, and this is the reason to point out the imbalance in studies and research that have focused on only one of these views.

All of the chapters in this volume focus on the passive view of happiness. They also emphasize the need for what Kosaka terms "localized knowledge" of the passive view of happiness. After identifying the authors and titles of the chapters, I will briefly summarize their contents and then comment on the volume. The chapters are:

1. Killing Many Innocent People: An Introduction to the Sociology of Well-Being and Ill-Being by Kenji Kosaka
2. An Axiomatic Approach to the Disadvantage Index by Hiroshi Hmada
3. Violence in Modern Society: Towards Social Research for the Enhancement of Human Happiness by Masahiro Ogino
4. Nietzsche and the Height of Happiness by Kojiro Miyahara
5. Language and Well-Being: Three Basic Essentials of Linguistic Rights by Nobutaka Kamei
6. On Facts: Towards a Folklore of Happiness and Unhappiness by Yoshiyuki Yama
8. Happiness and Unhappiness: A Clinical Sociological Approach by Eisho Omura

Leading off in Chapter 1, Kosaka argues that reducing unhappiness is more important than adding happiness and points to the importance of studying "missed opportunities" in order to reduce unhappiness. He addresses the question of what can be done with misfortunes that already happened and studies Vietnamese experiences regarding this question.

Building on Kosaka's proposition, Hamada mathematically develops an index of disadvantage that generalizes Sen's poverty measure to include multiple resources such as education, health, and social capital as well as poverty as factors that cause ill-being. He defines the concept of a "disadvantage boundary" with individuals whose resources fall below this standard considered to be in a disadvantaged environment.

Using the personal history of a woman he calls K, Ogino studies what lies beyond her unhappy life. Central themes that emerge include the state of capitalism, violence in modern society, and unpredictable social structures that contain many uncertainties.

Miyahara identifies three types of happiness in Nietzsche's work: a low form in which the slave finds "comfort and rest," a high form sought by the master in "fighting and conquest," and the highest form of happiness a young child finds in "play and creativity." Miyahara argues that the young child's happiness—which he regards as the ultimate goal—is supported by the passive view of happiness, whereas the happiness of master and slave derive from the active view.

Kamei studies the constituents of human happiness in relation to the use of a language, particularly a sign language. He identifies three basic requirements of language rights—biological, developmental, and cultural—and argues that attempts to resolve the pains and deprivation of actual language users, for example by making Sign Language an official language, originates from the passive view of happiness.

(Continued on next page.)
Call For Papers

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The aim of this journal is to publish conceptual, methodological and empirical papers dealing with quality-of-life studies in the applied areas of the natural and social sciences. As the official journal of ISQOLS, it is designed to attract papers that have some direct implications for or impact on practical applications of research on the quality-of-life. We welcome papers crafted from inter-disciplinary, inter-professional and international perspectives. This research should guide decision making in a variety of professions, industries, nonprofit, and government sectors such as healthcare, travel and tourism, marketing, corporate management, community planning, social work, public administration, human resource management, among others. The goal is to help decision makers apply performance measures and outcome assessment techniques based on concepts such as well-being, human satisfaction, human development, happiness, wellness and quality of life. The Editorial Review Board is divided into specific sections indicating the broad scope of practice covered by the journal, and the section editors are distinguished scholars from many countries across the globe.

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