

Chapter 12: Culture, Development and Happiness

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Introduction

Culture permeates everything we do. It is how we learn, how we share ideas and knowledge, and how we accumulate and transform practices across generations. Through cultural processes, humans cultivate individual identity and social relations, and provide larger collectivities with a sense of joint responsibility and affection. Law, business, finance, military capability, science, and love-making, are all just as ‘cultural’ as spirituality, kinship, dress codes, dance and material art. Since all aspects of our happiness and wellbeing are culturally constructed and learned, for both personal and public responsibilities we need strong cultural awareness. Sometimes, too, it is helpful to single out some kinds of activity as ‘cultural’ in order to protect or promote them.

Everything humans think and do is cultural. Similarly, culture colours and is inseparable from all aspects of development. Yet culture is a commonly misunderstood and neglected dimension of development (Ura, 2007). Culture is debated because its processes and manifestations are often diverse (making it very hard to define), and because many cultural processes arouse strong passions either for or against ‘traditions’ and identities. Being diffuse, dynamic, power-laden, dependent on the lens of the viewer, culture is considered by some as being too complex to serve well as a rubric for development planning. But it is too important to ignore.

To be culturally responsible, the new happiness-based development paradigm must be supported by clear cultural analysis and objectives for cultural promotion. We suggest considering ‘culture’ in two ways:

- a. Cultural analysis is needed to appreciate the cultural dimensions of all development, recognizing that people’s ways of acting, thinking, and belonging are learned, patterned and trans-generational. For instance, culture reflects how we think about the environment, other living things, our daily practices, and give meaning to them. It influences the way in which we construct ideas of “what is happiness” and “how we live”.
- b. Cultural promotion is when we single out particular kinds of activity, capability, or artefacts that have more than ordinary significance for wellbeing and are not already adequately promoted under other policy rubrics. This is an unavoidably residual domain that will therefore vary

widely from one country to another. For example, indicative examples and specific usages are outlined using this concept in GNH as put forward by the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Because we know culture is important for development, we dedicate academic disciplines, budgets, targets, ministries and global organizations to studying and promoting it. But if we cannot agree on what it is, or on which aspects of it are 'good', we are ill equipped for improving the wellbeing and happiness of people through cultural promotion. We need a sense of how cultural processes matter before we try to improve some specific aspects of culture through policies and research. We need to strengthen our abilities to talk and think clearly about how culture and happiness interact. Despite the dominance of individual-level orientation in happiness scholarship, research on cultural dimensions of happiness has also been carried out that attempts to aggregate from the individual to the societal or the nation, as reflected in GNH.

The key benefit of the 'happiness lens', coupled with cultural analysis, is that it should render more rational and transparent the processes by which some aspects of culture are singled out for protection and promotion, and others are not. So-called 'critical' cultural analysis is needed here, because claims about cultural value are always intertwined with power relations. This chapter argues not only that culture matters for happiness and development, but that critical analysis is needed to reveal not only cultural benefits but also cultural harms. So first, we try to provide some analytical clarity in the exploration of the 'cultural' values of happiness (intrinsic and instrumental values), based on emerging literature and research on the potentials and barriers of implementing development through a happiness lens. We then discuss cultural promotion (i.e. relevance in terms of research, methodologies and policy), drawing particularly on experiences from Bhutan, the home of GNH, as well as on theories from cultural anthropology, the anthropology of development and cultural psychology.

Intrinsic value of culture

GNH is concerned with the wellbeing of all living things. While there are ongoing debates about whether aspects of culture such as socially patterned behaviour, capacity of language, symbolism and intense sociality applies to non-humans, what is perhaps clear is that culture - understood as symbolic systems, values, and meanings - is a trait characterizing humans (Gibson, 2002; Moore and Sanders, 2006, 4). All our capabilities and our actions, our bodies and our environments, our knowledge, our social relations and institutions, and our fantasies are 'cultural' in that they are to a large extent influenced by roughly collective and trans-generational transmission of knowledge in the form of ideas, beliefs, norms and artefacts (Cronk, 1999; Tomasello, 1999;

Baumeister, 2005; Boyd and Richerson, 2005; Richerson and Boyd, 2006; Henrich and Henrich, 2007). We learn and express ourselves in response to knowledge and beliefs passed to us from others, including from people who died before we were born. Such transmissions rarely occur en-masse, but are adapted, transformed and sometimes resisted. In the sense that these cultural processes constitute the quality of our lives, 'culture' can be said to have 'intrinsic value' in the same way and to the same extent that humanity itself has intrinsic value: no culture, no humanity.

Hence, culture pervades everything we do. Specific cultural practices, however, have values for specific people in relation to their purposes. Although culture is sometimes considered all too pervasive to define, looking at development through a 'cultural lens' means paying more than usual attention to the learning, knowledge and communication processes by which we collectively generate values and meanings. Key aspects of our lives, like money, deities, and norms, are constantly shifting in value and meaning according to their engagement in human exchanges and performances. They are also associated with particular context and historically social groups, locales, disciplines and networks. Development practitioners need to think about how people's preferences, capabilities, and ways of thinking and doing things are socially constructed, learned and changing. If we want to improve wellbeing we need to remind ourselves that anything cultural can be either maintained or changed through conscious choice. If no aspect of culture is fixed for eternity, neither need it be lost through negligence or greed.

For both pragmatic and moral reasons, we must also respect the fact that cultural processes involve deeply-held attachments to symbolic forms of expression and to more intangible indigenous and spiritual beliefs. Culture is also associated with some of our most treasured achievements, collective sense of belonging and sources of meaning. All too often used perniciously to defend unjust and harmful practices, or arrogantly to claim or justify class and gender-based discrimination, culture is a power-laden concept. 'Good' or 'bad', it clearly matters a great deal for our happiness and wellbeing.

Though culture has been 'essentialized' in the past (treated as a single fixed entity or coherent structure associated with specific places and/or groups of people) (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Malinowski, 1939), contemporary anthropologists and cultural sociologists treat culture as an ongoing fluid process. They are critical of the problematic way human differences were conceptualized as a diversity of separate 'cultures', each with its own coherently bounded culture containing shared meanings, values and beliefs (Moore and Sanders, 2006; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997a; Abu-Lughod, 1993). Rather, people are constantly accepting or rejecting cultural information,

meanings, and values from multiple sources. On the other hand, culture isn't entirely chaotic. It is patterned to some extent, but the pretence of cultural coherence and consensus often comes from people with a powerful vested interest in this construction (Moore and Sanders, 2006, p.10, p.17). Further, culture is not fixed or static, but constantly adapting in response to globalization, technical change, climate change, policy reforms, geo-political shifts, etc. Nor is isolated and disconnected from global forms of social, political and economic processes that connect even the most isolated contexts from a wider world (through migration, education systems, globalized media, etc.) (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997a, pp.2-3). To analyze culture means to think about the construction of our identities, values, knowledge, and behaviours, but also our ways of learning and communication, cognitive styles, and symbolic representations, meanings and relations of power. The concept of 'epistemic cultures', originally developed for the analysis of social relations and knowledge production among scientific communities (Knorr-Cetina, 1981), may be useful to this chapter. This refers to the strong patterning of knowledge and beliefs among persons who share similar sources and modes of knowledge (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Verma, 2009). Collective action and identity claims, like science, are often pursued in groups that mutually reinforce cultural beliefs, ways of thinking, acting and networks (Latour and Woolgar, 1979).

At the same time, essentialized cultural concepts are increasingly being taken up by indigenous groups, civil society, and national and social movements to redefine themselves in relation to competing or neighbouring groups, or their distinctiveness in an increasingly globalized world (Moore and Sanders, 2006, p.18). They lend support to struggles of indigenous people over their rights to resources in the face of powerful elites, corporations and nation-states (Verma, 2013). Such struggles not only shed light on differences and relations of power between and among such groups, but also the different ways in which happiness and wellbeing is given meaning and significance (Moore, 1993).

Instrumental values of culture and happiness

If we analyze and promote culture through a happiness and wellbeing lens, and more specifically the GNH approach in which it is one of nine domains, the concept is defined by four sub-domains: language, artisan skills, socio-cultural participation and *DriglamNamzha* (the way of harmony) (Ura et al., 2012a; 2012b). Each of these is valuable for analyzing aspects of culture, and is discussed below, together with other additional, alternative sub-domains for considerations, including discussion of 'residual' and intangible cultural considerations. We also reflect later in the chapter how qualitative methods can complement quantitative measurement of cultural values, as well as highlight cases and examples for each existing and alternative sub-domain.

3.1. Language

Language is associated with identity, history and belonging by facilitating communication and connectedness. Distinct languages, dialects, and folklore can also have symbolic importance for maintaining national identity and cultural distinctiveness. Respecting the importance of combating linguistic homogenisation worldwide, the GNH survey asks people how well they can speak their 'mother tongue' as an indicator of cultural diversity and resilience.

Maintenance of distinct ethnic languages is, of course, just one among many possible indicators of linguistic value and identity. And all forms of linguistic distinction are contentious because if they indicate traditions and ethnic cohesion they also indicate and perpetuate divisions between people. And there are many non-linguistic ways of creating and severing connections, and of generating or inhibiting a sense of belonging between people: bodily communication such as music and dance, and the embodiment of knowledge, are also significant in articulating culture and wellbeing.

Language may not be the only way of creating bonds, connections and sense of belonging between people. Non-linguistic forms of communication, such as body language, music, dance and the embodiment of knowledge, are also significant in articulating culture and wellbeing. Although complex, it may also be useful to consider the concept of discourse, defined as normative ideas, attitudes, beliefs and practices that construct subjects and aspects of the world with certain interpretative power. Discourses point to power relations and exercise by control over narratives (what can be spoken of), rituals (where and how one may speak), and power and privilege (who may speak) (Foucault, 1972).

3.2. Artisan skills: *zorig chosum*

Artisanship is a very loose category referring to traditional and creative activities that are socially valued in principle but undervalued by the free market. This might expand to include activities such as the performing arts (theatre, music, drama, dance, etc), literature (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, storytelling, etc.), visual arts (film, painting, sculpture, photography, casting, etc.), crafts (weaving, textiles/embroidery, carving, bamboo works, leatherworks, paper-making, etc.), blacksmithing, gold and silver-smithing, carpentry, masonry, and sports and other activities. In particular, GNH engages in thirteen elements of art and crafts considered important for cultural capital and for preserving a living and vibrant culture, especially those that have a long history and are deeply embedded with spiritual significance (Ura et al., 2012b, p.146).

The positive 'cultural policies' label is often used in the restrictive 'arts' or 'arts, leisure, and sports' senses, although it can be used in a more holistic way (see

Owen-Vandersluis, 2003; UNESCO, 2011). In some cases, especially in western contexts, this sense of culture often overlaps with what is considered 'highly sophisticated' artistic capabilities and objects that are associated with being 'civilized' and having a life that is not restricted to mundane drudgery. Along with 'heritage', this tends to be the core, default referent of cultural ministries and budgets, of the common restrictive sense of 'cultural policy' (Meredyth and Minson, 2001; McGuigan, 2004), of fine arts disciplines and study of material culture (a sub-discipline of anthropology), and of the young and rapidly growing sub-discipline of 'cultural economics' (Ginsburgh and Throsby, 2006; Towse, 2010).

In some parts of the world, art is embedded in everyday life rather than segregated in elitist forms. Mostly, however, different art forms compete for attention and valuation, and are associated with claims not only to class, creativity and cultivation, but also 'indigeneity' and 'identity' in such forms as ethnic architecture, tattoos, dress, material culture and artefacts related to modes of production.

3.3. Socio-cultural participation

In its 'verbal' sense of activities, culture can refer to participation in events such as festivals, rituals, and performances, which support the social bonding and the ongoing exchange of knowledge. Such events are valued both for the direct enjoyment (Putnam, 2000) but also for their role in perpetuating active cultural continuation and creativity (Ura et al., 2012a; 2012b) and generation of 'social capital' with its many spin-off benefits such as trust and cooperative capability (Putnam, 2000). Research suggests positive effects of participating in social and cultural events on health, self-esteem and a sense of belonging (Chouguley, Naylor and Rosemberg-Montes, 2011).

While GNH measures the number of times individuals participate in events and festivals, what perhaps requires further analysis is the qualitative depth and meaningful engagement in such events by differently positioned individuals. For instance, there are often differences in the engagement of women and men in enacting public speeches, rituals and rites that are related to relations of power and knowledge creation that disadvantage women; such an analysis is also likely to yield useful insights and recommendations for policy. Similarly, such research might also help in understanding of differences of the quality of engagement of such practices by youth and older generations, and the differing degree of meaning they might attribute to them. In turn, such knowledge may be critical for policies and actions towards preserving certain aspects of culture that depend on trans-generational learning and may be under threat.

'Cultural diversity' is often associated with the term 'tradition', conjuring up an image of multiple essentialized 'cultures' being allowed to persist side by side, in strong association with ethnically 'distinct' populations. Later in this chapter, we discuss the problems with such understandings of culture. In its more fluid, verbal sense of 'learning', by contrast, culture is always self-evidently diverse: every human becomes multiply enculturated from a wide variety of kinds of people, sources information, and encounters. The task at hand for happiness research is to both quantify and qualify socio-cultural engagement and participation over time.

3.4. Driglam Namzha: The way of harmony

This sub-domain is a uniquely Bhutanese expression referring to a more widely applicable role of dress, consumption habits, attitudes and body language, etc, in expressing and generating social harmony, especially in formal settings (Ura et al., 2012a; 2012b). This quality is measured through two indicators that assess its perceived importance and perceived change over time.

Considered in this diffuse sense as a 'way', culture can be understood as a set of activities and expressions which need to be repeated to maintain the social qualities desired. It can also be reified, considered as a fixed thing that persists through time, allowing us to talk of 'cultures'. This reification in turn leads to a problematic understanding of 'cultures' as having collective 'cultural capital' or 'heritage', with 'cultural continuity' across generations, with boundaries and emphasis on difference. It sometimes also refers to specific kinds of environments and settings, and hence with the concept of 'cultural diversity' emerges when comparing between such environments or locales. This kind of meaning can also be found in concepts like 'organizational culture' or 'school climate', which refer to fairly intangible patterns in rough collective attitudes and ways of doing things in certain settings.

Alternative sub-domains and processes for consideration

It may be useful to consider alternative and additional sub-domains not covered by GNH, but that might be useful for measuring happiness related to culture. These include issues of identity, social institutions and residual/intangible/misunderstood aspects of 'culture'. We also reflect on cultural elements and processes to help the analysis further.

4.1. Identity

The term identity tends to be associated with particular epistemic cultures, places, organizations, networks or cognitive styles such as holistic vs. analytic attention (Nisbett, 2003). The emphasis tends to be on the sense of belonging in a group rather than necessarily on rootedness in the past. In this sense, it is also associated with boundaries and differences but also with 'multicultural' or

'pluralist' policies, for coping with or celebrating difference within nations or organizations. Cultural identification sometimes leads to legal and ethical exceptionalism and 'cultural rights', and with the concept of cultural identity clarity (i.e. a clear cultural identity which allows individuals to construct clear personal identities, and therefore achieve self-esteem and wellbeing), which has been shown to correlate strongly with indicators of subjective wellbeing and self-esteem (Usborne and Taylor, 2010; Hodder, 2010).

For the purposes of GNH, it may be useful to measure cultural identity and sense of belonging to a particular epistemic culture or locale. Given the correlation between wellbeing and cultural identity clarity and cultural competence, indicators might investigate the degree to which an individual defines, perceives and engages them.

4.2. Cultural capital and institutions

Cultural capital, assets and practices associated with personal distinction(s) associated with social stratifications such as gender, age, ethnicity, class, marital status, caste, etc. The dynamics and motives associated with cultural capital can be associated with zero-sum class, inter-ethnic or interpersonal status competitions (Kim and Kim, 2009). But it can also be about distinguishing an aspirational from an actual self, or a past from a present self, and in those senses be more positively about the roles of cultural resources in self-making and community development (Phillips and Shockley, 2010).

Socio-cultural institutions are cultural patterns, practices or relationships that are created, organized, reinforced and transformed by different epistemic cultures. They include kinship and family; political, legal and governance organizations; spiritual and religious organizations; economic systems; work and modes of production; social organization (marriage, status, authority, safety nets, etc.), education, health, etc. Socio-cultural institutions, like culture, are rarely fixed and bounded, but are actively negotiated, transformed and resisted over time. They are also inseparable from people's values, beliefs and meanings about the world, and are related to wellbeing and happiness in man ways. At the same time, they are often not obvious and sometimes "hidden" from view, except to sociologists and anthropologists who systematically study them. They are infused with relations of power, which drive them and pattern actions and behaviours. It will be useful for future analysis and assessment of culture to consider exploring the way different women, men and children engage in cultural capital and institutions, including both the breadth and depth of such engagements through quantitative and qualitative methods.

4.3. Residual, intangible aspects of culture

Culture is frequently used in a residual sense of referring to the many neglected, unseen, intangible, symbolic but important aspects of what we do. 'Culture' in this sense is invoked not to explain anything, but to prompt enquiry when unexplained patterns of behaviour become troublesome. For example, indigenous systems of environmental management (irrigation, pasture conservation, soil conservation, pest control, forest conservation, etc.), not only have their own logic but also scientific merit, but often remain 'invisible' to development practitioners, engineers and scientists (Verma, 2009; Lansing, 1987; Richards, 1994; 1993; Fairhead and Leach, 1996; 1995; 1993).

It is perhaps this sense that UNESCO uses when referring to culture as 'the most neglected dimension in strategies to achieve the MDGs' (UNESCO, 2011, p.17). Evidently poverty, reduction, schooling, medical care, all the rest of the core MDG-focused activities are clearly cultural, but the critique here refers to the inadequate recognition of the cultural factors affecting progress towards these goals. However, the ability to recognize and cope with the various challenges posed by ill-understood cultural differences is referred to as 'cultural competence' or 'cultural intelligence' (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008).

A different way of analysing culture is to distinguish different generic cultural processes that scholars and policy-makers might want to appreciate with a view to influencing culture. In relation to and crosscutting the GNH sub-domains, these multiple manifestations and elements of culture can be classified into five areas: i) values and attitudes, ii) identities/roles, iii) beliefs/knowledge, iv) capabilities; and v) material environments/artefacts. Since culture is varied and fluid, and to appreciate how these various cultural elements are transformed, we also need to think analytically about the social processes through which it is continually being generated and re-interpreted. Our understanding of these cultural elements can also be helped by distinguishing the various processes in which people adopt, negotiate, and demonstrate their cultural differences by inheriting, learning, sharing, cultivating, and resisting. Table 1 provides an overview of how cultural manifestations and processes interact. It can perhaps serve as an analytical tool, with indicative text, for sketching out the range of cultural processes that scholars and policy-makers might want to consider when supporting positive aspects of culture.

	Inheriting	Learning	Sharing, bequeathing	Cultivating	Rejecting
<i>Values, attitudes,</i>	Strong patterns such as individualism, hierarchy, and status consciousness are passed down the generations	Values are learned from parents and other carers, siblings, teachers, public media, literature, etc.	We communicate our values to other people through expressions, judgements, and actions	Values are too deep for direct manipulation, but nations, schools, and employers try to promote values	New values are often generated through explicit rejection of old ones
<i>Identities, roles</i>	Sense of belonging, and specific functional roles and identities, may be inherited from one or both parents or from other relatives.	Identification with groups or networks of other people is learned through ritualization and schooling	Both shared and individual-specific identities and roles only exist insofar as they are communicated with complicit others	Identities and roles may be deliberately created, modified, or enhanced for practical or strategic purposes	Social transformation can happen through explicit or tacit rejection of identities and roles
<i>Beliefs, knowledge</i>	Strongly held beliefs are often foundational – i.e. associated with mythical creators, ancestors, or culture heroes	Most of our knowledge is learned implicitly, through observation and imitation, often unconsciously	Beliefs are socially contagious, and so is scepticism	Writing and cyber-storage have revolutionized human ability to store, accumulate, and deliberately evaluate and compare knowledge	Beliefs may be questioned and rejected on scientific or emotional grounds, or due to adverse associations with people or events
<i>Capabilities</i>	These can't be directly inherited, though often people believe this	Early learning is particularly essential for some abilities such as language and	Arrangements for spreading abilities through social	Most abilities require active practice rather than mere acquisition of	Since we have an almost limitless variety of potential

	to be so (e.g. in the idea of genetically transmitted musical ability)	music	networks and groups are crucial aspects of cultural transmission	know-how	abilities, growing up involves active rejection of many of these
<i>Material environment and artefacts</i>	Individually and collectively we inherit built environments, modified landscapes and artifacts	We learn how to maintain and use environments and things bequeathed to us	We pass on modified landscapes, tools, etc to future generations	Many environmental goods and artifacts require active continuous maintenance and cultivation	To make room for new forms of material organization we often have to destroy goods that we inherited

Table 3: Cultural elements and processes

Intrinsic vs. instrumental values of culture

Although humanity got by without ever theorizing ‘culture’ until very recently, most global organizations and academics now agree that culture matters a great deal both intrinsically and instrumentally. Being all-pervasive, hard to define and analyse, and often highly complex as we have shown above, culture is not easily amenable to deliberate transformation. Would-be protectors or transformers of any aspect of culture will do well to sharpen their ability to analyse culture critically and reflexively as a way of improving the rationality and transparency of what they are trying to achieve. A ‘happiness lens’ is helpful in this regard.

5.1. ‘Culture’ through a happiness lens

Looking at cultural processes through a happiness lens means that we interpret the values, power relations, meanings and justifications underlying cultural processes with respect for how people experience them. A happiness perspective requires us to reject naïve fundamentalism, traditionalism, or modernism: cultural values, practices and beliefs are never valuable or virtuous simply because they exist, because of claims they are divinely inspired, or based on a modernist zeal for cultural innovation. Creativity and culture-sharing, like indigenous practices, are not necessarily ‘good’ in themselves but need to be assessed in reference to people’s subjective experiences and their contribution to wellbeing.

Nearly all humans want not only personal happiness but also to live in what they perceive to be a good society, and in order to fulfil these needs, both of these preferences require culture. Since we are uniquely 'cultural' beings, culture in this very diffuse sense has intrinsic value. This matters because we should not instrumentalize 'cultural capital' (or 'social capital') as if it mattered only insofar as it affects the 'economy'. Living in what is perceived as a good society, facilitated by roughly similar cultural practices of which we are proud, has intrinsic value. We value the quality of our social and cultural environments more for their direct contributions to our quality of life and wellbeing than for any indirect benefits that might flow from them. For example, a friendly, supportive, calm, lively, and purposeful school or workplace 'climate' or 'culture' may well be valued by school boards or employers primarily for its productivity dividends, but for schoolchildren and work staff these environmental qualities matter intrinsically.

Since this 'cultural' attribute applies to both 'good' and 'bad' qualities, we can't afford to assume that either culture or cultural diversity are intrinsically 'good'. Culturally practiced humiliation or torture of people or animals has always existed but there is no 'intrinsic value' justification for such practices. We also need to consider that what might be viewed as 'good' for one group of people or even within a particular epistemic culture, may not be perceived as such by others, both within or beyond the group. One of the core principles of GNH is its focus on the collective good, which is somewhat different from Western approaches that focus more on individualistic goals. This must be defined reflexively, noting that power and status inequalities often restrict some people's ability to express their true feelings about the experiential value of cultural practices.

However, questions arise about who defines the collective 'good', and on behalf of whom. As such, perhaps the most important implication of using a 'happiness lens' in policy-making is the insistence on transparent evaluation and analysis of everything we do by reference to an ultimate collective goal of happiness, defined by scientifically accepted domains. Using this evaluative lens, no aspect of culture can be defended solely in terms of its 'intrinsic value'. It is most important that the collective is defined reflexively, keeping in mind relations of power that might marginalize certain groups of people. In short, the defence or promotion of existing or new cultural practices, beliefs, or artefacts must be done with reference to their contributions to happiness.

This leaves, of course, a great deal of room for debate about whether anything, on balance, is better for our happiness. Whose happiness counts? What kind of happiness matters? Do we mean just this-worldly happiness or happiness in an imagined life hereafter? Does happiness mean gaining merit through good

deeds in this life for the collective good, while giving less weight to our individual needs? Or does the collective good have greater weight, as in the GNH approach? Such debates are not easily settled, but neither can we afford to use this as an excuse for not using the happiness lens to evaluate our cultural environment and to choose and justify our cultural policies on the basis of the best available evidence about how culture and moral choices influence wellbeing (Harris, 2010, p.9).

5.2. Cultural diversity through a happiness lens

Rather more controversially, it can also be argued that cultural *diversity* is in general more benign than cultural homogeneity because it allows a wider variety of ways in which people can flourish. In any given cultural context, some people's personalities will 'fit' better (for optimizing their wellbeing) with dominant cultural traits and power relations than others' do. Culturally diverse societies (and organizations like schools, communities, and workplaces), therefore, which effectively offer a wide variety of values and of valued occupations, are likely to perform better at facilitating wellbeing than more restrictive and homogeneous cultures in which a smaller set of values and valued occupations or products are dominant because in more diverse societies more people will be able experience a sense of 'cultural fit', 'personality-cultural match' or 'cultural consonance' (Ratzlaff et al., 2000; Lu, 2006; Fulmer et al., 2010; Reyes-Garcia et al., 2010).

A diversity of cultural options can make individuals more resilient to the inevitable shocks of life, while also making groups more resilient in the face of major socio-economic or environmental upheavals. Nonetheless, diversities (for example language barriers, value confusions, intergenerational contradictions, mutually exclusive norms) often come at a high price in terms of social harmony and personal sense of wellbeing or meaning. Since culture is always diverse, its quality and its influences are what matters, not its diversity per se. Cultural diversity must, however, be traded off against the benefits of shared cultural values.

There are also severe transitional costs to people who have grown up with one strong set of values and who are suddenly exposed to a radically different cultural context (Baumeister, 1986). 'Culture shock' and 'cultural identity confusion' are two names for a wide variety of psychosocial conditions associated with rapid cultural transitions which are made all the worse when host populations are unsympathetic and when individuals perceive the cultural changes as ones they have not voluntarily chosen for themselves (Usborne and Taylor, 2010).

Nonetheless, human lives are in general enriched through exposure to diverse cultural practices, cultural products and knowledge forms, and impoverished by restriction of such exposure. Our lives can be enriched through such exposure even if we reject many of these as unappealing. Intercultural empathy is becoming ever more important in a culturally globalised world, so we all need to learn to understand and respect diverse cultural practices even if we don't always like them. Conversely, our wellbeing can be harmed when others deliberately or unintentionally disparage our cultural practices or restrict our freedom to express our sense of cultural identity.

We must, therefore, respect two kinds of *qualified* cultural considerations: i) exposure to cultural diversity (provided that the benefits of the beliefs and practices outweigh the costs), and ii) freedom to express our cultural identity (provided that in doing so we don't cause avoidable harm to others). Bearing in mind these crucial qualifications, we can expect that both the preservation of cultural heritage and facilitation of cultural diversification are better than allowing heritage to be lost, practices to wane, and global culture to homogenize. Exceptions to this default valuation of diversity would, of course, be cultural practices that are known to cause avoidable harm. For example, many cultural traditions endorse medical and ritualized treatments which cause severe and unnecessary bodily mutilation and psychological harm: if we recognize these as such, it is disrespectful and dishonest not to question the morality of such practices, especially if we know that vulnerable people are exposed to them. *Any policies promoting respect for cultural diversity must, therefore, be qualified by attention to the possibility of harmful cultural practices.*

Since human purposes are culturally constructed, the 'instrumental value' of everything we do is cultural. Neither culture nor cultural diversity are in themselves conceptually fixed enough to associate them plausibly with any kind of generalized instrumental value. Promoting happiness with a cultural lens must therefore involve looking at people's diverse purposes, and considering carefully the cultural means, social processes and power relations through which they are learned and pursued. An instrumental approach must also ensure that the views, needs and realities of those being considered are at the centre of our efforts, including any unintentional harm that may arise from even the most well-intended cultural interventions.

Emotionally, it is often difficult to engage in rational discourse about deliberate modification or transformation of culture, due to people's strong and even unconscious attachments to particular cultural symbols, values, and practices. The prevalence of texts on the growing cacophony of 'culture wars' worldwide testifies to the fact that some aspects of culture provoke strong emotional reactions that quickly lead to intransigence and to unhelpfully polemical

debates (James, Plaiice and Toren, 2010; Dallmayr, 2010). This should not surprise us, given that many of civilization's bloodiest and most undignified (and to outsiders, downright silly) battles have been fought over religious beliefs, language, rituals, and even clothing.

Optimistically, various development organizations and United Nations agencies have promoted 'cultural diversity' (UNESCO, 2009) and 'cultural liberty' (UNDP, 2004) as ways of seeing beyond the mire of cultural chauvinism and culture wars. These are noble aims though they are unlikely in themselves to influence people who are strongly wedded to intolerant cultural values which don't respect people's freedom to choose their own values and practices.

5.3. Cultural psychology through a happiness lens

At the most general level, conceptions and valuations of happiness and the individual self are strongly influenced by culture. Happiness research by cultural psychologists has demonstrated that there are strongly regional patterns in the degree to which happiness and its public expression are valued and expected (Kitayama and Markus, 2000; Diener and Diener, 1995). Indeed, what constitutes happiness can be different across different epistemic cultures, thus highlighting its socially constructed nature. Cultural construal of happiness, defined by the lay theory or definition of happiness in each culture, are shared within a culture and constructed through socio-cultural experiences, such as formal or informal education and exposure to cultural products. So far, this line of research has been somewhat restrictive in its scope and approaches, focusing mostly on broad-brushed East-West and individualism-collectivism contrasts based on survey or experimental data. More research is needed on more finely nuanced issues, in a greater diversity of contexts and populations, and using ethnographic and oral history approaches which will promote appreciation of the ways in which all individuals are constantly adjusting to multiple cultural influences.

Nonetheless, interesting findings have already highlight important cultural patterns. For example, North Americans and Europeans broadly define happiness as a positive emotional state that is typically construed as a state contingent on personal achievement (Kitayama, Mesquita and Karasawa, 2006). Negative features of the self, including negative emotional states are perceived to be a hindrance to happiness. Asians, by contrast, though most broadly value and expect happiness, are significantly more likely to expect and show an interest in emotional balance among the full range of emotions (Kitayama, Mesquita and Karasawa, 2006; Uchida and Kitayama, 2009) and to consider happiness in terms of expected future lives or otherworldly existence as a dialectical thinking style. For example, it has been suggested that reported intensity of pleasant and unpleasant emotions were negatively correlated in the

United States where as they were positively correlated in China and Korea (see Bagozzi, Wong and Yi, 1999; Kitayama, Markus and Kurokawa, 2000). In East Asian cultural contexts, people tend to evaluate their current state of happiness by taking ups and downs in life as a whole into account (Ji, Nisbett and Su, 2001). Therefore, if people recognize that their current state is not good enough, but expect it to be improved in the future, their current “unhappiness” is not very negative. Furthermore, in Japan, where interdependent orientation is salient, being outstandingly happier than others is taken as disharmonious within relationships. Indeed, when collecting the variety of meanings and consequences of happiness, over 98% statements were described as positively in the US but only 67% statements were described positively in Japan since they have both transcendental ideas (e.g., happiness does not last long) and afraid of negative social consequence (e.g., jealousy from others) (Uchida and Kitayama, 2009).

Therefore, in most cases, East Asian cultures show raw scores of happiness and life satisfaction scales than European or American societies (Diener, Diener and Diener, 1995). The reason of the low level of wellbeing is partly because of the definition of happiness and its measurement. “Standardized” scales that are mostly devised in European-American contexts are sometimes invalid when used in some other cultures, since those measurements are based upon personal achievement and attainment (e.g. Uchida and Ogihara, 2012). Thus, it is important to consider context-specific concepts of happiness in each culture and how they are attributed different meanings and values.

At an abstract level, conceptions of happiness can be seen as ‘universal’ in terms of satisfaction with one’s accomplishments and relationships; however, the degree to which each of these factors is emphasized and predicts happiness vary substantially from culture to culture. Furthermore, connotations of happiness also differ, such as incremental views of happiness observed in European-American cultures and dialectic views of happiness observed among East Asian cultures. African, Latin American and Polynesian understandings of culture also have different connotations, as well as variances across these heterogenous regions. Cultural differences are found not only at the individual psychological level but also at the macro level, such as within societal systems, institutions, and among scientific meta-theories. We have to illustrate not only cross-cultural differences but also illustrate cultural/societal changes over time in regard to happiness and wellbeing within nations or communities. Hence, disaggregated data are critical.

Culture and happiness: Development, research and recommended policies

Although there are literally millions of publications on various ‘cultural’ themes, and some research on culture and happiness in recent years from various disciplines, there is remarkably little *systematic* research either on how culture matters for happiness within development, or on how development-focused policies can make transformative differences to culture from a happiness perspective, or on the pressing gaps in research and possible methodologies for addressing them. In this section, we move from debates on the intrinsic and instrumental values of culture to a discussion of development, research gaps and methodologies, and actionable policy considerations, practices and recommendations in relation to happiness and wellbeing.

6.1. The role and power of culture in development

Bhutan’s GNH framework gives ‘culture’ equal weight within a trans-disciplinary framework of nine domains. This in itself is considered a good practice, in contrast to way culture is sometimes marginalized in numerous development frameworks, organizations and discourses. In this particular moment of history, market-oriented and economically led discourses prevail, in turn giving greater weight to what are considered “technical sectors” (such as agriculture, infrastructure, mining, genetics, etc.) dominated by bio-physical scientists, engineers and economists (Cernea and Kassam, 2006; Cernea, 2005; Ura, 2007; Verma, Russell and German, 2010; Barrett, 2008; Barrett et al., 2009). Although people’s lives are not lived by “sectors”, development has tended to be constructed along sectoral lines. Within such a context, culture becomes undervalued if not invisible.

In line with a “sectoral” approach (or superficial claims to be “integrative”), dominant development approaches are often constructed in ways that reduce complex realities and issues to “blue prints” or “technical problems” requiring “technical solutions” (Ferguson, 1994; Roe, 1991). It is also this same operation that suspends socio-cultural and power relations from development. To isolate culture as a pillar of development is to create an artificial compartmentalization for instrumental and rational purposes (similar to compartmentalizing economics, environment and social issues and other pillars in the development of the SDGs). Isolating certain practices and goods for attention in this way can often be helpful, especially if they are otherwise neglected, undervalued, or underinvested in by planners and consumers. But this inevitably selective approach must not detract from the more important requirement of recognizing culture in all aspects of development. Culture has in recent years increasingly been referred to as the fourth ‘pillar’ of development (Hawkes, 2001, UCLG, 2010; UNESCO, 2011). At a more critical level, as with the ‘economy, environment, society’ troika of the ‘three pillars’ (Thin, 2002, ch.1), it is useful to

reflect on what is gained, and what is lost by trying to contain diffuse entities into self-contained 'pillars'.

Although often neglected and at the margins of development (Ura, 2007; Cernea, 2005; Verma, Russell and German, 2010; Barrett, 2008; Barrett et al., 2009), it is worth considering how culture is handled in dominant development discourses and organizations. For instance, when development organizations such as UNESCO do in fact elaborate on cultural dimensions of development, they habitually produce think pieces which betray incoherent statements about culture. Typically, these amount to romanticized, unproblematized, uncritical and grossly over-generalised claims about the 'goodness' of culture, such as that 'culture guarantees a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence' ...and that it 'provides the basis for trust' (UNESCO, 2011, p.5).

Agencies like UNESCO that are charged with the development of policies and knowledge management relating to this over-generalized, overworked understanding of 'culture' often end up doing with worryingly little recognition of the global prevalence of harmful cultural beliefs and practices, or of cultural constraints on individual and collective progress. It is of course not only futile but also downright dangerous to pretend that 'culture' is in general a benign resource for human betterment free of power relations, or to deny that many of humanity's most wonderful achievements have been derived from bitter struggles *against* particular and dominant cultural beliefs and practices. It should also be obvious that if culture can be harmful, more cultural diversity is not necessarily desirable. Clearly agencies tasked with cultural development stand in dire need of the critical engagement and evaluative scrutiny of the happiness lens, while ensuring that their taken-for-granted assumptions are critically analyzed and made transparent. On the other hand, the same can be said of those who demonise culture as if it were a solid 'barrier' to development or to the achievement of human rights. An important question here is who is being 'developed', whose culture is considered an impediment to 'development', and who is developing and evaluating of 'culture', using what frames of analysis. Often, it is useful to analyze such questions through the lens of power, while paying discerning attention to dominant forms of knowledge, as well as alternative and indigenous understandings and framings of the question.

It is also worth keeping in mind that aspects culture can undermine or prevent positive transformative development from taking place. Anthropological research of development highlights that an overly technocratic culture of development programmes, projects and organizations prevent them from achieving their intended goals (Verma, 2009; Ferguson, 1994; Roe, 1991).

Moreover, the culture of development practitioners themselves creates more disconnect than meaningful interface with the intended beneficiaries in rural communities where development is often deployed, and is in itself an important subject of study (Verma, 2011; 2009; 2008). Hence, carrying out research on what is normally considered “hidden”, including the unintended harm or negative consequences of development programmes and policies on people, their culture and environments, is critically important for understanding what happens when development interventions are actually deployed (Verma, 2009; Ferguson, 1994). What this would mean for GNH and the new happiness based paradigm is carrying out simultaneous ethnographic research of the impacts of interventions, policies and processes of development, with a focus on the voices, experiences and perspectives of women, men and children whose very happiness and wellbeing we are hoping to promote, as well as the promoters themselves.

As culture is varied and fluid, we need to think analytically about the social processes through which it is constituted, as well as transformed and resisted. Hence, cultural policies and interventions are not transmitted “en bloc” to passive communities and individuals, but are actively negotiated, contested, bent and co-opted to meet the needs of different individuals (Sikana, 2010). Women and men exert their agency by constructing identities (i.e. “poor farmer”, “poor community”, etc.), position themselves to acquire development resources to meet their own needs (Sikana, 2010; Li, 1996; Mosse, 2005; Verma, 2009), or dis-adopt, reject or resist development in sometimes “hidden” ways (Scott, 1990; 1985; Abwunza, 1997; Sikana, 2010). This is often in response to techno-centric, top-down development interventions that do not take into account the needs, perceptions and voices of those whose happiness and wellbeing we want to improve. As such, transparency, reflexivity and critical, trans-disciplinary and holistic research that recognizes human agency and needs are important (Verma, German and Ramisch, 2010).

Research gaps and methodologies

In developing a new happiness based development paradigm, it is worth considering gaps that exist in discussions of culture, as well as methodologies that could potentially deepen its assessment and analysis. Given the broad field that is the study of culture, some gaps that exist in the assessing culture within a new development paradigm based on the GNH index have been outlined earlier and include three alternative and additional sub-domains of identity, cultural capital and institutions, and residual/intangible aspects. These together with the GNH sub-domains of socio-cultural participation, artisanal skills, language and *DriglamNamzha*/the way of harmony, may help to nuance and deepen the analysis of culture in different contexts across the world. Some other gaps in developing the new development paradigm identified during the

IEWG meeting in Bhutan in early 2013 include the absence of African, pastoral, indigenous, gender and youth perspectives from a cultural lens. These must be given special attention in the future to ensure the valuable concept of GNH is deepened to include the perspectives and voices of all groups of people, including those are sometimes excluded and marginalized from development. In practical terms, this would mean ensuring a more culturally, disciplinary, age and gender balanced international expert working group for the happiness based development paradigm, adding a new domain on gender and indigenous knowledge within the GNH framework, as well as including case studies and conceptual framings of wellbeing and happiness based in African, indigenous and pastoral contexts.

Future cultural psychological and anthropological research might also reflect on varied emphasis in different cultural contexts on individual versus collective wellbeing. As discussed earlier, Western perspectives often focus on individual wellbeing, whereas GNH, Asian, African and other perspectives might value collective wellbeing with greater weight. That the collective and individual are sometimes in tension with one another is useful to consider when evaluating different culturally defined notions of happiness. In doing so, we might also reflect on power relations among and between individuals through “searching questions about how the ‘cultural rules of the game’ got made, by whom, and for whom” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, p.4; Crush, 1995). Hence, different aspects of ‘culture’ play varying roles in contributing to the happiness and wellbeing of differently positioned women and men in different life stages and in different parts of the world. For instance, particular men and women might defend their particular interests in the name of culture and collective wellbeing. In Central Kenya, for example, it is often men who define and re-interpret cultural norms around patrilineal land inheritance in the name of ‘protecting’ the clan, even when these same norms allowed for certain women and widows to inherit land in the past (Mackenzie, 1995). In shifting political-economic circumstances, women are losing their rights and security over land as men strategically re-interpret cultural norms and customary laws to their own advantage (Mackenzie, 1995; Verma, 2001). Power relations are critical in analyzing the tension between the collective and individual within culture, where certain sub-groups are privileged while others are disadvantaged in the name of the “collective”. This can be particularly important in situations where some development organizations such as the World Bank rush to “return to the customary”, without considering the negative impacts on women in particular (Mackenzie, 2010; Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003). Here, processes and negotiations by which cultural norms are constructed and “protected” are critical for analysis (i.e. the role of elders, customary institutions, discourses, processes of exclusion, broader processes, etc).

Further, future research might consider certain questions about the relationship between culture and happiness within the context of development. Are some cultural beliefs, practices, and values systematically linked with better happiness outcomes than others? Can we identify some kinds of socializing process (parenting and care-giving styles, schooling, rituals, religious affiliation, community activities) that are strongly associated with better happiness outcomes? To what extent can such features be identified, can and should they be deliberately cultivated and transformed, and other less happiness-friendly features deliberately discouraged or forbidden? To be happy, is it beneficial to have a strong sense of belonging to a particular long-standing cultural tradition, or it is just as good or better to feel free to choose from a wide smorgasbord of cultural options? What are the implications for public happiness promotion of recognizing the many ways in which happiness is culturally learned? In what ways are dominant development approaches inductive or not inductive to supporting culture and happiness?

As with the measurement of happiness, so too with culture there exists unavoidable trade-offs between the wish to have 'robust' numerical data and the wish for in-depth understanding of complex processes. Combining quantitative with qualitative assessment will likely to lead to both an understanding of how common a practice is, as well as why it so for whom, when and what meaning(s) it has. In other words, while quantitative and statistical methods measure how widespread happiness is from a cultural lens within a snapshot of time (i.e. number of people who are happy or not, or how many times a certain cultural practice is engaged), qualitative methods investigate how differentially positioned people think over longer time frames (normally ranging from 6 to 24 months) and what meanings and significance they attribute to happiness based on their perceptions, experiences and actions. Most importantly, findings from both methods can be compared, contrasted, thereby providing a means for triangulating findings, and where discrepancies exist, more fine-tuned research can be carried out.

The study of culture is more often carried out through qualitative methods by anthropologists, with a focus on ethnographic research which includes a combination of participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions, textual/discourse analysis of documents, visual methods, questionnaires/surveys, etc. Unlike quantitative methods, such methods normally require a long presence in the field, which is rare in development research and practice¹, but necessary given the many failed development

¹ In the context of development, participatory rural appraisals are often used (PRA methods include transects, wealth ranking, timelines, feedback sessions, social mapping, etc.).

projects and research technologies that are not adopted, dis-adopted or resisted by beneficiaries of development over time (Misoko, 2010; Sikana, 2010).

Ethnographic methods are well aligned with the core principles of GNH, which emphasizes holism, interdependence and interconnectedness (Hoellerer, 2010). Through methods where researchers immerse themselves into a community, they aim “to gain a holistic perspective of human beings and their interrelationships with all aspects of human life” (Robben et al., 2007, p.4, cited in Hoellerer, 2010, p.38). Hence, anthropological and ethnographic research is perhaps the most useful and fitting research method in measuring happiness and wellbeing policies and effects (Hoellerer, 2010) especially in relation to understanding subjective emotions regarding culture and wellbeing.

While quantitative methods are useful in measuring cultural values, it is perhaps equally important to strengthen people’s ability to have intelligent conversations about culture. The inevitable simplification of numerical assessment risks down-playing those conversations. As discussed earlier, it is also ironic that at the moment where anthropologists debate and deconstruct the concept of ‘culture’, indigenous groups, civil society and social movements are increasingly using it to defend their ‘traditions’, rights and claims to territories (Moore and Sanders, 2006). In order for policy-making to avoid falling into traps that either romanticize culture or problematically regard it as bounded, fixed, rigid and inherently coherent, it is better understood as dynamic and fluid, and actively being created and recreated, interpreted and re-interpreted by women and men (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997b, p.14). ‘Culture’ is a site of common understandings of sharing and commonality, *as well as* a site of difference and contestation (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997b, p.14). In order to capture these aspects of culture methodologically, it is important to “write against generalizations” to counter the tendency make other ‘cultures’ seem more coherent, bounded and different from ourselves than they might be (Abu-Lughod, 1993, p.7).

Lastly, we think it is useful for the study of happiness and wellbeing from a cultural lens to reflect on the most recent innovations in conceptualizations and ethnographic approaches developed in the study of international development. Recent scholarship suggests that the importance of paying attention to the complexity of policy making, implementation and the way development is negotiated and contested by variously positioned actors (Mosse, 2005). For instance, research on the social and cultural lives of development projects, organizations and professionals, points to the diversity of interests, perceptions and actors beyond formal policy models (Mosse, 2011; 2005; Verma, 2009).

Happiness-focused cultural development policies

In its more fluid sense, culture as the subject of policy has various characteristics worth summarizing here: it is a holistically composed web of interconnected domains that is dynamic; it is socially constructed (though not usually with much systematic planning) over many generations; it arouses passionate attachments; it is often resistant to deliberate change; and it is inseparable from relations of power and knowledge production. Moreover, there are four overlapping and interconnected barriers to implementing cultural policy: conceptual diversity, elusiveness, emotional resistance and hegemonic technical development approaches.

The crucial message concerning the happiness lens is that it is a potentially very powerful and complex lens for cultural analysis and promotion. Though culture in itself is neither 'good' nor 'bad', there are elements of culture can be considered as such. There is intrinsic value in the enjoyment of cultural belonging(s) or cultural identity clarity, as discussed earlier. Cultural diversity and diversification can also be valuable, through the provision and expansion of choice, provided that the costs to coherence and continuity are not too great, and that service delivery is amenable to cultural competence. Most importantly, engaging happiness in any aspect of cultural policy requires policy-makers to be as transparent as they can be in justifying cultural practices in relation to positive and negative subjectivity, across life domains, through the life course and pertaining to differently positioned women, men and children in varying contexts. It is equally important to be as transparent as possible about the concepts, rationales, analyses, methodologies and evaluations of culture being engaged.

Research on cultural innovation and diversification can be very helpful sources of understanding for cultural policy within development. Since people face inevitable trade-offs and conflicts among their different purposes, policy-makers must then consider how these difficulties can be ameliorated through open conversations about cultural processes and values. This is a far more helpful and radical approach to putting culture into development than the approach commonly taken by governments, businesses, and culture-promoting agencies that semi-randomly label some of our activities as 'cultural' and address them piecemeal rather than holistically.

Looking around the world at the various public policies and policy-making institutions pertaining to 'culture', although there is no overall coherent agreement on what cultural policies ought to be about, there is a clear pattern whereby governments use this term in highly restrictive ways. Logically, 'cultural policy' could refer to any aspect of human collective endeavour, but in

practice this term tends to refer narrowly to 'non-vital', residual activities not already covered by other, and in reality equally 'cultural' activities such as health, science, defence, information, industry, and of course agriculture. Education sometimes comes within the remit of cultural policy, but it is probably more common for governments to treat schooling or education separately and to confine cultural policy to the arts and perhaps also sports and leisure.

Because of the strong association of culture with identities and practices associated with certain epistemic cultures, we often find ourselves talking of 'cultures' as if they were discrete local entities. Increasingly, managers of other entities such as schools and workplaces talk of 'the culture' of their organization in order to draw attention to the importance of taken-for-granted beliefs and practices that often evade scrutiny and deliberate transformation. However, culture is better understood not as a discrete entity, but as a way of talking about the fluid knowledge transmission processes that pertain to any kind of social form and development – not just nations and epistemic cultures, but also age groups, businesses, social organizations, schools, religious groups, and activities.

Sub-domains of culture in practice

In practical terms, if we view the sub-domains of culture elaborated earlier, several tangible ideas and examples and policy recommendations come to mind. For instance **socio-cultural participation** might be supported through the promotion and support of meaningful time in development programmes for students and employees to observe and celebrate cultural practices and rites of passage (i.e. participating in marriages, important birthdays and days on the seasonal calendar, celebrated observed by different nations, religions and cultures, etc.). Similarly, governments and organizations might consider support of time and resources for engaging in **driglam/namzha (the way of harmony)** in formal settings such as organizational cultures, community events. For example, cutting edge research organizations recognize creativity, innovation and common sense of culture can be nurtured through the encouragement of informal dress, ergonomic work stations, communal space for socialization and sports, and even bringing pets to work.

Language is closely related to the idea of preserving distinct cultures and identities, and therefore development organizations might consider greater resource support for epistemic cultures that are struggling to maintain their native languages (i.e. through targeted development funding for schools, adult learning, cultural organizations, language exchange programmes and scholarships, publication houses, community activists and organization, training centres, etc.). Respecting and recognizing one's own and other people's

various **identities** is a core feature of the growing call for 'cultural competence', the ability to interact respectfully with people of different cultures, particularly in multi-cultural contexts) in many fields such as the health and care professions (Purnell and Paulanka, 1998/2008; Tseng and Streltzer, 2004; 2008; Dreher, Shapiro and Asselin, 2006), educational evaluation (SenGupta, Hopson and Thompson-Robinson, 2004), international business management (Chhokar, Brodbeck and House, 2007) and international development. **Socio-cultural institutions** such as women's groups play a critical role in positive development in many countries of the South, where they enable savings and credit, collective work and action, increased confidence and cultural coherence, exchange of resources and opportunities for income generation. They also promote space, support and the wellbeing and happiness of women who often struggle for their rights in difficult circumstances and relations of power that disadvantage them.

One compelling example of ambitious cultural promotion in terms of **artisanal skills** is the 'El Sistema' programme that began with music lessons for a small group of underprivileged children in a garage Venezuela in 1975. The movement's founder, the politician José Antonio Abreu, indicates that the movement is not just about musical excellence for its own sake, but about shared responsibilities for personal life enhancement, social progress, and transcultural empathy (Abreu, 2009). Orchestral and other kinds of musical groups are developed as models for positive social cooperation. Rapidly scaling up through hundreds of local groups, El Sistema became a major national and then international socio-cultural movement, producing some of the world's finest youth orchestras. Nearly 40 years onward, it has directly reached over 3 million children, most of them from social backgrounds that would not otherwise provide them with opportunities for musical participation.

Socially motivated music education is a diverse and crowded market, and El Sistema's accolades have prompted some moderately skeptical questioning of its uniqueness and its value. Some have queried the strong emphasis on Western classical music, largely (though not entirely) to the neglect of other musical genres such as folk and popular music. Others have queried the ethics of high expenditures on orchestral instruments in contexts of economic poverty. Some evaluators have queried the many rather vague and unsubstantiated claims about social and personal transformation (Borchet, 2012). The specific issue of cost has been addressed in Paraguay by a low cost programme that built the 'Landfill Harmonic Orchestra' with instruments made from recycled rubbish and played by children who grew up in a slum on a landfill site (Townesley, 2012). The broader question of the overall contributions of such programmes to happiness has yet to be investigated systematically, but the indications so far are overwhelmingly positive.

Another perhaps more **intangible and residual** area of worth considering is cyberculture, where rapidly growing cultural activities are today engaged. It permeates many aspects of life, and in many countries, a significant portion of people's lives is today spent in cyberspace, even indirectly affecting in many ways the cultural opportunities of those who spend little time online. The development of the internet has radically transformed cultural conservation and creativity across the world (Souter, 2010; Goriunova, 2012), and cultural policy analysis must continue to assess the opportunities and threats of these rapid developments. Its influences on cultural vitality and happiness have been the subject of numerous research projects and popular assessments. Social networking is not only the subject of research, it also offers important new approaches to conducting socio-cultural research. Online collaboration and crowdsourcing are breaking down divisions between researchers and researched, and between producers and consumers of culture.

These developments are not always celebrated, and there are important generational, personal, gendered and geopolitical differences in the evaluation of cyberculture (Amichai-Hamburger and Barak, 2009). In some countries, the internet is absent from 'cultural policy' discourse or is addressed as a set of threats rather than opportunities (Dayton-Johnson, 2002). For instance, research on new popular cybercultural innovations such as online fantasy gaming demonstrates its cognitive and emotional benefits (Johnson, 2011), and future research might investigate how it can be carefully used as a development application. Many global reviews have noted the potential of the internet for promoting cultural revitalization, linguistic diversity, and intercultural competence (Danet and Herring, 2007; Ishida, 2010). Of note, the internet has been embraced enthusiastically by the government and people of Bhutan and shows good potential to play key roles in GNH policy (Kezang and Whalley, 2009; Heek, 2012).

Explicit happiness promotion has become one of the more prominent functions of cyberculture. Although much of this is done in a superficially individualist 'self-help' way, many activities promote offline social bonding and cultural engagement. Cultural practices are also transformed with cyberculture. For instance, in India, arranged marriages traditionally organized by relatives are facilitated by internet dating sites that systematically calculate social and astrological compatibility. In a study of happiness seekers following online self-help guidance, over half reported 'nurturing my social relationships' as the most important consequent activity; 77% reported acts of kindness to others as a consequent activity, 66% reported increased sports, and 41% reported increased religious or spiritual engagements (Parks et al., 2012, pp.1227-8). These researchers also found significant positive correlations between self-reported

happiness improvements and engagement in a variety of online-prompted self-help activities. Other research shows that even when happiness is not the direct and explicit objective of cybercultural innovation, social networking and blogging can have demonstrable and significant benefits for self-esteem, self-reported happiness, and social wellbeing (Valkenburg, 2006; Peter and Schouten, 2006; Ko and Kuo, 2009; Burke, Marlow and Lento, 2010).

Conclusion: The central role of culture in the new development paradigm

Culture, like happiness, is recognized as elusive by some – based on the argument that it is barely if at all within the reach of deliberate policy manipulation. Further it is posited, if happiness is rarely an explicit policy goal, this is doubtless largely due to the belief that whatever influences policies may have on happiness, they are very indirect and mediated through a multiplicity of personal, social, and environmental factors that aren't directly submissive to practical control. As we tried to capture in the new additional sub-domain suggested earlier of “residual, intangible and misunderstood” the cultural dimensions of these processes are particularly elusive and hard to study and describe, and difficult to deliberately manipulate due to reasons such as emotional attachment, deeply held beliefs, etc. In this sense, it is important to document not only what is intended and formally recognized within our interventions, but also what is often hidden, unintended, and take for granted cultural processes, and be transparent about who is constructing the definitions.

The vital importance of culture has often been undervalued, downplayed and marginalized in dominant development approaches and organizations. However, GNH and the new happiness based development paradigm, recognizing the pitfalls and shortcomings of previous development paradigms, gives culture equal value with other domains, including psychological wellbeing, community vitality, time use, ecological diversity and resilience, education, health, good governance, and living standards (Ura, 2012). This in itself is a valuable innovation that will better nuance and improve development efforts in the future, as long as it done with evaluative scrutiny, transparency, reflexivity, while giving equal weight to trans-disciplinary and different world perspectives. Here, what are normally considered technical fields such as science, engineering, economics, etc. must be on equal footing with culture, spirituality, society, environment and indigenous perspectives.

GNH and a new happiness based development paradigm have important global potential to the wider world, especially in the heels of the recent global financial meltdown compounded by energy and food crises. They bring invaluable insights about enhancing the quality of people's wellbeing and happiness at a critical time when the world begins to negotiate sustainable development goals. Bhutan's unique multi-disciplinary and holistic approach in which culture plays

a critical role, provides the world an important alternative to narrow, positivist and economically-driven paradigms that have dominated much of development for more than 60 years. Built on assumptions of modernity as the backbone of development, it is not clear that the whole planet consuming at 'first world' levels is viable or desirable (Ferguson, 1999; 1994; Peet and Watts, 1996; Escobar, 1996; 1995; Gardner and Lewis, 1996; Crush, 1995). Nor is the solution a Western "colonizing monoculture" that bulldozes over diverse local modes of life (Watts, 1995) and its place privileges one set of powerfully dominant cultural values, ideals, interventions and discourses over other ones (Verma, 2009). Recent crises have not only demonstrated their shortcomings, but also indicated that they are no longer viable for improving the wellbeing and happiness of the planet.

It is also worth keeping in mind that in a rapidly changing world, urgent research is needed to document and understand the way multiple drivers of change are impacting women's and men's ability to remain happy and not only maintain but improve their wellbeing within shifting circumstances and changing identities. Valuable cultural practices, languages, spiritual beliefs that are also scientifically and environmentally sound, indigenous peoples, ways of life and connectedness that contribute to wellbeing and happiness are being lost at the cross-currents of such rapid change. What the GNH and happiness based development paradigm can do is give due attention to these losses as well as value positive aspects of culture. It provides for the analysis and promotion of wellbeing, towards an improvement in happiness and quality of life. Here, the key word is betterment – not just ensuring that people are merely adapting to change or barely improving lives based on drudgery, but their lives are being transformed in ways that improve their happiness and wellbeing in ways that are positive.

At a time when the world ponders how to deal with economic recessions, persistent suffering, economic poverty, hunger, inequality and environment destruction, Bhutan's invaluable contribution to humanity is its GNH approach (Hoellerer, 2010). Culture, anthropology, cultural psychology and ethnography are all well-aligned with the central tenets of GNH, based on Bhutan's experience and thinking in this area. One only has to visit Bhutan to see that both culture and environment are protected and promoted in critical ways that preserve positive aspects of its heritage, and that the country takes very seriously and with humility the happiness of its people. In this moment of history, we have a unique opportunity to share with the world a holistic approach towards development, a new happiness development paradigm based firmly in the GNH approach that values culture, which can play a pivotal role not in the conceptualization of the SDGs but also improving the wellbeing and happiness of humanity.

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