

Gross National Happiness Policy Outputs in Bhutan from 1972 to 2014*

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Abstract

In 1972, Bhutan's Fourth King declared Gross National Happiness (GNH) more important than Gross Domestic Product. But what was the nature of GNH legislation policy outputs before and after the adoption of the written 2008 Bhutanese Constitution that required that Bhutan to promote GNH as a national policy goal? This study examines from 1972 to 2014 (six years after the adoption of the Bhutan Constitution) GNH policy outputs. There were two stages related to Bhutan's four pillars that include sustainable and equitable economic development, good governance, cultural preservation, and environmental protection. In the first stage lasting to the 1990s, Bhutanese policy outputs emphasized preserving traditional culture. In the second phase from the 1990s to 2014, Bhutanese policy outputs emphasized Buddhist modernism in which all four pillars balanced traditional Buddhist values with modern issues like health care and illiteracy.

Keywords: public policy, Gross National Happiness, Bhutan

Introduction

Bhutan is a small, landlocked, and highly mountainous east Himalayan Mahayana Buddhist nation located between India and the People's Republic of China (Rose, 1977b; Dorji, 1997; Mathou, 1999, 2001; Gulati, 2003a; Wangchuk, 2004; Dorji, 2008; Givel, 2009). On Bhutan's northern border is the Tibet Autonomous region of the People's Republic of China (Sinha,

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2001). On Bhutan's western, southern, and eastern borders lie the Indian states of Sikkim, Bengal, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2011). Bhutan's population in 2013 was close to 753,000 with a total land area equal to about one half the size of the U.S. state of Indiana (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2011; World Bank, 2013).

In 1972, the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, indicated that Gross National Happiness (GNH) was more important than Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Dorji, 1997; Dorji, 2008; Honorable Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley, 2009a, 2009b; Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley, 2009). The primary reason that King Jigme Singye Wangchuck called for GNH as a national policy goal was to guide Bhutan in balancing capitalism and modernization with traditional Mahayana Buddhist religious and values (Honorable Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley, 2009a, 2009b; Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley, 2009). GNH was also initiated to preserve Bhutan's traditional culture and society (Honorable Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley, 2009b; Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley, 2009). In this paper, an examination is made from 1972 to 2014 to provide a detailed and nuanced analysis on the nature and quantity, over time, of how and what impact GNH legislative public policy outputs have had.

Public policy outputs are what governments do or do not do that impact segments of the public and the public interest (Birkland, 2011a; Dye, 2011). In the modern age, governments can regulate adverse behaviours such as pollution, distribute benefits to certain groups in society, or redistribute wealth or income from certain classes to other classes (Lowi, 1964). The instrumentalities used to carry out administrative and legal requirements include executive, legislative, and judicial institutions in policy regimes. Policy regimes reflect the relationships between the agendas, interests, and ideology of those that govern and the state (Stone, 1989; Jochim & May, 2010). Policy outcomes, in this paper are the intended or unintended consequences of the goals and objectives of policy outputs. For example, if Bhutan adopted legislation designed

to bolster protection of its natural environment, has that occurred or do the Bhutanese people in a national random sample survey believe or perceive that environmental quality is being enhanced. From 2008 to 2013, the ruling Druk Phuensum Tshogpa continued to promote GNH as a prime development policy for Bhutan to balance non-GDP values including cultural preservation of traditional Mahayana Buddhism with modern globalization and capitalism (BBC News, 2013; DeHart, 2013; Pandey, 2013). In June 2013, with the election of People's Democratic Policy of Bhutan, GNH as a policy took a new direction under new Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay:¹

Although Tobgay has been outspoken in his belief that the government must turn to more concrete matters, he has left the door open to promoting GNH – in its right place. This is where the nation's beloved monarch comes in. As the country's symbolic leader, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, is well suited to take up the torch for GNH in Tobgay's view.

“We have experts, the foremost of whom is our king,” Tobgay said. “I would like for real experts to take centre stage, leading the discourse at home and abroad. I think

¹ Some western observers and others have over-stated the change in policy direction of GNH under People's Democratic Party Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay to mean Bhutan has abandoned GNH almost altogether as a prime policy and development goal. This statement written in a 2015 anonymous review in the *Asian Politics & Policy* journal is typical of this opinion. “...The First Prime Minister Jigme Thinley was resoundingly defeated in the 2013 elections. One of the most significant drivers of this defeat was that he was parading around the world, “selling GNH”, while the country was falling apart. Moreover, a Rupee crisis ensued and value of Bhutan currency went from low to not even being accepted in India to whom they were increasingly in debt. The new Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay has taken the helm and it is clear from both reading the papers, talking with insiders and looking at international proclamations and pronouncements that while GNH is valued, it is no longer the driving factor or component of development that it once enjoyed. In fact, GNH seems to have been displaced as the model in favor of pursuing an approach of less idealistic but more practical paths to development.”

the Bhutanese people will be thrilled if His Majesty champions the cause” (DeHart, 2013).

The four concrete matters of primary concern to the new government in addition to promoting GNH were: high government debt, rupee shortages, unemployment, and growing corruption (DeHart, 2013). By 2015, in addition to addressing significant domestic problems at home, Bhutan’s continued to promote GNH policy including using GNH as a screening, planning, and evaluation tool for national government plans and projects by the national GNH Commission, utilizing 20 GNH Index measurement indicators in the 11th Five Year Plan, and completion of GNH Index national surveys to track with the publication of new national Five Year Plans (Phuntsho, 2015). The newest GNH Index survey will be released later in 2015 (Phuntsho, 2015).

The GNH Index, which is conducted through national public opinion surveys in Bhutan, is a mix of subjective and objective indicators developed in the mid-2000s by the Thimphu-based think tank, Centre for Bhutan Studies (Thinley, 2009; Centre for Bhutan Studies 2011a, 2011b). The index is generally based on four recognized pillars of GNH including sustainable and equitable economic development, good governance, cultural preservation, and environmental protection (Thinley, 2009; Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011a, 2011b). Integrated into the four pillars are nine domains that are a subset of and are congruent with the four pillars (Thinley, 2009). They include: standard of living, health and education within the pillar of sustainable and equitable economic development, good governance congruent with the pillar of good governance, cultural vitality and diversity, psychological wellbeing, time use and balance, and community vitality within the pillar of cultural preservation, and ecosystem vitality congruent with the environmental protection pillar (Thinley, 2009).

While the GNH Index represents snapshots at different times of subjective Bhutanese public opinion on policy outcomes of happiness in the four pillars it does not measure concurrent

public policy outputs initiated or not by the Bhutanese government to implement GNH. Little is known to date of how and what emphasis the Bhutanese placed shortly after the adoption of the 2008 written Constitution that required GNH as a national policy on the enactment of GNH public policy outputs. In this paper, an examination will be made from 1972 to 2014 of enacted GNH public legislative policy outputs to ascertain what GNH legislative public policy outputs trends have been over time. This includes whether GNH legislative policy outputs have emphasized all four pillars, over time, and the degree and nature of the public policy outputs in terms of implementing the four pillars.

Methods

The analysis of the legislative policy outputs implementing GNH, and the four pillars will include a content analysis of national legislation including 2008 constitutional provisions enacted from 1972 to 2014. Each enacted law or constitutional provision was examined to determine if the law was substantially promoting preservation of culture, good governance, environmental protection, and equitable economic development. Preservation of culture is defined as maintaining or bolstering Mahayana religion and traditions. Good governance is defined as government ethics, transparency in government, and anti-corruption practices. Environmental protection includes any legislation that preserves and conserves the parks and flora and fauna or counters environmental pollution. Equitable economic development including references to economics that also incorporates social and economic justice.

Data for this analysis was obtained from National Assembly of Bhutan's web site at: <http://www.nab.gov.bt/business/acts>. The data analysis occurred by determining whether a law explicitly mentioned in whole or part one or more of the four pillars. For each enacted law, if the law addressed in a substantial and substantive manner either cultural preservation, environmental protection, good governance, or equitable development then this was counted as one provision

of a law promoting any or all of the four pillars. The data is reported in tabular form as bar graphs depicting the quantity and degree of enactment of policies related to GNH from 1972 to 2014. Also included are tabular tables and list of the laws or constitutional provisions that promoted one or more pillars of GNH.

The analysis includes legislation enacted prior to 2013 when the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa was in power as well as from 2013 to 2014 when the People's Democratic Party was in power.

The method used in this archival research paper to counter subjectivity bias is the audit trail approach. As noted above I have a clear record of the research steps taken including the reporting of findings, which any third parties could replicate and analyse for themselves (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2015). Additionally, this paper provides an overview of enacted legislation and does not review implementation of GNH policy as the implementation program has been incorporated into the GNH Commission program, planning, evaluation, and implementation process as well as national Five Year Plans (Phuntsho, 2015).

Literature Review

U.S. political scientist, Harold Lasswell, developed the first public policy stages heuristics theory in the 1950s known in this period as policy sciences. The policy sciences was oriented toward resolving pragmatic public problems, utilizing interdisciplinary methodological approaches, and was grounded in primarily quantitative methodology (Lasswell, 1948, 1971; deLeon, 2006; Birkland, 2011b; Theodoulou, 2013). Moreover, policy sciences displayed a distinct value basis that incorporated anti-communist and Cold War ideology with “proper” public policy options in a democracy entailing a free-market system that included a mix of the public, civic, and market sectors. This was in contrast to an entirely public governmental approach or what Lasswell labelled a totalitarian

and un-democratic system (Lasswell, 1948, 1971; deLeon 2006).

The foundation for quantitative empirical analyses occurring in Lasswell's theory was evaluating how the staged public policy decision-making process progressed. Within this process, public policy developed in a unilateral and linear fashion from policy stage to policy stage (Lasswell, 1956; Jones, 1970; Lasswell & Kaplan, 1971; Anderson, 1975; Sabatier, 2007). This conception of policymaking known as the stages heuristic theory includes the following steps: a problem or issue of importance develops in the public realm, policy formulations and proposals, legislative policy enactment, policy implementation by a public agency, and feedback of whether the policy was meeting the original policy intent through usually quantitative policy evaluations (Sabatier, 2007). The stages heuristic theory remained a prominent policy theory until the 1980s.

By the 1980s, a number of critics argued the theory was flawed because it did not appropriately describe underlying critical policy drivers such as structural economic and political inequality, it was apolitical, policies do not always occur unilaterally from stage-to-stage, and the model does not lend itself to definitive predictions of possible future possible policy outputs or outcomes (Sabatier, 2007). Others argued it did not account for complex policy interactions between the top, middle, and bottom levels of government and did not describe non-linear government decision-making (Hjern & Hull, 1982; Sabatier, 1986, 2007).

Beginning in the 1980s, a new group of U.S.-based policy theories became predominant. In 2007, Sabatier argued in his authoritative book, *Theories of the Policy Process* the more promising policy theories included: institutional rational choice, punctuated equilibrium, multiple streams, advocacy coalition framework, policy diffusion, and large N-comparative studies (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Kingdon, 1995; Ostrom, 1998; deLeon, 2006; Repetto, 2006; Berry & Berry,

2007; Ostrom, 2007; Sabatier, 2007; Zahariadis, 2007; Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Birkland, 2011a). The selection criteria used by Sabatier for these American-based policy theories included they were: empirically tested with falsifiable hypotheses, provided a broad explanation of the policy process, and assessed a broad range of factors that political scientists have traditionally researched (Sabatier, 2007).

Notwithstanding the important criticisms of the stages heuristic theory and the new wave of policy theories since the 1980s, the stages heuristic theory provides an important descriptive approach on how policymaking occurs by partitioning public policy stages for identification and evaluation. Different policy scholars and analysts use different descriptions of the heuristic stages, and these descriptions are congruent with the primary stages of the policy process such as policy formulation. For instance, Kingdon describes a window of opportunity that might open that occurs between a policy issue or problem and policy formulation (Kingdon, 1995). This approach of analysing separate policy outputs will be utilized in analysing the policy enactment stage of GNH legislative resulting in policy outputs from 1972 to 2010.

Happiness Under Buddhist Theocracy

From 1616 to 1651, founder of Bhutan, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal unified Bhutan under one governmental called Chhyosi Nyidhen. After the Zhabdrung's death in 1651, Chhyosi Nyidehn or the two-fold system of government basically intermixed as a Buddhist theocracy; secular affairs overseen by a secular ruler and spiritual matters overseen by a religious Buddhist leader with Mahayana Buddhism being the state religion. At that time (and up to the present), the predominant Mahayana Buddhist school in Bhutan was the Drukpa or Thunder Dragon school (Labh, 1996). The construction of Dzongs was also a key political, religious, and military approach by the Zhabdrung to consolidate his political power. Dzongs, also housed civil and religious administrators who governed Bhutan and its several regions. The Dzongs also proved to be a brilliant military strategy because they were

constructed in key military defensive positions like on prominent hillsides that successfully repelled all Tibetan, and in one case Tibetan and Mongol military attacks during this period (Ardussi, 2009).

The two-fold system of governance in Bhutan lasted for about 250 years until December 17, 1907. From 1903 to 1907, a political crisis ensued in Bhutan related to the unresolved issue of clear succession of heads of state (White, 1909). In 1903, the Zhabdrung Rinpoche died (a reincarnation of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal who held the Buddhist religious leadership), followed by the civil leader or Druk Desi in 1904. This resulted in the Je Khenpo or the head monk temporarily filling both political offices from 1904 to 1907. During this period, British Political Officer in Sikkim, India, John Claude White, conducted several official visits to Bhutan to mediate the political crisis (White, 1909). As a result of these visits he helped to broker a political deal that enabled Bhutan to establish a hereditary monarchy. The position of Druk Gyalpo (Dragon King), the King of Bhutan, was eventually created in 1907 by the Buddhist religious hierarchy and other powerbrokers in Bhutan (White, 1909).

In 1907, the First Druk Gyalpo, Ugyen Wangchuck, was inaugurated at the Punakha Dzong. This ceremony established the Wangchuck rule of five successive hereditary kings of Bhutan during the 20th and into the 21st century. Under the new monarchy, the king exercised significant power over the executive, legislative, and judicial functions, and structures of government. Among the main functions of the government was to bolster the state Mahayana religion. As a result, the Je Khenpo remains an important advisor to the hereditary monarchy to this day (Zurick, 2006).

In the mid-twentieth century, the hereditary monarchy slowly began to democratize initially with the establishment of a new legislative National Assembly in 1953 (Rose, 1977a; Labh, 1996; Gulati, 2003b). In July 1998, the National Assembly was granted the ability to elect a Council of Ministers to administer

the government. The National Assembly could also remove the king with a two-thirds no-confidence vote (Rose, 1977a; Labh 1996; Gulati, 2003b).

On December 17, 2005, the fourth hereditary king, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, relinquished the throne and calling for a transition to a Constitutional Monarchy including national elections (Dorji, 2008; Turner *et al.*, 2011; Turner & Tshering, 2014a, 2014b). King Jigme Singye Wangchuck also announced that he would abdicate the royal throne to his oldest son (Dorji, 2008; Turner & Tshering, 2014a, 2014b). In July 2008, the first written Constitution of Bhutan was approved that included democratic elections and civil and political rights (Dorji, 2008). While numerous scholars have advanced several key factors for democratization in modern times including: regime disunity, elite agreements to democratize, economic crises, pressure from international sources, and popular mobilizations and social movements for civil and democratic rights none of these applied to Bhutan (Turner *et al.*, 2011; Turner & Tshering, 2014a). Instead, it was the legitimacy of the Bhutanese state in tandem with a transformational monarch, namely King Jigme Singye Wangchuck that resulted in the promotion and enactment of democratization in Bhutan (Turner *et al.*, 2011; Turner & Tshering, 2014a). King Wangchuck's success in promoting democratization occurred in a societal culture that was comfortable with centralized rule under a monarchical form of government (Turner *et al.*, 2011; Turner & Tshering, 2014a).

Gross National Happiness

The modern institution of Gross National Happiness began in 1972 as Bhutan began its movement to democratize from a hereditary monarchy. The establishment of GNH as national policy began when the fourth hereditary King Jigme Singye Wangchuk indicated that "Gross National Happiness was more important than Gross Domestic Product" (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-2007). King Wangchuck believed that change from modernization and global capitalism was inevitable (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-

2007). At the same time he wanted to balance this change by maintaining key features of Bhutan's traditional Mahayana Buddhist culture and society (O'Flynn & Blackman, 2009). GNH has been Bhutan's primary guiding public policy for development since the 1970s, even though the development of quantitative indicators for GNH did not happen until 1998. They were established after 1998 when Lyonpo (Foreign Minister) Jigme Y. Thinley spoke to an international audience at the Asian-Pacific Millennium meeting in Seoul, South Korea (Thinley, 2010).

This modern happiness policy assumes that happiness is universal and should or can be a primary focus for all human beings (Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley, 1998). The philosophy of GNH, in great part, is derived from Mahayana Buddhist beliefs (Tashi, 2004). Mahayana Buddhism of GNH in Bhutan is viewed as an important step for all laypeople to obtain Enlightenment. This obtainment of Enlightenment occurs by governmental public policies establishing the proper and optimal conditions for Bhutanese citizens to individually become Enlightened. As Lyonpo Thinley indicated in 1998:

This follows from an original meaning of development in Bhutanese context in which development meant enlightenment of the individual. I hasten to add that enlightenment is not solely an object of religious activity. Enlightenment is blossoming of happiness. It is made more probable by consciously creating a harmonious psychological, social, and economic environment (Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley, 1998).

A focus only on the ego cravings of materialism and greed that occurs under GDP, according to Mahayana Buddhism and the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism leads to suffering and unhappiness (Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley, 1998; Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley, 2009). Happiness and bliss from a Mahayana perspective occurs with the mitigation of unwarranted ego cravings (Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley, 1998). This primarily occurs according to the Fourth Noble Truth of Buddhism by

individuals undertaking an Eightfold path (Snelling, 1998; Gethin, 2004). The Path is divided into three parts (Snelling, 1998; Gethin, 2004). Sila encompasses proper physical actions and refraining from improper deeds of body and speech. Samadhi focuses on meditation practices, which help to gain the mastery over ones' own mind necessary to achieve the Ultimate Truth. Prajñā offers insight into the true nature of the Ultimate Truth of the Universe. Contained within Sila are Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood (Snelling, 1998; Gethin, 2004). Within Samadhi are Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. Within Prajñā are the final two parts of the Eightfold Path, Right Understanding and Right Thought.

GNH happiness also intertwines material needs with inner happiness and bliss (Tashi, 2004; Thinley, 2007). Inner activities, for instance, would include aiding all sentient beings in achieving Enlightenment. Outer activities would include meeting modern human needs and environmental sustainability through good governance, equitable economic development, and environmental protection. Through this holistic approach to institute a GNH state, Bhutan seeks to establish collective happiness in a caring society while mitigating the conflict between modernization and capitalism with traditional cultural and Mahayana Buddhist religious values (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2000; Dasho Karma Ura, 2008).

Bhutan originally declined to develop quantitative indicators of GNH, because the Bhutanese opposed measuring their GNH policy, which was also based on their Mahayana Buddhist religious beliefs (Honorable Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley 2009a). However, due to claims, pressure, and demands primarily from the west that complex social phenomena that is not measured in an empirical and positivist manner is not valid, Bhutan developed quantifiable measures of GNH (Honorable Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley, 2009a). The first quantifiable indicators were the four pillars of equitable economic development, cultural vitality and diversity, good

governance, and ecological preservation. The four pillars have been subdivided in 2010 into nine domains (Thinley, 2009). Contained within the original pillar of equitable economic development are the domains of standard of living, health, and education. Good governance is the same as the pillar of good governance. Cultural vitality and diversity, psychological well-being, time use and balance, and community vitality are domains contained within the pillar of cultural preservation. Ecosystem vitality is equal to the environmental protection pillar (Thinley, 2009).

The pillar of sustainable and equitable development is primarily oriented to reducing poverty and income and wealth inequality (Thinley, 2007). Additionally, due to Bhutan's emphasis on all individual's seeking Enlightenment through Mahayana Buddhist, this pillar also includes bolstering individuals to pursue free time and leisure (Thinley, 2007). Another key feature of equitable economic development the development of human capital in areas like health and education (Gross National Happiness Commission 2002-2007). Also emphasized in equitable economic development is further enhancement and maintenance of roads, telecommunications, energy, and air transport (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-2007). Finally, another goal of this pillar is to increase economic productivity and viability in key Bhutanese economic sectors including tourism, energy and hydropower, and agriculture (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-2007).

Bhutan also regards the promotion of the natural environment and robust ecosystems as key to quality emotional well-being, including emotional and Mahayana Buddhist well-being (Thinley, 2007). Underpinning this strong environmental ethos is a traditional Buddhist respect for the harmony of the natural environment and all sentient beings (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-2007). Additionally, environmental preservation complements economic development in which both are thought to occur in sync with

each other (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-2007).

Cultural preservation is also an important aspect of development, particularly regarding state policies that allow individuals to pursue Enlightenment as well as maintain cultural traditions such as Bhutanese art and handicrafts (Thinley, 2007). Bhutan views its preservation of cultural heritage through GNH as a means safeguard its unique Mahayana religious and cultural identity and traditions.

Finally, good governance is grounded in government operating in a transparent manner that is free of corruption (Thinley, 2007). Through this approach, good governance entails a government that promotes development with the greatest well-being and happiness for its citizens, and “integrity, accountability, and transparency in governmental practices” (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2002-2007).

GNH Policy Outcomes

Each of the four pillars containing the nine domains was subdivided in 2010 into 33 measures of happiness (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2009). These measures, which are averaged together are obtained by the Centre for Bhutan Studies in periodic national opinion surveys of Bhutanese citizens (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2009). The 2010 GNH Index survey found policy outcomes for all domains that men were happier than women (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011c). The Bhutanese were also, on the average, happiest in health, environmental protection, psychological wellbeing, and community vitality (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011c). In urban areas, 50% of people were happy, while in rural areas, it was 37% (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011c). Happiness is highest for Bhutanese with primary education or above, in comparison to those with no formal education (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011c). By subgroups, the happiest people, on the average, were civil servants, monks and nuns, single people and young people (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011c). The overall average rating

for happiness in 2010 for all domains was 74.3% based on a scale of 0% to 100% (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2011c).

Modernization and Traditional Societies

Modernization and global capitalism can often have a highly disrupting impact on traditional societies that are modernizing (Walcott, 2009). A primary purpose of GNH is to take a middle path between the excesses of modernization and the maintenance of traditional Mahayana cultural values. But what characterizes a traditional society, in general, and specifically in Bhutan's case? Rituals and practices that are not usually practiced in an industrial society usually denote traditional societies (Langlois, 2002). In this regard, traditional societies are focused on past traditions and practices while modern industrial societies focus on the present and the future (Langlois, 2002). Traditions in traditional societies are often conveyed to others in symbolic and oral forms and traditions that provide strong social messages on mores for understanding important questions of religion, culture, and society. Global capitalism and modernization can transform or supplant these cultural traditions with modern industrial, capitalistic, and high technology culture. Traditional Bhutanese culture prior to the 1960s has included subsistence agrarian practices, barter economies, and a highly pious devotion to Mahayana Buddhism (BBC News, 2015; BBC Travel, 2015). Bhutan remained closed to much of the world until the early 2000s (BBC News, 2015; BBC Travel, 2015). GNH in this context is a concerted policy effort to maintain a devotion and reverence to a traditional past Mahayana culture and society in the present while mitigating the excesses of modernization and global capitalist culture. In essence, Bhutan is attempting to steer a middle path into the 21st century.

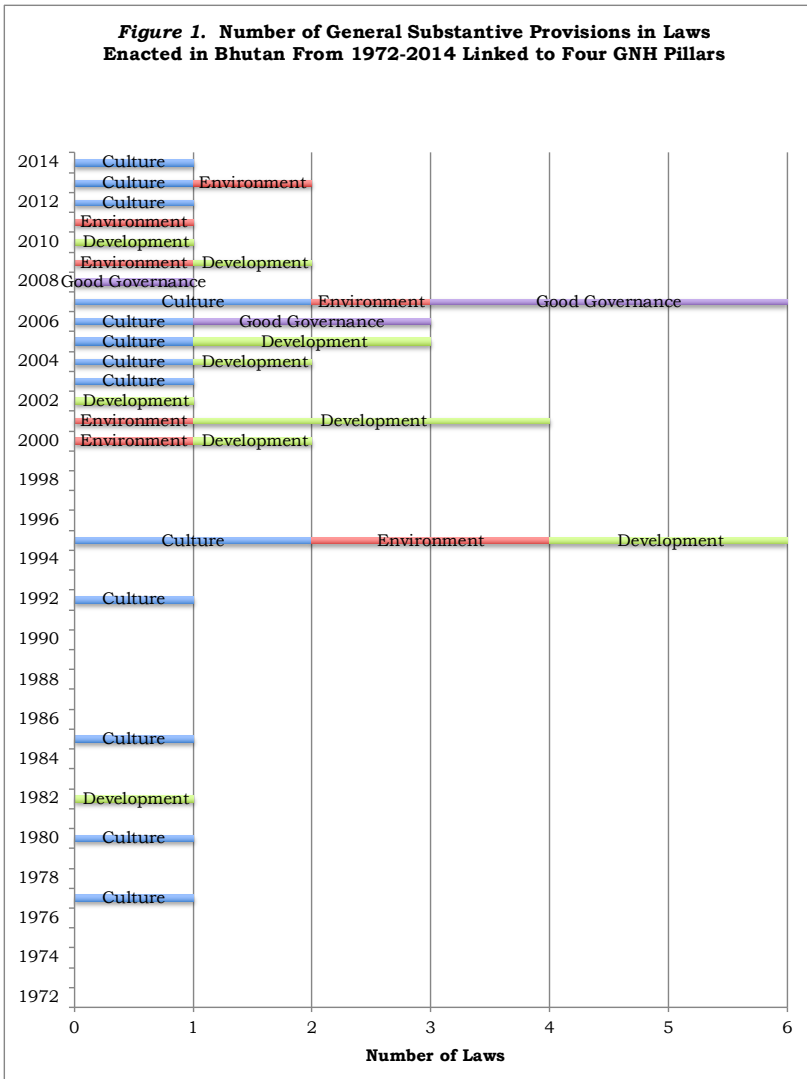
Results

In tandem to the policy outcomes reported in the results of the latest GNH Index national survey, Bhutan has engaged in ongoing enactment since 1972 of various legislation. From 1972 to 2014 (National Assembly of Bhutan, 2015), Bhutan

enacted 115 national laws. As indicated in Figure 1 and Appendix 1, GNH legislation from 1972 until the mid-1990s included few laws, almost solely focusing on the cultural preservation pillar. Only one law addressed equitable development. The focusing on traditional cultural concerns in Bhutan reflected a national government policy effort on maintaining Bhutan's ancient cultural and religious traditions. In this period, when it comes to national legislation, the other pillars of environmental protection, good government, and equitable economic development were not a primary focus in terms of legislation enacted.

Gross National Happiness Policy Outputs

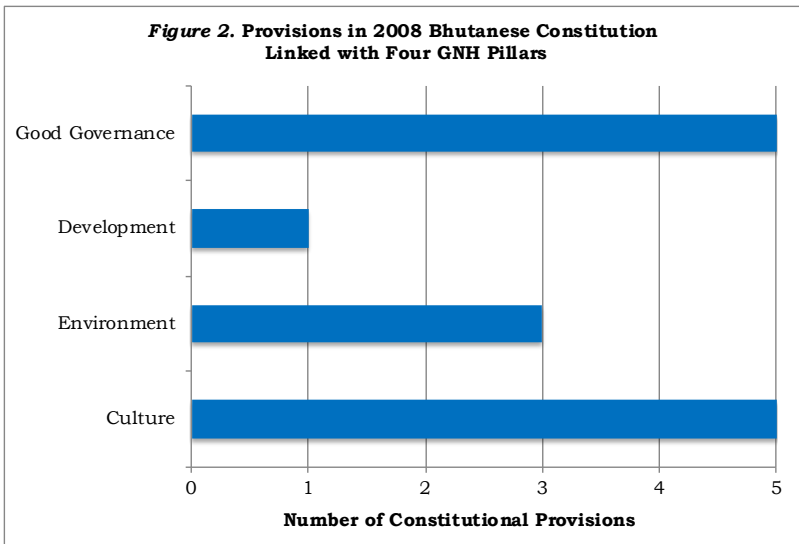
Figure 1. Number of General Substantive Provisions in Laws Enacted in Bhutan From 1972-2014 Linked to Four GNH Pillars



This began to change by the mid-1990s, when legislation also originated to address environmental protection, as well as sustainable development and cultural preservation. By the 2000s, Bhutanese policymakers focused their orientation on GNH with a large cluster of new laws addressing the four pillars. In this regard, GNH policymaking and policy outputs in Bhutan from 1972 to 2014 are characterized by two distinct phases. In the first phase, from 1972 to the mid-1990s, Bhutan focused on maintaining the traditional cultural identity and values of a Mahayana Buddhist monarchy and society.

Phase two of GNH policymaking commenced in the mid-1990s and expanded the scope of the policies to include all four (or, the other two) pillars of GNH. Policies addressing ecosystem protection began in the 1990s and were extended in the 2000s. Beginning in the mid-2000s, several good governance policies were enacted to limit corruption, promote greater transparency, and raise accountability in government. Other policies continued to emphasize cultural preservation and economic development. From 2013 to 2014, the People's Democratic Party enacted three laws that had significant provisions related to GNH.

Tracking with the new surge of GNH legislation for all four pillars in the 2000s in the second phase are key provisions in the 2008 Bhutanese Constitution, (Figure 2) which specifically address cultural preservation, sustainable development, environmental protection, and good governance. Similarly, the 2008 Bhutanese Constitution (Figure 2) addresses the realms of cultural vitality, standard of living, ecosystem vitality, and cultural vitality. Again, this represents a modern effort to maintain traditional cultural values balanced with the forces of modernization and capitalism.



Conclusion

Prior to the 1990s, the enacted legislation was based on maintaining a traditional Mahayana Buddhist culture and society. The expansion of the GNH policy agenda from the mid-1990s to 2014 also occurred in conjunction with Bhutan's successful effort to steadily modernize the state including mitigating the effects of the global economy. In essence, this was aligned with long-standing government policies to modernize Bhutan. This included channelling or maintaining the traditional Mahayana Buddhist tradition and values that were established from early statehood to modern times. This second phase of GNH legislation also coincided with Bhutan slowly opening itself to the outside world.

Thus, the two distinct phases in GNH public policy outputs with the first phase focusing on maintaining traditional Mahayana Buddhist values and the second phase focused on mitigating too much erosion of traditional Mahayana Buddhist by globalization and the modern world represent a distinct evolution of GNH public policy output in Bhutan. The second

phase represents a clear expansion, as well, with the enactment and implementation of all four pillars as public policies. It is important to note that the roots of the second phase are contained in the first phase with an emphasis on traditional Mahayana Buddhist values. The second phase while expanding into new policies areas has a primary historical foundation in the first phase of traditional Mahayana religious values.

Because GNH legislative public policies has been enshrined in modern Bhutan as a proper collective goal for society to pursue, a key question for Bhutanese policymakers is whether the enactment and implementation of GNH policies will move Bhutan closer to being a robust GNH society. Is GNH more important than GDP and modernization and will it counter and mitigate the excesses of global capitalism and culture? One primary policy output of GNH is balancing ongoing modernization and capitalism trends with traditional Mahayana Buddhist cultural values.

Officially, GNH is more important than GDP and modernization in Bhutan but the growth or not of GDP and the modernization of the Bhutanese free market economy can be a powerful influence on whether the effort to maintain GNH in a viable form is successful in maintaining traditional cultural values. If GDP unduly alters traditional Mahayana Buddhist values and culture, the legislative policy outputs to enact GNH policies will result in unintended policy outcomes and policy consequences. Thus, a key challenge in the present and future for Bhutanese policymakers is ensuing that Bhutan retains its traditional Mahayana culture while it continues to modernize. Whether Bhutanese policy makers can succeed in this effort remains an open question at this juncture. Will Bhutan develop into a modern capitalist state with less reliance and need by Bhutanese citizens on the old traditions? The GNH Index seeks to track this important policy question that includes questions of happiness on the maintenance of traditional culture and religious beliefs and practices. Any current or future Bhutanese government devoted to maintaining GNH as a

national policy will need to successfully intervene through legislation and other government actions to maintain this balance between modernity and tradition.

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Gross National Happiness Policy Outputs

Appendix 1. Chronological List of Laws Enacted in Bhutan From 1972-2014 Linked to Four GNH Pillars

| Year | Name of Law | Pillars Covered |
|-------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1977 | Bhutan Citizen Act | Culture |
| 1980 | Marriage Act | Culture |
| 1982 | Royal Monetary Authority Act of Bhutan | Development |
| 1985 | Bhutan Citizen Act | Culture |
| 1992 | National Security Act | Culture |
| 1995 | Mines and Mineral Management Act | Development, Environment, Culture |
| 1995 | Forest and Nature Conservation Act | Development, Environment, Culture |
| 2000 | Seeds Act | Development |
| 2000 | Environmental Assessment Act | Environment |
| 2001 | Livestock Act | Development |
| 2001 | Electricity Act | Development |
| 2001 | Co-operative Act | Development |
| 2003 | Biodiversity Act | Development, Culture |
| 2004 | Penal Code of Bhutan Act | Culture |
| 2005 | Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Substance Abuse Act | Development |
| 2005 | Movable Cultural Property Act | Culture |
| 2005 | Food Act | Development |

| | | |
|------|---|-----------------|
| 2006 | Bhutan Information Communications & Media Act | Culture |
| 2006 | Audit Act | Good Government |
| 2006 | Anti-Corruption Act | Good Government |
| 2007 | Local Government Act | Good Government |
| 2007 | Thromde Act | Good Government |
| 2007 | Religious Organizations Act | Culture |
| 2007 | Public Finance Act | Good Government |
| 2007 | Natural Environment Protection Act | Environment |
| 2007 | Civil Society Organizations Act | Culture |
| 2008 | Public Election Fund | Good Government |
| 2009 | Cooperative (Amendment) Act | Development |
| 2009 | Waste Prevention and Management Act | Environment |
| 2010 | Bhutan Standards Act | Development |
| 2010 | Royal Monetary Act of Bhutan | Development |
| 2010 | Tobacco Control Act of Bhutan | Culture |
| 2011 | Anti-Corruption Act | Good Government |
| 2011 | Water Act of Bhutan | Environment |
| 2012 | Tobacco Control Act (Amendments) | Culture |

Gross National Happiness Policy Outputs

| | | |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 2013 | Domestic Violence Prevention Act | Culture |
| 2013 | Road Act of Bhutan | Environment |
| 2014 | Tobacco Control Act (Amendments) | Culture |

Appendix 2. List of 2008 Constitutional Provisions Linked to Four GNH Pillars

| Name | Intent | Pillars Covered |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Article 3 | Promotion of spiritual heritage | Culture |
| Article 4 | Preservation and protection of culture | Culture |
| Article 5 | Protection of natural resources and environment | Environment |
| Article 6 | Designation of citizenship including knowledge of culture, customs, traditions and history | Culture |
| Article 7 | Citizens shall refrain from division based on race, sex, language, religion, or region; no person shall be compelled to join another religion nor incite disunity | Culture |
| Article 8 | Citizens have duty to foster tolerance of all, cultural preservation, environmental preservation | Culture, Environment |
| Article 9 | State shall promote GNH, human rights, | Culture, Environment, Development |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------------|
| | minimize inequality of income and wealth, private sector development, adequate livelihood, education, cooperation in community life, Buddhist ethos, public health for all, culture, | |
| Article 14 | Proper management of monetary and public finance | Good Government |
| Article 22 | Local governments shall be accountable | Good Government |
| Article 25 | Royal Audit Authority will audit and report on economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in use of public resources | Good Government |
| Article 26 | Royal Civil Service Commission operations | Good Government |
| Article 27 | Anti-Corruption Commission operations | Good Government |