'Global traveller'

Wellbeing concepts and methods across different subfields of international development

*Laura Camfield, University of East Anglia l.camfield@uea.ac.uk*

My argument

- Conceptualisations of wellbeing have moved from material to subjective to relational ('how people are doing when they say they're doing well', White, 2015)

- These dimensions are seen as interrelated, co-constituitive and environmentally embedded – wellbeing arises from the relationship between them

- The relational shift is helpful in understanding children's wellbeing, as I illustrate with qualitative data from Ethiopia showing the relational impact of poverty

- A wellbeing lens sharpens the focus on intended and unintended social impacts of programmes, as I show through the example of social protection

- Finally, an important puzzle for contemporary researchers and practitioners is how environmental change and interventions to address this affect social wellbeing; here I draw on preliminary research in East Africa as part of the Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions (ASSAR) project

What is wellbeing?

- A marketing device?
- A normative construct?
- What people say it is?
- The outcome of a set of domains?
- Relational?

- "having [resources], doing [agency], thinking and feeling [subjective and relational]" (McGregor, 2006)
- "Not just about what people have, but what their goals and aspirations are; what they are trying to do with what they have, and about what choices they make in trying to achieve these goals" (Gough, McGregor and Camfield, 2007)
- "A state of being with others, which arises where human needs are met [needs], where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals [capabilities], and where one can enjoy a satisfactory quality of life [subjective wellbeing]" (McGregor, 2008)

What is wellbeing?

White, 2010: 165

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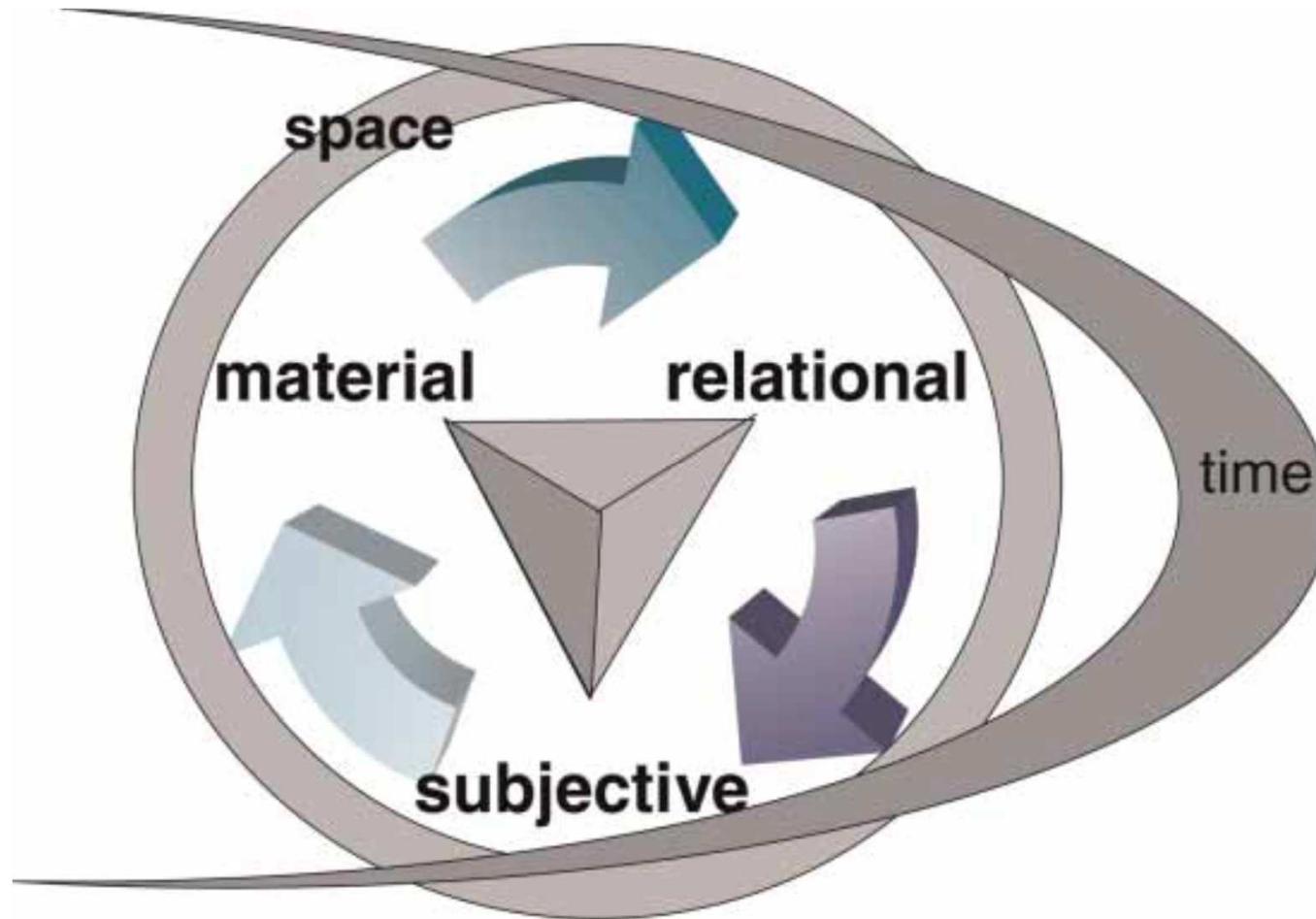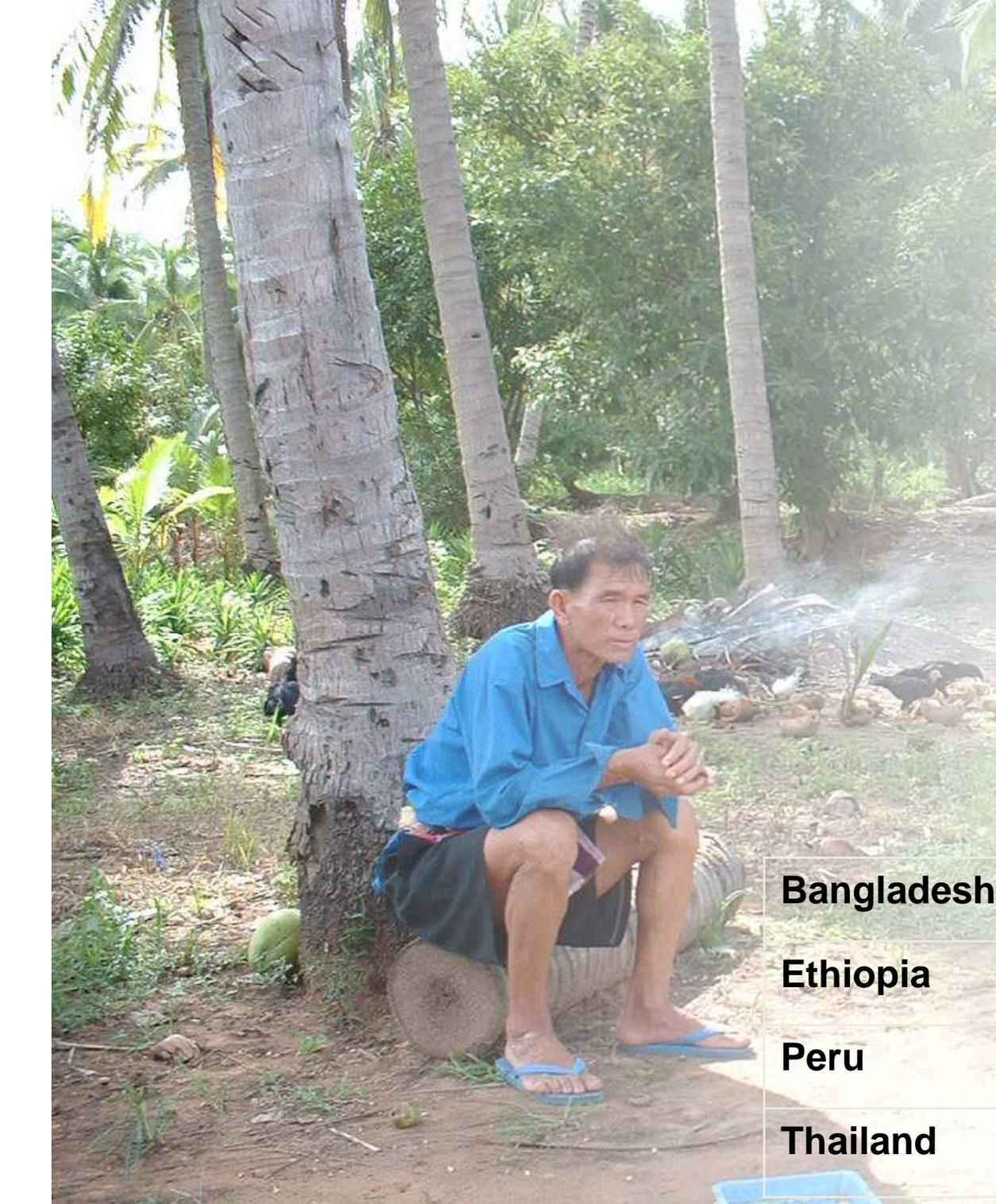
WeD initial exploratory research

What do people value?

What gives *quality* to their lives?

Examples:

What are the characteristics of a family who lives well/ doesn't live well?

What are the characteristics of an ideal community?

What are your hopes/ worries about the future?

Bangladesh	6 sites: 73 interviews, 21 focus groups
Ethiopia	6 sites: 120 interviews, 36 groups
Peru	7 sites: 419 interviews
Thailand	5 sites: 102 interviews, 36 groups

Findings:
Qualities of life

- Close affiliation

- Relations with the community and the wider world

- Material wellbeing

- Education

- Religion

"A nice girlfriend and a business so we can work together, and make enough money to support a family"
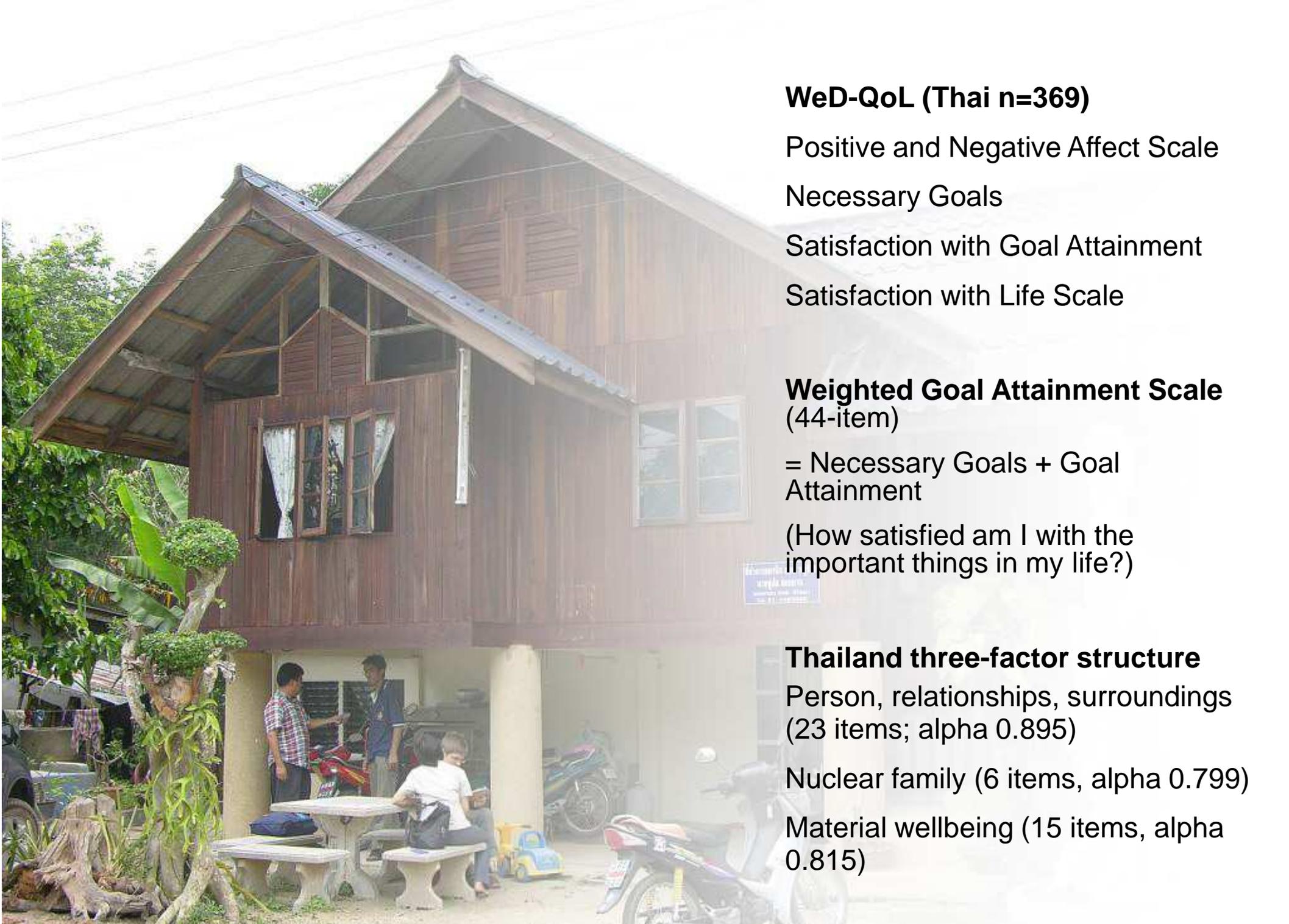
Pek, 20, NE Thailand

"**Quality of life** is the outcome of the gap between people's goals and perceived resources, in the context of their environment, culture, values, and experiences"

What people want to do or be and the resources they can access to achieve this

WeD-QoL (Thai n=369)

Positive and Negative Affect Scale

Necessary Goals

Satisfaction with Goal Attainment

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Weighted Goal Attainment Scale (44-item)

= Necessary Goals + Goal Attainment

(How satisfied am I with the important things in my life?)

Thailand three-factor structure

Person, relationships, surroundings (23 items; alpha 0.895)

Nuclear family (6 items, alpha 0.799)

Material wellbeing (15 items, alpha 0.815)

WeDQoL

Subjective wellbeing, aspirations and poverty

- **Subjective (mental) wellbeing**

  – Negative Affect was significantly higher among poor respondents

- **Adaptation**

  – Poor respondents reported significantly higher satisfaction with life

  – No significant differences in the number or type of goals that poor people considered important - societal consensus about what matters?

- **Attainment**

  – Poor respondents reported lower attainment overall and for the three factors of basic house and home, luxuries and nuclear family.

  – No significant differences for attainment of community and social resources- poor people feel included in their communities and can draw on local social networks?

mean goal satisfaction rating

WeDQoL

goals in rank order of necessity rating

goal	
health	
food	
water	
family relations	
room/house	
electricity	
well behaved children	
education children	
behaving well	
healthcare access	
wise spending	
provide for fam	
faith	
family occasions	
household goods	
living environment	
peace in comm	
children	
neighbour rels	
comm gps compatible	
satisfied what have	
friendship	
improve comm	
metta-karuna	
knowl ed self	
sanitation	
own vehicle	
clothes	
partner	
teach others	
neighbours participate	
recognised in	
convenience goods	
public transport	
celebrations	
recreation space	
telephone	
beautiful house	
own business/shop	
small no children	
spacious house	
personal progress	
travel pleasure	
accessories	

What can wellbeing approaches offer practice? (drawing on White and Abseykere, 2014)

- Reflects shift in type of programming to become more holistic, subjective, agentic, context-specific…

- 'People-centred' rather than 'project-centred' (c.f. Copestake and Remnant, 2015)

- Entails gaining an holistic and dynamic understanding of how people think and feel about their lives and respond to interventions (feedback loops, tipping points… Devereux et al, 2013; Woolcock, 2009)

- Recognizing the importance of relationships between staff and recipients and their potential effect on people's wellbeing

- Methodology for combining qualitative, quantitative, and objective, subjective and intersubjective data to address the same question from different angles

What can wellbeing approaches offer practice? (drawing on White and Abseykere, 2014)

- Sensitivity to how the data is constructed, especially through participatory processes, and need for 'disciplined enquiry' (Shulman, 1997)
- Awareness of political nature of evaluation
  - 'recognise the conflicts that arise when we consider the well-being aspirations of different people in our societies', McGregor et al. 2007:3
  - how different methods 'play' with different audiences (e.g. policymakers' concerns for usability, rigour, context-specificity with generalisability)
- Encouraging a participatory process where people establish what they value most and what the indicators should be
  - perceptions and priorities are likely to be differentiated and competing
  - highlighting hopes and strengths of people/ communities rather than what they lack

"Children are fundamentally social beings, for whose mental and emotional health it is vital to enjoy positive connections with others: a sense of consistency, continuity and reciprocity in relationships"

(Hart 2004:24)

"They play with their own ball - the big one - and when they refuse to let me in I say to them 'didn't I allow you to play with my plastic ball' and they would say that my plastic bag ball did not compare with their big ball and would refuse to let me in

(Tekola 2009, p76)

Children's understandings of illbeing and poverty

Group and individual interviews with children aged 5-6 and 11-13 in five urban and rural communities (*n*=100)
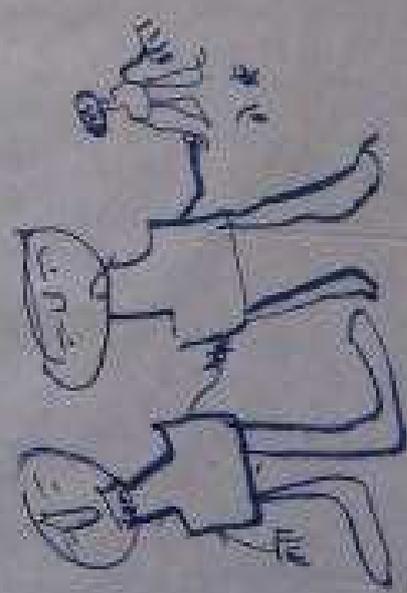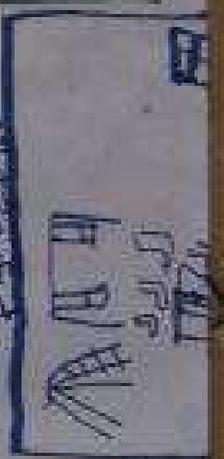
Wellbeing exercise

He has both parents. He has a house with many rooms, CD [player], and TV. He has a good variety of food prepared for him by his parents. The child goes to entertaining places with his parents. He goes to a school that has a field and equipment for kids to play on […] not far [from his home], it has good classrooms and clean toilets for boys and girls separately; and it also has a library

Having no parents and living alone. The roof of his house has holes so during the rainy season, water goes into the house and as a result the boy gets sad and cries. He doesn't go to school and does not have any food to eat because his parents are dead

Main indicators of Illbeing/ Poverty

Appearance; Clothing; Education; Food; Housing

Clothing and Appearance
Clothing Children "couldn't work without clothes" (*Bale)*
Appearance Four of five main indicators for girls in *Angar (*being thin, having dry and undressed hair, wearing torn, old clothes, having a dirty body because they couldn't afford soap)
Stature Boys with "thin, spindly legs" and girls who "look hungry" (*Aksum)*
Cleanliness Being dirty = being ugly and not having friends because of their appearance (*Debre*)
Fitting-in Younger boys going to school without trousers and wearing "something weird on top"
(*Aksum*)

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Summary: 'Standing equal with others'

Experiences of relative poverty are common and corrosive in the Global North and South

> *While a child who goes without food is said to be more seriously deprived than the child who is unable to participate in the world around them […] the long-term effect of being deprived of food for a short period during childhood could be less serious than the effect of being denied access to the means of development and participation throughout childhood*
> (Middleton et al. 2007:53)

Respect is as important to children as adults, possibly even more

> *On one level, it is a struggle to make ends meet, to make it through another day, and, ultimately, to survive. On another level, one that is arguably as or more important to children themselves, it is a struggle to assert one's humanity, to remain a person and to not become the lesser being that they believe the host society sees them to be* (Mann, 2009:9)

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Typology of social relations around development programmes

Level	Social relationships		
Intra-household	Female	↔	Male
	Older generation	↔	Younger generation
	Biological children	↔	Non-biological children
	Beneficiary	↔	Recipient
Intra-community	Beneficiaries	↔	Non-beneficiaries
Programme actors	Beneficiaries	↔	Programme staff
Economic actors	Beneficiaries	↔	Traders
Political actors	Beneficiaries	↔	Local politicians

In: Devereux and Roelen, 2015

A matrix for assessing intended and unintended impacts

Unintended (social) impacts

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Positive	'Double success' [+/+] Intervention achieved its objectives and also had unplanned, beneficial social consequences	Success [+/=] Intervention achieved its material objectives and had no discernible social consequences	'Mixed result' [+/−] Intervention achieved its material objectives, but had unplanned negative social consequences
Neutral	'Qualified success' [=/+] Intervention did not achieve its objectives, but recorded improved social indicators	No impact [=/=] Intervention effectively never happened; it had no discernible intended or unintended impacts	'Qualified failure' [=/−] Intervention did not achieve its objectives and left beneficiaries worse off on social indicators
Negative	'Failure plus' [−/+] Intervention left its beneficiaries worse off in material terms but better off on social indicators	Failure [−/=] Intervention left its beneficiaries worse off in terms of its intended material indicators	'Double failure' [−/−] Intervention left its beneficiaries worse off in both material and social indicators

Intended (material) impacts

In: Devereux and Roelen, 2015

Social impacts at the community level

Adato (2000) - PROGRESA in Mexico

- Local understandings vs. programme categories
- community social relationships/ solidarity
  - e.g. "resentment, envy or gossip" (ibid:19), confrontations, communal work, social divisions

Adato (2007) - RdP in Nicaragua

- Different categories and logics (equality vs. equity)
- impact on children's relationships
  - "one day my son told me that a boy (he didn't say his name) told him 'look, I have a new back pack and you don't', and he started showing him all the new things he had in his back pack" (ibid:18)

Social impacts at the community level

Streuli (2012) - Juntos in rural Peru

- affecting relationships within the community

  - *When we saw for the very first time that some families were receiving it [an allowance from Juntos], we cried. I do not care any more. I am used to it now.* (Non-beneficiary mother, Vilcas)

  - *They [the teachers] make us bring all the books and materials. We have to have everything complete; all school materials … even school uniforms … they should ask these things only of Juntos families, because they are getting extra money … we are not* (Non-beneficiary mother, Vilcas)

- And children's experiences in school

  - *I didn't send him before, because they didn't want to take him. Now with Juntos, all children have to be in schools. But now he cries every time he has to go … The boy next door told me that children tease him during break and that his teacher beats him when he doesn't stay quiet* (Beneficiary mother, Alamo)

Social impacts at the individual level

- Effects on girls' work
  - <u>Reduced</u> – Ecuador, Cambodia, Honduras, Bangladesh
    - Bangladesh – one study showed reduction, but only 18% of increase in enrolment so majority of new students combining work and schooling
  - <u>Increased</u> – Uruguay, India, Ethiopia
    - Ethiopia – three studies showed direct and substitution effects of PSNP on children's work, particularly girls
  - <u>Conflicting</u> – Brazil, Nicaragua, Mexico, Colombia
    - Brazil – three studies (+, -, ~), e.g. boost to local economy increasing female employment, qualitative evidence of increased work for girls (Hall, 2008)

Social impacts at the individual level

- Differentiated effects
    - <u>Age and gender</u> – reduces work of older/ under-achieving boys, but not older girls (Nicaragua, Carpio and Macours, 2009)
    - <u>Location</u> – work reduced in peri-urban (Colombia, Barrero-Osoria et al, 2008) or capital (Uruagay, Borraz-Gonzalez, 2009), not rural
    - <u>Siblings</u> – reduces work of 'treated' children, increases work of female siblings (Barrera-Osorio et al, 2008)

Changes in household assets

- Ethiopia
    - PSNP participants enrolled in OFSP which loans money for cattle to support 'graduation' after five years
- Cattle require herding
- Impact on young children and girls' workloads
    - Cockburn & Dostie, 2007; Woldehanna et al, 2008; Heissler and Porter, 2010

Data (see also Camfield, 2014)

- Quant and qual data from Young Lives longitudinal study (2002-)

- Older cohort girls aged 14-15 (2009)

- Descriptive analysis of rural sample (n=647, 28 villages in Ethiopia and Andhra Pradesh)

- Content analysis of qualitative subsample (n=31, seven villages in Ethiopia and Andhra Pradesh)

- Discussion of six case studies

- **Key finding**: All Ethiopian sample and most of Indian work, but only one third work on NREGS/ PSNP and half of these combine this with other paid work

- All chores
- Vegetable farms
- Herds cattle
- Keeps shop
- PSNP on Sundays
- Studies after finishes chores
- *I work the whole day. My recess is only when I go for sleep*

Beletch, Leki, Ethiopia
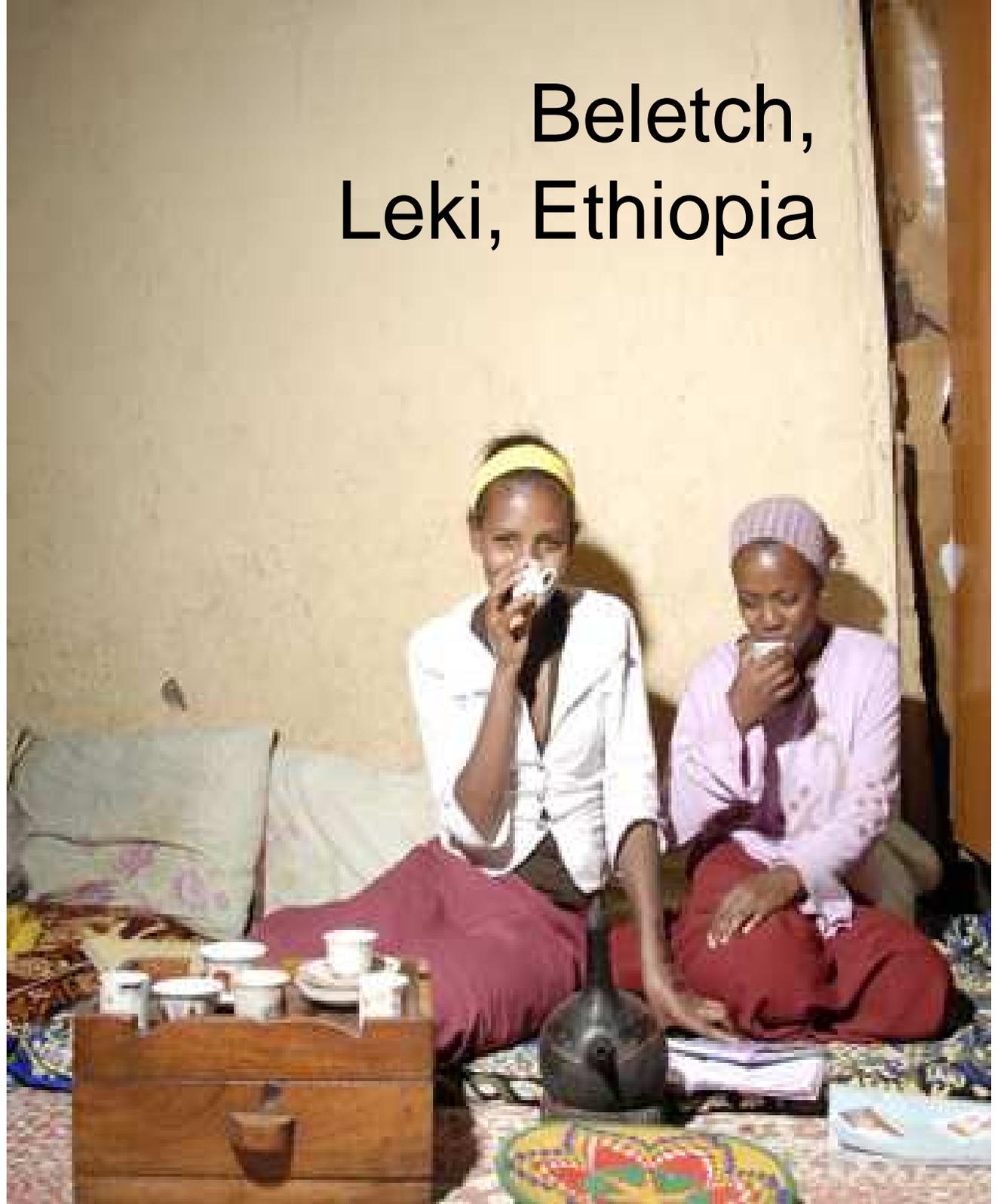
Summary

- Social protection schemes can increase girls' workloads, especially if they involve public work, but are rarely the only factor
    - New economic opportunities, lack of childcare, and family illness may be more important
- Increases in income from social protection are insufficient or insufficiently reliable to remove the need for paid work
- Tensions between individual and family life courses, e.g. schooling, but some reciprocity between siblings

Environmentally-sensitive wellbeing research

"the challenge of sustainable development is the challenge of finding ways to <u>live well together</u> both in terms of people on the planet now and the people who will be on the planet in the future" (McGregor, 2014:223)

- Environmental change (Armitage et al, 2012)

- Fisheries (Coulthard et al, 2011, Britton and Coulthard, 2012)

- Eco-system services in coastal and delta areas (P-Mowtick and SPACES (Daw, Brown et al), ESPA Deltas (Adger et al), ongoing)

- Conservation (Milner-Guland et al, 2014, Wellbeing and Poverty Pathways, 2013)

Coulthard et al, 2014

"If we frame what people do, and how they pursue their aspirations in terms of wellbeing, <u>it broadens the range of motivating factors that become visible to us</u>, as [researchers into environmental change] who seek to understand and influence people's behaviour' (Coulthard, 2012, in ibid:78)

- **Human needs assessment** to determine the extent to which human needs are being met or denied
  - universal and theoretically informed categories, local thresholds
- **Governance Relationship Assessment** explores social relationships that are important for fishing behaviour and how satisfied people are with them
- **Global Person Generated Index** assesses respondent's Quality of Life according to self-determined criteria

ASSAR East Africa through a wellbeing lens

- Initial literature review identified eight interrelated climate-related social-ecological risks that affect people's livelihoods and wellbeing in semi-arid areas of East Africa: rainfall variability, drought, flood hazards, resource degradation, resource conflict, food insecurity, human health, and plant and animal diseases.

- Different groups and societies experience vulnerability to these risks in different ways
  - Females, disabled people, elders and children and the rural (pastoralists; smallholders) and urban poor are especially vulnerable due to lower adaptive capacities and limited access to resources for adaptation practices
  - Multiple dimensions of vulnerability come together in 'vulnerable locales'

- Key responses that support livelihoods and wellbeing: knowledge and awareness, extension services, livelihood diversification, social safety nets, gender focused approaches, relocation and migration and risk sharing

Conclusions

- I started by claiming that there had been a 'relational turn' in wellbeing approaches and looked at its origins within the WeD programme

- Then I illustrated its value of a relational approach in understanding poor children's experiences and the influences upon them

- I then talked about capturing unintended social consequences as well as intended material ones in evaluating programmes, and illustrated this with a review of the effects of social protection programmes on community relationships and child work

- Finally, I looked at what a wellbeing lens and methodology might bring to studies of environmental change

- While I can't claim to be a I'm keen to hear about your wellbeing 'journeys' so please stay in touch as your research develops!