

The Wellbeing Narrative Framework

Explanation of the Wellbeing Narrative Framework

The Wellbeing Narrative Framework

Description of the Wellbeing Narrative Framework

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Description of the Wellbeing Narrative Framework

The Wellbeing Narrative framework is the conclusion of current research into wellbeing economics. It summarises the cultural awareness needed to drive an economy devoted to the generation of sustainable wellbeing.

The Objectives of Society

Wellbeing economics is an evolution of monetary economics. The defining characteristic of a wellbeing society is in its purpose to serve its people, where success is measured in terms of human experience.

We use several names to talk about a society devoted to delivering wellbeing, such as a wellbeing society, wellbeing community, wellbeing economy or wellbeing nation. By and large, they all mean the same thing.

There are several measures of human experience, such as wellbeing, happiness, peace, spirituality. By and large, they too are all very similar.

We do not yet have the means to measure human wellbeing directly, so instead we use a variety of indirect markers. Different indices use their own unique mix of markers. The Happiness Index, for example, reports on what people say about how happy they feel. The Prosperity Index works with over 50 markers, such as protection from harm, physical health, property crime and family relationships. Our Economic Framework models how society generates wellbeing and compares its predictions with reality.

Monetary economics measures success in monetary terms. Newspaper headlines are a little obsessed with how this year's monetary output compares with last year. They celebrate almost any growth and castigate almost any contraction. Economists define a recession as an economy whose monetary output had declined for two quarters in a row. Monetary output does not measure the impact of an economy on human experience. a typically ironic illustration of the inadequacy of monetary output is the huge oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. It killed 11 people directly, hundreds of thousands of sea birds, closed all the shrimp fisheries in its vicinity, damaged and killed thousand year old coral and polluted a thousand miles of shoreline on the Gulf of Mexico. None of these impacts were measured as economic costs. Instead, the impact of all this destruction on the economy included a positive contribution of \$65 billion to the GDP because that is what it cost to clear up the mess.

In a wellbeing economy, output reflects the entire human experience of life. The value of the measure is subject only to our ability to measure human experience in a meaningful way.

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The Key to Society's Success

Individuals can create wellbeing for themselves. Society's success hangs on its ability to deliver greater wellbeing than individuals can create alone.

The wellbeing narrative needs to explain how this happens because it informs people's attitudes towards themselves, each other and the world.

When we coordinate activities effectively, it allows us to specialise, partly by individuals becoming better at what they do, partly by avoiding unnecessary duplication and partly by developing teams that can do things that individuals alone can not.

Story tellers will probably come up as many of examples of people combining their efforts to break through challenges that individuals alone can not solve as the number of people on the earth. The classic example is the story of the fallen tree. It falls across the road and no-one is strong enough to move it on their own. Even 100 people taking turns can not move the tree. But when they push together as one, they can muster enough force to move it out of the way. It is as if they have temporarily created a new entity, a human machine that pushes trees. This human pushing-machine works by temporarily fusing together the power of 100 individuals into a single combined group that is 100 times more powerful.

Society is made up of an number of temporary enfusions of people and resources. Family units, communities, schools, businesses, sports teams are all examples of enfusions that can contribute to wellbeing in a way that individuals alone can not. In advanced economies, the added-value of this ability to invest and specialise is a factor of several thousand.

In many respects, society itself is an enfusion of the contributions of millions of people and resources into a wellbeing-generating machine.

It is interesting to note that enfusions are seen everywhere – literally everywhere throughout society, throughout the world and throughout the entire universe. Each human is an enfusion of billions of cells. Some of which come together into organs, others as blood, others as muscle, others as sensors. The body is also made up of a wide range of inert materials, such as 80% of the mass of the human body being water. Each cell and material within the body is, itself, an enfusion of organic and inorganic molecules. Molecules in turn are enfusions of atoms which, themselves are enfusions of sub-atomic particles.

The key characteristic of an enfusion is its ability to function more powerfully than its individual constituents can do alone. Clearly, given how pervasive enfusions are throughout the universe, they are important parts of stable, flourishing life. This is why it is important that we understand the nature of society well enough to support its ability to deliver wellbeing. In the human body, there are only bad outcomes if the kidney starts to compete with the liver for oxygen. The same is true of society, where one of its communities or groups that play their part in contributing added-value to wellbeing turns on another.

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Requirements for Societal Success

A successful wellbeing economy is good at generating wellbeing for its members. The purpose of society is to generate the opportunity for individual wellbeing. A number of characteristics confer its ability to succeed.

Social Order

A society can not deliver added-value wellbeing to its members without social order. The way a nation establishes order influences the amount of added wellbeing it can generate.

Statehood goes through four stages of order.

- Anarchy is the stage prior to statehood. Typically, there is no clearly defined law. People have little protection from violence or theft of their possessions.
- Autocracy is the stage where a single leader wrests overall control from competing groups. Typically, written laws exist although leaders are generally above the law. People have some degree of protection from competing groups, but little if any protection from antagonistic leaders who control the way laws are applied. Autocracies tend to be preoccupied with threats from people looking to wrest back control of the state. Control is concentrated in the hands of very few people. In autocracies, the government is largely indistinguishable from the people who govern.
- Democracy is the stage where members of society have some influence over who leads the nation. This influence encourages leaders to reflect the interests of members of society in decisions about the best way to structure society and to share its added-value dividends. The individuals who make up the government are subsidiary to the . Democracy is a range of states. It starts modest representation of the interests of some members of society. This is typically accompanied with some element of free and fair elections open to at least some member of society. It progresses through a growing proportion of members whose interests are reflected in decisions, and where each member has increasingly equal representation. This is typically accompanied by increasingly fully free and fair elections open to increasingly all members of society equally. In democracies, decision making is increasingly decentralised from government where appropriate. Experience suggests that more minds who have a better understanding of local interests make for better planning. In democracies, the government is an institution that is independent from the people who run it.
- Wellbeing democracy is an emerging stage of statehood. One of its key attributes is fair representation of all members' interests. Ultimately, no one member's interests take priority over society's overall pursuit of wellbeing. Wellbeing democracy is also a range of states. Its entry point is the formal recognition by a government of the wellbeing agenda, typically with well established democratic institutions. This develops to an economy where everyone's interests are balanced fairly in major decisions in pursuit of overall wellbeing.

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Some people refer to the two democracies as adolescent democracy and mature democracy. It reflects the parallel of an individual transitioning from adolescence, where nature encourages a significant amount of self-discovery, into adulthood, where the responsibilities of parenthood loom large.

Although we perceive nation states as being one of the stages above, in reality, it is easier to understand the tensions within society as a rainbow of cultures. Each person takes their individual cues from any of the stages of statehood and adapts their lifestyle accordingly. Organised criminals exist even in the most well run democracy. Heart-warming instances of care and support exist even in the most violent anarchy. The mixed blend of leaders' and people's experience of statehood, the nation's centre of gravity, is usually quite discernible.

The need to maintain order presents states with a dilemma. The laws and force they need to maintain order limit freedom for individuals to realise their potential. It restricts the state's ability to localise the control that encourages participation and harnesses the richness of talents spread throughout society. Societies have to balance these two conflicting demands, maintaining order whilst maintaining the creativity and innovation that comes with freedom. The balance of gravity is a mix of the statehood laws, practices adopted by the leaders and the related cultures of society's members.

The state of order in a nation is important because wellbeing becomes more accessible to greater numbers of people as states progress through the stages. For example, a top-down imposition of thoughts and actions has a direct bearing on an individual's wellbeing. Understanding the nature of society's statehood can throw light on the opportunities available and barriers that need to be addressed to increase wellbeing. Story tellers have an important role to play in helping leaders and members of society to understand the nature of statehood, the dilemma of order, and the role of statehood in delivering wellbeing.

Coordinating members' activities

Society adds value by fusing together the activities of members of society effectively, with each other and with society's resources. An enmeshed society exists to generate wellbeing. How does society manage this coordination effectively, towards the common goal of generating wellbeing?

Firstly, society needs to engage members with its common goal. The more people who join together to contribute their efforts to society's structures, the greater the power they generate. So leaders of society are charged with finding ways to engage all members of society and to eliminate ways that disengage any of them. Society needs to ensure that members feel part of society and are rewarded fairly for their engagement. This can be achieved by combining financial reward with a sense of belonging. Society needs to highlight and recognise people's inherent value to themselves, to the people around them and to society overall. This is a foundation stone for understanding how to improve people's quality of life.

Secondly, society's effectiveness depends on how well it directs and coordinates its members activities towards its purpose. It achieves this through government initiatives to stimulate particular outcomes, through business activity and by individual behaviour. We currently rely on the monetary system to direct activities with the reward of untold profits. A wellbeing economy modifies the system of rewards to

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businesses so that they are better aligned with society's objectives. Social responsibility accounting is a first step to moving towards a monetary economy. It creates the opportunity to redirect management behaviour towards more socially responsible activities. And it modifies the system of reward to government by shifting the assessment of society from monetary GDP measures to human wellbeing measures.

Cultural management

Research has found a high degree of correlation between the state of a nation's culture and the wellbeing of its members.

Individual culture is the collection of an individual's social norms and expectations. A communal culture is the collection of the community's social norms and expectations. These can develop through the tradition, the attitudes of the communal leaders and the attitudes of the community's members. A nation's culture is just an extension of a community's culture to the entire nation, although it is more complicated because it is made up of so many more people.

Culture is quite confusing because it means different things to different people. In terms of wellbeing economics, culture refers explicitly to people attitudes and expectations of behaviour. It incorporates, for example, attitudes towards marriage and the death penalty. It does not include styles of clothes or customs that are the colourful signature of ethnic and communal tradition.

A nation's culture can be measured by assessing the attitudes of members of society. Generally, there will be bands of people with different cultures. The nation's culture represents a mix of the cultural bands people belong to and cultural lenses through which leaders govern. In general terms, the values and norms that encourage social harmony deliver greater wellbeing than the values and norms that set people in competition against one another.

Monetary economics has limited awareness of the role of culture on economic outcomes. In wellbeing economics, a greater emphasis is placed on understanding how cultural progress impacts social cohesion and wellbeing, and on the opportunities it presents to improve economic outcomes.

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Requirements for Individual Success

Society generates the opportunity for individuals to experience considerably greater personal wellbeing. For individuals to benefit, they have their own role to play. They contribute energy towards society's wellbeing-generating machine. And they convert the opportunity for wellbeing generated by society into a wellbeing experience. They do both with the help of a number of capacities.

Social capacity

Social capacity is the capacity each individual has to create effective relationships. The two domains of relationships are working relationships, the ability to work effectively with others, and personal relationships, the ability to form effective personal connections that comprise one of the key dimensions of wellbeing. Individuals need the emotional dispositions and skills to understand themselves and each other. Our social capacity helps us understand what makes each of us tick, in our unique ways, and how to adapt our attitudes and behaviours appropriately.

Wellbeing capacity

Wellbeing capacity is the capacity each individual has to convert the opportunity for wellbeing to actual wellbeing. It is the capacity to understand our individual needs, wants and hopes and to understand how those needs can best be met. It is the capacity to understand how to interact with others to achieve what we want from life. It is the understanding we have about life and how well that understanding aligns with our needs.

Society delivers us the means for wellbeing. It is up to us to take the opportunity and process it in the way that is right for us. Is our glass half empty or half full, do we take care of our mental health, do we value ourselves and others in equal measure? Our wellbeing capacity adds the finishing touches on our individual wellbeing - for better or worse.

Social capability

Social capability is different from social capacity. Capacity refers to the individual set of skills and dispositions that equip us to carry out various tasks. Capability refers to the opportunities we have in society to realise our potential by carrying out the tasks at which we are skilled. We can have any number of social skills. But if we are excluded from being able to carry out tasks that take advantage of those skills, the capacity is largely wasted. When we say that social capacity is wasted, what we mean is that we restrict the opportunity for the individual to contribute to their full potential to help society generate wellbeing.

Society can enhance its wellbeing by nurturing individual social and wellbeing capacities, by nurturing cultures that accommodate everyone's individual contributions to wellbeing, and by redirecting cultures that limit anyone's.

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Alignment of members' interests with society's objectives

A wellbeing economy needs to find ways to align members' sense of what is in their best interest with activities that advance society's objectives. Society has a number of tools at its disposal. It can enforce certain behaviours through dominance, it can trick us through manipulation or it can motivate us through incentivisation.

The most efficient way to achieve wellbeing is through incentivisation. This encourages individuals to choose behaviours that support society's objectives. Since wellbeing is enhanced through the freedom to decide how to act, society can achieve greater net wellbeing by incentivisation than by domination or manipulation.

Incentivisation, itself, is an interesting topic in wellbeing economics. An effective society creates an added-value of wellbeing. Incentivisation is part of the overall system of sharing out the added-value between members of society. In a wellbeing economy, we seek to treat everyone fairly, and to reward their contribution to wellbeing with reference to their contribution. This contrasts with the current system of monetary economics where reward is shared less by reference one person's contribution relative to another and more by reference to the extent to which one person has control over another.

A wellbeing society helps to achieve its objectives through a fair reward system. This is what it looks like.

Society generates added-value wellbeing. In a wellbeing economy, the added-value is shared fairly between society's members. This is what a fair system looks like.

There are three components to reward. One is the reward is devoted to maintaining order. Leaders often need to feather their associates' nests to cement their loyalty. Another is the reward devoted to motivating people to do the jobs that no-one else wants to do or is capable of doing. But in a fair system, the majority of the reward is allocated to reflect an individual's personal contribution to fulfilment of society's objectives, without regard to class, status or exploitation.

In a monetary economy, certain contributions are vastly rewarded, such as heading up a successful public company, some reward is allocated without any contribution, such as owning property when prices are rising, and others are not rewarded at all, such as parenting. A wellbeing economy recognises that added-value is the product of fusing together people's contributions, where all contributions to the wellbeing-generating machine are valued equally. This contrasts with the monetary economy's simple perspective that an individual can make a valuable contribute towards any one product or service without reference to the entire system that enabled that production process in the first place.

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The Constituents of Wellbeing

Wellbeing is notoriously challenging to measure. That should not stop us from trying.

For centuries, we have equated monetary wealth with quality of life. "Money does not buy happiness" is not a phrase that resonates in political or economic circles. This thinking is emedded deep within the current narrative. "Dreams don't work unless you do", "A man lifts himself by his own bootstraps".

If we want people to engage with a wellbeing economy, we need to ensure that, if money does not buy happiness, they understand what does.

This is how wellbeing works. Our personal circumstances dictate what drives our actions. Our drivers are based on what we feel are our needs, wants and hopes at any one time. Our sense of wellbeing is determined by how far each of the domains is satisfied relative to those drivers. An entry point to understanding these drivers of wellbeing is through the three basic domains described below.

Security

We need to feel safe in this world. We need physical security, from natural dangers such as severe weather, from disease, from deadly animals or from human aggression. We need protection against ill-health or disability. We need energy to think and to carry out activities so we need access to food to provide that energy. We need to be safe and we need to feel safe. Our expectations for the next few weeks, months and years are just as important as our current reality. As a member of the human species, most of us have an evolved drive to reproduce at some point in our lives, or to share in the effort of nurturing the next generation.

Connectedness (emotional, inter-personal and spiritual needs)

Humans are social animals. We need to feel connected with people around us in order to feel valued. It is part of our perception of safety, Our communities offers refuge against many risks. Where we are connected with the people around us, with the many communities we belong to and with the world around us, we feel a sense of peace and protection. By contrast, where we sense we are not valued, it undermines our sense of self-worth and emotional security.

Stimulation (evolved drivers of behaviour towards self-preservation)

We have evolved a number of impulses that motivate us to take certain actions that provide for our needs. Some of these drives are conscious, such as hunger. Others are sub-conscious, such as the need to breathe - although it becomes conscious very quickly where our breathing is interrupted.

We are stimulated by the people around us, by the world around us and by our evolved drivers. Our bodies deliver us with chemical rewards when we do something that the body feels it needs. Wellbeing is

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associated with being stimulated in ways that flow into what our bodies as being productive. Wellbeing is not served where we seek the chemical pleasures without the accompanying productivity.

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Togetherness

A core concept of a wellbeing economy is that our our outcomes are deeply entangled with one other.

We live in society. This is a place where we all live and work together for mutual benefit. It is a co-created entity that is designed to deliver wellbeing. It has a collective power and capabilities to generate wellbeing that far exceed our individual abilities, even if our individual efforts could be added together.

Our wellbeing outcomes are boosted where we work together effectively to generate wellbeing. Understanding the idea of togetherness helps to understand the power of society as a whole to generate wellbeing.

Society is an entity in its own right, whose objective is delivery of wellbeing

Society is an example of a strange and wonderful feature that is found throughout nature. The feature is the way in which life itself is built. We can take it for granted, but we can not ignore its power.

Society is created by the fusion of contribution of all its members to its goals. In bringing our efforts together, we create an entity that is far more powerful than its component parts. The power of co-creation can be seen in the tree analogy, where a tree has fallen across a road. Any number of individuals can not move the tree alone. But when they combine their efforts, when they fuse their strength into a single pushing "machine", they have enough strength together to move the tree out of the way. Society supercharges a whole range of different collectives, which supplement a vast number of individual contributions, to generate wellbeing for its members.

We refer to this fusion of effort into a single unit as an "enfusion". Nature is full of enfusions. Humans ourselves are enfusions of trillions of cells, some of which combine their efforts to create organs, others of which become defenders against disease, others of which let us grow and carry out activities. The human entity is an example of an evolved enfusion. Even our individual cells are enfusions, or a number of organic molecules in a particular configuration of materials and chemicals some of which come together as human genes.

Society is co-created by its members

The key aspect of enfusions is that they acquire their own characteristics and functionality that are distinct from their constituent parts. An enfusion vastly outperforms what its constituent parts can achieve alone.

There are two types of enfusions. Humans are examples of evolved enfusions. Our constituent cells can not function for long outside our body. Society is an example of a co-created enfusion. It is co-created by its members. Members of society do have a choice of whether to participate. We can survive on our own if we choose not to participate - up to a point. But the benefits from participation are vast, so there is strong incentive for individual members of society to participate in the co-creation.

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It is important to understand that society is an enfusion, an entity in its own right. Its identity is distinct from its individual members. It has implications for how we can develop society in ways that make it more successful in delivering wellbeing to its members.

An effective society increase productivity by factor of thousands

Society delivers more wellbeing than its individual members can do alone. This is because it allows groups of people to fuse their contributions into groupings or entities that are more efficient. The benefits come in no small part from the ability of working in groups to specialise. Anyone who has tried to get the milk from the inside of a coconut will appreciate the power of specialisation. Without experience, it can take up to 10 minutes to get milk from a coconut. To someone skilled, it can take as little as 30 seconds.

The power of specialisation becomes turbo-charged when specialist tools and investment in dedicated production systems are added to the mix.

Specialisation is able to multiply individual wellbeing by factors of tens to hundreds, depending on how it is measured. When looked at from the perspective the human species, it delivers multiples in the tens to hundreds of thousands.

So anything that can improve the quality of society, meaning anything that can improve society's ability to generate wellbeing for its members, can create improvements in the quality of life not of the 2-5% typically targeted by monetary economies but of 20-100% for people who currently enjoy low standards of living.

Human outcomes are interdependent

It is often difficult for individuals to appreciate the value of their contribution to co-created society. Some members undervalue their impact because they struggle to see what they do. Others overvalue their impact where they seek to link their share of the gains from society with their contribution.

In reality, no single individual makes a significant contribution alone. The gains from society come from enormous numbers of people fusing their contributions into a single wellbeing-generating machine. Once the machine is well oiled, it is true that an individual can leverage the machine to increase overall output significantly from their effort alone. But that misrepresents how the gains are achieved. When a very strong person pushes the tree, it does not budge. When 99 others are pushing, the strong person may make the difference in moving the tree. But despite the tree only moving when they add their weight, their contribution alone is not what moves the tree.

Society's added-value is achieved as a result of humans working cooperatively in generating wellbeing (input) in satisfaction of human needs, wants and hopes (output). Without both, society does not create the massive gains. Apple Inc is currently the most valuable public organisation in the world. What would its value become if literally nothing changed for it except one - if the world population dropped from 7 billion to 7 thousand. This illustrates the role of people as consumers in generated monetary wealth. It also shows the injustice in awarding the lions share of Apple's gains to a relatively tiny proportion of the

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world's population, when the value only arises when the whole world's population becomes a potential customer for Apple's products.

Where we develop stronger societies, more wellbeing is generated. Where we act in ways that undermine its effectiveness, we undermine our own wellbeing. Where we develop cultures that exclude some members of society, those same cultures impact our own wellbeing. In today's interconnected and hugely complicated world, the wellbeing outcomes we enjoy is directly related to the contribution and wellbeing outcomes of others. In the long run, improving the outcomes of others and their descendants will improve the outcomes of us and our direct descendants.

Illustrative narratives

- Alone we survive, together we thrive
- The power of "we"
- The right kind of collaboration builds wellbeing, the wrong kind (competition) destroys it
- Cutting off our nose to spite our face
- The body flourishes when the kidney and the liver harmonise together. There is only one outcome when they compete to the death, the winner quickly becomes sick.
- We can now measure "the common good" when people are asked for personal sacrifice

Human Nature

Wellbeing can not be understood or managed without understanding human nature. The human brain comes with capacities with characteristics that both help and frustrate us in generating wellbeing for ourselves and for other members of society.

The Wonders and Limitations of the Human Mind

The human brain has over 100 billion neurons - places where we can store simple data. It works at lightening speed, with 100 trillion electric pulses zipping between them every second. The unimaginably complicated architecture is what gives us our senses, awareness, memory and understanding. It also gives us an instinct for survival and wellbeing. These are powerful, often subconscious drivers to behave in certain ways that the mind believes will protect our very being.

Despite the enormous power of the brain, it has to manage enormous complexity. It is not enough for the brain to see, hear and feel what is around us, it also needs to understand what it means. We need to respond differently between a butterfly fluttering by and a lion eyeballing us. This evaluation requires immense processing power - in reality, even our massive brains are not powerful to process everything it sees from scratch every time it sees anything. It has evolved a brilliant way for managing. It allows us to process a situation and to store it for future use. The second time we come across a situation, it may be quicker to retrieve what we understood last time than to re-process it from scratch.

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Brilliant, but also limiting. The issue is where we come across a situation that is similar but not necessarily identical. The brain has to take short-cuts. Sometimes we retrieve an understanding that is a close fit but which is not necessarily the right understanding for the particular situation. If we categorise people according to the colour of their hair or skin, or their height or weight, we may mistreat someone new who reminds of someone we already know who we may like or dislike.

We have a similar problem with the sheer quantity of information available to us. No matter how big our brains, we do not have the capacity to remember everything. Again, our brains are adept at creating short-cuts and rules of thumb to help us learn from past experiences but without being able to remember everything. This causes challenges for police interviewing witnesses about what they saw. Our brains are programmed to remember events as key bits rather than in its entirety.

Our brain is brilliant at giving us awareness and understanding to manage our lives despite its physical limitations. We need to be aware that the same brilliance is what exposes us to manipulation by others. If we can hook into some of the brain's shortcuts, or if we can influence the shortcuts that are stored, we can influence people to think in ways that may serve the manipulator's interests better than the person being manipulated.

The Social Human

Humans are social animals. This has been a key factor of our extraordinary successes during the 500,000 years. We have been able to do more because we have been able to cooperate with each other to good effect.

This capacity for cooperation is a feature of our evolved brains. We are bestowed with the capacity to understand and how to interact with each other well through the instinctive lens of a series of deeply seated values. These are human principles that guide our thinking and behaviour in ways that allow us to judge best how to take care of ourselves and to behave with others. We recognise behaviours driven by values such as trustworthiness, togetherness, persistence and joy. We all have these instinctive recognitions, these values, which help us judge who we can trust and how we relate to each other in ways that are mutually beneficial.

We are born with a brain system whose social capacities are nurtured. It is a bit like a blank drawing page. As we experience more situations, we become increasingly skilled at judging which values are best suited to which circumstances, at which shapes and colours to draw on the page for future reference. Our social capacities are nurtured to reveal an increasingly complete picture unique to each of us of what we need in life and how to interact effectively with others.

In evolutionary terms, human communities succeed where their members work together. In order to assure our cooperation, evolution has bestowed us with the need for social interactions. We need to connect with others in order to establish a sense of self-worth, of the security and benefits that comes from being a fully integrated member of a successful community. Satisfaction of these social needs is a direct component of wellbeing.

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The better we nurture our social capacity, the better each of us is able to achieve our goals individually and together. And as we become more connected with ever stronger and more cohesive communities, the better each of us is able to contribute to our own wellbeing and to the wellbeing of those around us. Societies that seek to control how people think and behave, that limit people's ability to nurture their unique social capacity, compromise their social cohesion and their ability to generate wellbeing.

Morality reflects the positive impact of our behaviour towards ourselves and each other. It is the outcome of a healthy social capacity that is put into practice.

The Role of Culture

A particularly noteworthy social capacity is our ability to copy and learn from others. We have evolved ways to avoid having to repeat other people's mistakes. We no longer have to reinvent new ideas or techniques from scratch where we can learn them from others. Mushroom pickers, for example, appreciate being able to identify the poisonous species without having to test it for themselves.

Just as we can learn technique from others, we can also learn elements of social capacity from others. Culture is the social capacity equivalent to science books for technique. Culture is the set of social norms and understanding that communities expect from their members - where communities can be family, friends, work colleagues or members of any other of the many communities to which each of us belong. By its nature, culture is quite a blunt instrument - it can not adapt to particular circumstances. Its overarching norms and expectations offer guidance to getting on well within the community. We still need to adapt this cultural direction to our personal capacities and circumstances. Successful wellbeing societies offer greater freedom for individuals to adapt the cultural norms to their individual circumstances appropriately.

Culture offers another important insight into the wonders and limitations of human nature. The cultural capacity to learn from others matures into a herding instinct. More often than not, we find comfort in going with the social flow. It offers us the opportunity to benefit from group wisdom. But it also exposes us to risk. Group think is not granulated. It does not recognise or adapt easily to individual risk. It offers a false sense of security where we assess the risk against the outcomes we see in others. The risk of herding arises from our failure to pay enough attention to individual risk. Once a poor decision enters the group think, it is quite easy for the poor decision to become the rule that everyone follows - as anyone who has lost money in a pyramid scheme, property bubble or economic bust will know.

Human Nature

Our natural values also bestows us with dispositions that drive our productive capacity. Dispositions that feature strongly in the success of humanity include creativity, resilience, persistence, single-mindedness and the courage to take risks. Courage gives us the mental strength to join others to defend our village from attack, even where the risk to each fighter individually might not justify the fight. Creativity and single-mindedness are valuable bed-fellows when we are working out new solutions to apparently intractable problems.

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All our capacities that serve us well in some situations can serve us poorly in others if we fail to adapt our behaviours to different circumstances. Courage can become a disadvantage if we are driven by too much toxic masculinity to take risk without regard to the extent and impact of potentially fatal risks. Single-mindedness becomes a problem when solutions to one problem exacerbate other out-of-mind problems disproportionately. People addressing climate change despair at the disregard many organisations have towards the costs they impose on society where those costs do not hit their bottom line.

The Truth of the Matter

Human consciousness is another wonder of the human brain. It is also poorly understood. It gives us awareness of our surroundings and our understanding. Although it is still quite a mystery to us, consciousness and understanding is both intensely personal and also shared.

We learn by watching what happens around us and try to make sense of what we see. This is a layered process. As a baby, we see people feeding and smiling at us. We see things move and fall. We try to make sense of it all. Once we have a basic awareness of hunger, eating to feel better, working out how to be fed and some very rudimentary physics, we progress to relationships with parents and other adults, siblings and other children. We layer what we experience onto what we already know. We also learn from those around us, from our family, friends and school. This is what makes each of us unique. Our understanding of the world is based on years of experience, making sense of our experiences in our own way, and learning through others.

We share consciousness through our capacity to learn from others and with the use of language. Culture plays its part in creating a shared consciousness by providing general rules of social behaviour and understanding.

The world is a complex place, and our capacity to understand is limited by the physical constraints of our brains. When we try to understand experiences, it is easy to come to a conclusion that explains what we have experienced but which is not necessarily complete. Come to that, it is not necessarily correct. A child seeing something drop may start to learn about gravity. But s/he may also misconnect the dropping with punishment for having done something wrong - especially if the child receives other forms of abuse.

This layering of understanding plays havoc with our perception of truth. Where any of our layers are misinformed, it impacts our perception of what is happening today. Similarly, where our layers are not necessarily misinformed but different from others, where we see the world through different eyes, we may perceive the same truth differently. How one person perceives truth may seem very strange to another.

Truth is the reality of what happens. Life has only one truth. Our perceptions of truth, however, can vary as widely as the number of people on the planet. The truth of the 2020 coronavirus outbreak is that more than 40,000 people were infected within the first three months, and more than 2,000 people died. But different numbers of infections and deaths were circulating at the same time. Some people chose

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which of the numbers they believed based on their individual perceptions of how the world works. Some people had no interest in the virus where they felt it had no relevance to their lives. People perceived the outbreak, its causes, cover-ups and human successes in containing it many different ways. The many and varied perceptions of the outbreak did not change the reality of the virus. What they did change was the impact it had on the outcomes on people it touched, on the the people who were protected from it, and on its overall impact on humanity.

The truth is universal - differences in perception of the truth is the place where we struggle for common understanding. These different perceptions are why respecting other people's views is a core if complicated part of maintaining freedom and harmony. Where our views put us into conflict with each other, there are plenty of peaceful ways to accommodate differences if we so choose.

Illustrative narratives

- A rule of thumb is for guidance, not for mind control
- Adaptable cultures fashion harmony. Rigid cultures mutate to dominance and hate.
- It is easier to believe perception than truth
- Beware being bested by manipulation of your mind
- Human success rests on cooperation. Successful cooperation rests on empathy evolved by nature.
- Tenacity, resilience and innovation is more productive when directed towards progress than adversity

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Human Wellbeing

Over the last century, economics has increasingly celebrated monetary output and monetary growth as measures of success. Money has always been seen as a means to an end. But in recent years, it has become an end in itself. Because money is spread so unequally amongst the population, total monetary output no longer reflects how humans experience life.

The objective of society is to provide a good life for its members. But what do we mean by the experience of a good life and how do we measure it? The wellbeing economy shifts the focus of success away from monetary goals towards human experience, using the term wellbeing as the means to assess the overall positive human experience of life.

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a physical and mental state in which we feel we have achieved what we want out of life. It is a natural state, shaped in each of us by our unique natural drivers and how well they are satisfied. Our drivers are often referred to as needs - but that misses the point. Needs relate to basic human survival, wants relate to our quality of life. Wellbeing is an assessment of quality of life, so it has to incorporate both needs and wants.

Scientists are at a relatively early stage in understanding wellbeing. They have identified many individual factors relating to wellbeing. But the body has some kind of overall evaluation of wellbeing that defies any individual measure. Scientists are nowhere near figuring this out.

There are clearly many components to wellbeing. These can be collated into three overall areas. The first is physical security. It relates to anything that keeps us physically safe. It includes having enough food and drink to stay healthy, having access to shelter, having access to medical help when we are ill and being kept safe from attack by natural dangers and other humans. The second is emotional connectedness. It relates to anything that makes us feel valued and part of the communities we engage with who can keep us safe and sound. It includes positive relationships with people around us, a positive self-image, and a sense of purpose in life that comes from interacting with humans and nature. The third is stimulation. It relates to anything that stimulates our minds or bodies. It includes excitement, challenge,

When the three areas of wellbeing are well balanced in our lives, we enter a state of inner peace and harmony. Wellbeing is a feature of this state of harmony. The harmony is disrupted when aspects of our wellbeing are not being met fully. The impact on wellbeing of unmet needs and wants varies from person to person, depending on their individual circumstances. A person who is starving may have a very low sense of wellbeing regardless of the quality of their relationships with others or how much stimulation they have. Conversely, the fact of starvation may be irrelevant to their wellbeing if they have temporarily chosen to fast for positive reason, such as diet or spiritual cleansing.

We often confuse the means to achieve wellbeing with wellbeing itself. This is where monetary measures get it wrong. Having money does not, of itself, deliver security, good relationships or stimulation,

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although it may well help to achieve aspects of them if the person uses it in the right way for their needs and wants.

This gives rise to a conundrum in measuring wellbeing. What does “the right way” mean? Who has the right to say whether a person is acting in “the right way” to satisfy their needs and hopes? A drug addict may well decide their wellbeing lies in taking more drugs, perhaps having to steal to pay for the drugs. A family member may disagree.

Probably the best we can come up with is to base wellbeing on nature's drivers. Our bodies clearly have a number of needs - eating, staying safe, reproducing to name but a few. Our bodies have evolved ways that motivate us to behave in ways that provide for our needs. Pleasure is nature's driver towards specific outcomes. It incentivises us to take particular actions in particular circumstances. It is the means to an end. Where we carry out those actions that serve our interests - what we want and need to support a sustainable, healthy life - we create a state of wellbeing. Where we seek pleasure without the accompanying action that serves our interest, we are not enhancing wellbeing. Pursuit of happiness as an end in itself does not deliver wellbeing.

An implication of this concept of wellbeing is that quality of life is an experience, not a destination. We should balance our aspirations for the future with our wellbeing for now.

Quality of Life

Wellbeing relates to the quality of life. It starts only when a basic level of subsistence is reasonably assured. Subsistence living means living with just enough to eat and drink to survive, with just enough security to avoid harm and with just enough connection to avoid being chased away and just enough stimulation to avoid a sense of irrelevance. Where people can not be reasonably confident of subsistence for the foreseeable future, a sense of fear and hopelessness pervades their lives. Humans preoccupied with survival are working for life, they have no meaningful quality of life.

Once an individual has reasonable grounds for confidence of subsistence for the foreseeable future for them and their dependents, access to wellbeing can commence. This means that nations can achieve huge improvements in national wellbeing by delivering the most basic improvements in life for people who are in poverty, who are homeless or who are otherwise excluded from society. This also means that wellbeing economics has an inherent bias towards fairness where small improvements in the lives of people living at or below subsistence levels have a disproportionately large impact on their wellbeing.

Generating Wellbeing

How is wellbeing generated? Society generates the means to wellbeing by coordinating people's activities towards that objective. It creates systems for producing physical items needed for wellbeing at a rate that far exceeds what people can produce alone. It creates systems for providing services to support both physical production and supports aspects of belonging.

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Society delivers the means to wellbeing. It only becomes actual wellbeing when converted by the individual into the actual experience of wellbeing.

Each individual has their own capacity to convert wellbeing. It can be innate (part of our nature) or developed (part of our nurture). It comes from understanding what we need and how we can satisfy that need. An example is choosing to eat the the right food for our bodies. Are we eating too much or too little? Is the balance right between fats, carbs and nutrients to serve our body's needs? Are we connecting with others in a way that is right for us both? Are we too assertive, to disinterested in their concerns or not concerned enough for ourselves? Wellbeing capacities include self-aware understanding, social skills and congruent understanding of the individual's environment.

Generally, there are three dimensions to wellbeing capacity. One is the self-awareness that allows us to understand our needs and how best to satisfy them. The second is the social skills that allows us to understand how to interact with others to develop strong relationships. The third is an understanding of how the world works that aligns with our needs. Someone who was abused throughout childhood will struggle to trust others or to know how to behave in a way that engenders trust. This underdeveloped understanding is incongruent with the individual's ability to function in society in ways that are consistent with their overall wellbeing.

Wellbeing is a natural state in which we sense we are safe and sound and are making a meaningful contribution to other members of society, to society itself or to the planet. This state is a harmonious state that evolution seeks for us, where we are at one with ourselves, the people around us and our surroundings. It is the state evolution sets for us in order to support our species' flourishing in a sustainable way. As a social being, it means we are able to balance the satisfaction of each of our individual needs, wants and hopes with those of the people who contribute with us to shaping our lives, their lives and with the world in which we live.

Positive Universal Values

We have evolved in a way where social relationships are a critical feature of wellbeing. Evolution has bestowed on us some useful tools to help us understand how to develop effective relationships. Positive universal values play a pivotal role in guiding our understanding and actions that generate wellbeing. They include values such as trust, respect, integrity, togetherness and joy. To be useful, these values need to be applied to specific interactions. Sometimes, values conflict with each other. Honesty may require us to be truthful. But kindness sometimes requires us to temper our honesty. Often, we combine several values and temper them with others.

Cultural norms seek to offer us predetermined understanding and actions in specific circumstances. For example, some cultures promote the death penalty as a means of imposing order and punishing severe crimes. Other see the death penalty as callous and vengeful. We refer to the underlying values as elemental values because they are like atoms in a molecule. By and large, everyone throughout the world shares a number of positive values that lead to stronger social relationships. But how we combine those elemental values and apply them in practical situations varies enormously. This disagreement about how to apply values can cause intense conflict. In advanced societies, most people have lost touch

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with their elemental values. They have lost the skills to apply values for themselves, relying instead on other people's cultures and rules. Much of this conflict can be averted where people are more in touch with their full set of values and are experienced at applying them appropriately to the circumstances.

Greater engagement with elemental values has the power to bring us closer together, in common understanding. It also helps us to live our lives according to the standards we set for ourselves, rather than standards imposed on us by others.

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Societal Wellbeing

In a wellbeing economy, society has one purpose, and one purpose only. To deliver sustainable wellbeing to its members. It fuses the contribution of its members with earthly resources in a way that generates wellbeing for its members. Society can be perceived of as an entity in its own right, an enfusion of contributions and resources, that has its own unique set of characteristics and capabilities that are distinct from its members. It is this added value that society delivers that is the output of a healthy, effective and efficient society. In effective societies, the added value is measured in factors of hundreds of thousands times better than the wellbeing that can be generated by individuals alone.

Societal structures

Societal wellbeing refers to how well society is structured to make best use of its people and resources to deliver wellbeing. The structures are in place to coordinate people's activities in ways that are sensible to achieve society's objectives. Structures include leadership, laws, cultures and ways of organising people in ways that supports society overall. Organisations in society are akin to organs in a human body. They are groupings of cells that perform a very specialist function. The organs are nourished by the systems that they serve. If either the organs or the systems they serve get sick, the whole body suffers.

So there are two crucial aspects required for a healthy society. Firstly, organisations need to have a clear focus on their purpose to serve the society on which their existence depends. Secondly, people need to be motivated to specialise and collaborate within organisations in a balanced way that best serves the overall effectiveness of society.

Social purpose

There are several ways that support these healthy outcomes.

Society needs a clear definition of its overall purpose. It needs to create measures against which success can be assessed, based on the total human experience of members of society. Many measures of wellbeing are currently emerging - in the thousands. It is likely that a small number of indices will emerge as the standards against which communities and nations assess their success.

Society needs to engage its members in the overall purpose, in order to encourage their engagement with the coordinated process of generating wellbeing. The best societies are the ones that are able to establish a common purpose around universal wellbeing.

Motivational tools

There are a number of tools open to society to motivate its members to collaborate with each other. At the one extreme, members are forced or coerced into certain types of work. At the other extreme, members are rewarded for their contribution to the wellbeing of society. In autocratic economies, members are largely directed by the central leadership. This leadership is often far removed from the

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people they direct. It is impossible for central leaders to micromanage large numbers of individuals. So the rules become unwieldy and make inefficient use of resources. As economies stabilise and mature, people are led by decentralised organisations that are better placed to make best use of individual capacities. The challenge for both types of leaders is to align the activities of the organisation with the objectives of society - with action and output that is coordinated with the output of all other organisations in a way that best generates wellbeing. The monetary system currently place a significant role in helping individual organisations to calibrate their activities and the activities of its employees. New systems are emerging that encourage organisations to account for the amount of social responsibility they take, and to increase the reward available to the organisations that are more socially responsible.

It can be difficult to assess an individual's contribution to society. This is because the enormous added-value generated by society does not arise from individual contribution. Indeed, much of the added-value society currently delivers is based on the contribution of our ancestors going back hundreds of generations. A useable wheel could not have been invented without people having invented appropriate tools. Useable cars and trains could not have been invented without people having used wheels extensively. Usable rockets could not have been invented without people having invented cars and trains.

Contribution to wellbeing comes in many guises. It may come from someone picking fruit for someone to eat. It may come from someone building tools to help fruit picking. It may come from someone cleaning the toilets that allow people to work in the office that builds the fruit picking machinery. It may come from helping to build roads, to manage the legal protection that secures individuals and empowers organisations, or it may come from someone leading hundreds of thousands of people in a successful multi-national corporation. What everyone has in common is that no-one's contribution is of significant value on its own, without everyone else contributing and consuming in their billions. It may also come from a parent devoting their life to bringing up their children, or a volunteer having tea with a lonely person disabled by age, neither of who are paid in the monetary economy. Contribution to a wellbeing economy bears little resemblance to the reward for the same contribution in a monetary economy. Neither the head of Apple, nor the kindly volunteer make a contribution of any significance to an entire nation without the whole working of society pulling people together for mutual gain.

In a monetary economy, contribution is rewarded largely on the degree of control one person exerts over others. In a wellbeing economy, contribution is linked more to contribution to the overall wellbeing generation machine than to any attempt to separate out individual contribution to outcomes. Reward should reflect how hard someone works, how skilled they are or how unpleasant the work is compared to other contributions. But that element of reward is quite modest relative to reward for their engagement with the overall generation of wellbeing by society.

Social justice

The lions share of societal added-value arises from the combined efforts of billions of people, past and present. When each person adds their contribution, they add their stone to the stone mountain on which we climb to the highest heights.

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There are four competing forces vying for a share of the added-value. One is the reward for contribution described above. The second is the reward for people to establish and maintain order. Humans have the capacity to cooperate and also to compete. Competition can quickly become violent or deadly where the stakes are high enough. All leaders need to create a loyal inner group of people who are able to influence large numbers of others. One way to assure loyalty is to pay for it, with a disproportionate share of the added-value of society. The third is society's aspiration to protect people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged and who, for any other reason, are precluded from making a full contribution to society. The fourth is personal greed, the desire to take a share of the added-value without commensurate contribution.

In a wellbeing society, social justice seeks to reward the establishment of order because without order, society can not function effectively. It seeks to reward people for their contribution to society, without regard to whether they are paid by the monetary economy. And it seems to allocate some of the added-value to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. This social care has an additional impact. It establishes a culture that pervades all corners of society. Societies that do not care for the vulnerable experience raised levels of fear, anxiety and distrust. These have a direct effect on wellbeing. A strange aspect of allocated an appropriate share of society's added-value to the most vulnerable is that it improves wellbeing overall.

Where added-value is allocated to people by reason of the amount of control they wield over others, it undermines the foundations of social justice on which cohesive society depends.

Illustrative Narrative

Social justice is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members

Like organs in a body, organisations that poison the people they serve end up poisoning themselves.

Slavery, coercion, exploitation and economic dependence are all corroding sides of the same ugly coin

Society's vast added-value is the fruit of an orchard planted by hundreds of generations past

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Planetary Wellbeing

The new narrative relating to climate change is already well established.

The wellbeing economy is focused on sustainable human wellbeing. Even though few of us now farm, we still live off the land. It provides us with food and water, with air to breath, with minerals and compounds to make goods and buildings, with space to carry out, consolidate and distribute production, and a wealth of ideas from nature to improve our lives.

Our wellbeing is only sustainable if we live within the boundaries of what the earth can support.

The world population has increased from around 1 billion to around 8 billion in just the last two hundred years. Our demands for food and resources has increased well beyond the eight-fold increase, as our appetite for new and grander goods has become close to insatiable.

We have reached the edge of what the planet can sustain in a number of key areas, and things are getting worse. Unless we change our ways, there is only one possible outcome - shortages, conflict for ever more scarce resources and wholesale death within the human population.

This means we need to find new ways to produce items where the component parts are running out. We also need to acknowledge that the components we use up are no longer available to other forms of life. For some, this is enough to show constraint. For others, we need to be more aware of the impact on our own lives of interfering with the natural order. We use pesticides to help plants grow more easily, to allow us to feed more people for less cost. We ignore the impact of the pesticides on the pests we are trying to keep away. There is now good evidence to link pesticides with a decline in the bee population by up to three quarters. This reduces the insect population available to pollinate food plants, which leads to the frightening prospect of our food supplies drying up.

Whether through compassion or self-interest, we need to come up with new ways to provide for our wellbeing which are sustainable in the long-run and which protect the amazingly complicated natural environment on which so much of our wellbeing depends.

Illustrative Narratives

- We are living beyond our means. It will catch up with us before we know it. When it does, it will be too late.
- We are not looking after ourselves responsibly. We are failing our children whose future is in our hands.
- We need to encourage human ingenuity for solutions. We can not allow today's profiteers to hold us back.

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Order

Order comes in two flavours. One is the statehood. This is the order that comes when the state protects itself from attack either from external powers or from within. A nation can not exist without order. In most cases, some degree of force or its credible threat is required to establish order. As societies grow in size, so does the need for more sophisticated use of force/military might to maintain order.

The other is the policing of common understanding of members of society to live and work together in ways that respect their wellbeing and their freedom to contribute fully to society. This is the order that comes from effective laws, cultural norms and a shared understanding of how to behave in relation to each other. Driving becomes much safer when everyone knows which side of the road on which they have to drive.

In times of stress, the effort to maintain order grows. This may arise where there is competition for resources, either with other nations or between members of society. Actions that compound scarcity of resources, such as those that contribute to climate change, increase the stresses on security. As the stresses grow, society needs to divert an increasing proportion of its members to maintaining order. At the same time, security fears and breaches are directly responsible for holding back wellbeing.

In times of peace, there is an inherent tension in the use of force to establish order. Society can not function as an effective generator of wellbeing without it. Excessive use of force hampers wellbeing in a variety of subtle and not so subtle ways. It may restrict some people from living a life that is congruent to their beliefs and needs. It may restrict some people from contributing fully to society. It may hold back education where leaders fear how widespread access to knowledge may be used. But it is important to distinguish the positive effect on wellbeing of using force to maintain order from the negative effect where it is used solely to prevent new people from taking over leadership of society.

Keeping internal order can be challenging and is potentially very labour intensive. Once security is established, the next goal of society is to coordinate people's activities towards its objectives of generating wellbeing. The way it achieves this goal has an impact on wellbeing. Coordination can be thought of along a scale of management. At one end of the extreme is domination. It involves slavery and exploitation of vulnerability, such as lack of protection by the state or economic dependence. The middle of the scale is persuasion. It includes manipulation through misinformation and financial incentivisation. At the other end of the scale is autonomy. It involves connected self-leadership, a self-drive that is connected with others and that is congruent with the overall objectives of society.

As society is increasingly able to assure its own security and the security of its members, it has the option to release the reigns, allowing coordination of members' activities to be decentralised and to move up the scale. There is a correlation between aggregate wellbeing and how people's activities are coordinated along the scale of management. The correlation is connected with a further condition relating to the degree of alignment between the managers' goals and society's.

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Illustrative Narratives

- Emotional and financial abuse is no less damaging by its invisibility
- Aggregate wellbeing is served best where the leaders' good is the common good
- Wellbeing is born of the marriage between statehood and order
- Self-leadership rules when aligned

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Wellbeing Economics

Monetary economics analyses the system that produces output. It is preoccupied with its monetary flows. Activities that take place outside the monetary system, or that do not relate to monetary output are largely outside its scope.

Wellbeing economics analyses the system that generates wellbeing. It is interested in monetary flows to the extent the flows affect distribution of resources and how society's added-value is allocated. But its preoccupation is human wellbeing, without regard to the monetary flows. How parents bring up their children, for example, is completely outside the scope of monetary economics. The impact on the child's wellbeing and on the child's soulal, social and wellbeing capacities, by contrast, bring it to the centre of wellbeing economics.

In reality, the scope of wellbeing economics is so wide that it almost makes the term redundant. But we will continue to use it in order to allow us to refer to the analyses of how society generates wellbeing, the means to assess its effectiveness and the ability to forecast future wellbeing based on existing and new policy ideas.

The wellbeing economy is the system that coordinates human input and resources (production) to deliver human output (wellbeing). In wellbeing economics, the wellbeing economy is another term for the enfused society. Wellbeing economics is the study, analysis and understanding of the system.

Economic Power

People, and people alone, deliver the power that drives the generation and consumption of wellbeing. People can use tools, such as machines and artificial intelligence, to enhance their power. But since the system is designed to deliver human wellbeing, albeit sustainably, the notion that computers or robots could replace humans is irrational in wellbeing economics. Those who dispute the concept may consider Apple's vast valuation. It is the first listed company to attain a valuation of \$1 trillion. Imagine the world stays exactly as it is with one exception – the population drops from 7 billion plus to 7 million plus. Apple's \$1 trillion valuation would almost entirely vanish because it would have no customers to sell to, nowhere near enough people to create the specialist parts it needs to manufacture its products and the infrastructure in which it is able to coordinate staff, build the product and distribute around the world would almost completely disappear. In wellbeing economics, the human contribution to the whole process of specialisation, coordination and consumption is the power that drives the economy.

In monetary economics, we talk about the amount of power leaders can wield. In wellbeing economics, leaders do not have power. They have influence over how much power is delivered and control over the direction in which that power is applied. This is relevant because it raises awareness of the value of individual contribution to society as a whole and mitigates the sense that the contribution of people with huge amounts of money is somehow disproportionately greater.

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Economic Effectiveness

Monetary economics rarely talks about its effectiveness. This reflects, in part, its weakly defined objectives. It offers few clear benchmarks against which to judge. In wellbeing economics, an effective society is easier to assess. An effective society aligns the application of human and resource input with its objective of delivering sustainable human output. It requires politics and business to align their activities with society's objectives of delivering wellbeing. In a wellbeing economy, organisations need to account for both their monetary impact, and also for their social impact where social is defined in terms of society's wellbeing objectives.

In monetary economics, monetary GDP measures the success of the economy. In wellbeing economics, monetary objectives are no more than a means to an end. The success of a wellbeing economy is measured in terms of the experience of wellbeing. It is calculated as the aggregate wellbeing of all members of society.

Outcomes of a Wellbeing Economy

The outcome of a wellbeing economy is sustainable human wellbeing. When it becomes the focus of attention, the measure of success, politicians are driven to policies that improve overall wellbeing. There are many studies that show the link between wellbeing and productivity. So even autocratic leaders, whose preoccupation may be maintaining internal or external security or with personal enrichment, will recognise that a more productive society provides them with greater riches and resources with which to pursue their objectives.

Wellbeing economics has an additional, if subtle outcome.

In monetary economics, an individual can never limit the amount of additional wealth they can amass. For this reason, monetary output is unmoved by inequality. In terms of wellbeing, there is an upper limit. Once someone's material needs and wants are met – where wants are defined in terms of satisfaction of natural drivers, where they have developed excellent connections with others and with the planet and they have a deep sense of purpose, once they are stimulated in a way that suits their wellbeing, they can not increase their individual wellbeing regardless of the amount of additional money they may accrue. Conversely, where someone lives in abject poverty, there is a substantial chance their basic material needs are not being met. Even the slightest increase in their share of the added-value generated by society can have an immediate and substantial impact on their individual wellbeing. So a wellbeing economy has an inbuilt bias towards equal opportunity and a dampening effect on excessive inequality.

Illustrative Narratives

- Wellbeing economies are inherently biased towards fairness and social justice
- The power of society is generated by its members pulling together as one
- Meritocracy rewards people's genuine contribution to society

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Wellbeing Culture

Society's culture is the set of social rules and norms that each community expects of its members, including its leaders. Many social cultures co-exist within large populations. Even the same person is able to adapt their cultural guides to their circumstances. The same person behaves very differently at a sports event than at a funeral, or even just with different friends. Each community develops its own unique set of cultures. So within a nation, there are lots of cultures adopted by lots of different people.

Research has found that culture goes through stages during our lives through an apparently predictable set of cultural stages. We move from one stage to the next only when we have fully adopted the cultures of that stage and found that they no longer fully serve our needs. Each cultural stage varies in some respects between communities and nations. But there are well established common traits. Examples of traits are attitudes towards law and order (such as the death penalty) and attitudes towards strangers (such as immigration). The mix of around 100 or so attitudes that have been studied have been categorised into eight stages.

A person's culture is sometimes referred to as their worldview reflecting the role of attitudes in the way we assess culture.

In the same way that life expectancy varies from person to person depending on their unique circumstances, so does culture. We measure society's culture as the average weighted stage of culture adopted by people. Some people refer to this as national culture, some as national consciousness.

The cultures we adopt have an impact on our wellbeing. Research has found that aggregate wellbeing in nations correlates reasonably strongly with the nation's measured culture. In short, more progressive cultures deliver greater wellbeing.

But there is an important nuance. In order to assess the cultural impact on wellbeing, we need to distinguish the nation's culture from the culture adopted by its leaders. Leadership is in step with its people where the leaders apply laws and governance in accordance with the national average. Often, however, leaders rule from a different worldview from the general population, which we call a leadership gap.

In a healthy society, leaders are in step with the populations or they are slightly ahead of the curve trying to nudge the nation forward. Significant leadership gaps contribute to social disharmony and unrest. Where leaders have surged ahead too quickly, it gives rise to frustration and discontent. Where leaders seek to pull a nation backwards, it raises the temperature considerably, where frustration and discontent can easily spill over into violent expression.

At an individual level, alignment between the individual's values and their behaviours contributes to their sense of inner peace and wellbeing. Cultures that have a more authoritarian tone tend to interfere with this alignment. Cultures that are more progressive tend to support it.

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Culture has a further influence on wellbeing. An individual's wellbeing is tied up with their sense of self-worth. For most of us, this is influenced by how we are valued within society, which itself is influenced by our connectedness with other members of society and with our engagement with society's common purpose. Where individuals are at liberty to adopt their own cultures, they tend to feel a greater connection with society. Societies need to resolve a tension where an individual's freedom to follow a culture restricts someone else's freedom to practise theirs.

Where we breach laws, an well developed state has clearly defined punishments. The punishment for breaching cultural rules/norms is shame. This is a product of human evolution. It justifies people from excluding people from the benefits and security of life within society. At its extreme, an individual is banished entirely. Unlike laws, cultures are fluid and personal. There are no written laws that can be enforced. The advantage of cultures being imprecise is it allows it to be applied flexibly and to adapt to changing circumstances in subtle ways. Its disadvantage is the power it has for misapplication to create social injustice, unrest and waste of potential.