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The Decent Society

Planning for social quality

Pamela Abbott, Claire Wallace
and Roger Sapsford



The Decent Society

The search for ‘the Decent Society’ – a fit place in which to live – has informed policy at both governmental and international level. This book analyses its nature and devises a consistent way of measuring the concept worldwide on the basis of a coherent theory of agency within social structure. Influenced by classical sociology and by the economist Amartya Sen, the book posits that societies need to create (a) economic security, (b) social cohesion, (c) social inclusion, and (d) the conditions for empowerment. The model is interactive and recursive; each component provides the requirements for each of the others.

This book outlines the sociopolitical framework underlying ‘the Decent Society’ and summarises a decade of research, some of which has had a formative impact on governments’ policies. The first half contains studies of social quality based on surveys in the former Soviet Union and sub-Saharan Africa, while the second half describes the construction of a Decent Society Index for comparing very different countries across the world.

This book and the index it develops will be of interest both to academics and researchers in sociology, politics, economics, psychology, social policy and development studies and to policy-makers in government, local government and the NGOs.

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177 The Decent Society

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First published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Abbott, Pamela, author. | Wallace, Claire, 1956– author. | Sapsford, Roger, editor.

Title: The decent society : planning for social quality / Pamela Abbott, Claire Wallace and Roger Sapsford.

Description: New York : Routledge, 2016. | Series: Routledge advances in sociology

Identifiers: LCCN 2015045913 | ISBN 9781138909335 (hardback) | ISBN 9781315694023 (e-book)

Subjects: LCSH: Social policy. | Social integration. | Social change. | Power (Social sciences)

Classification: LCC HN18.3 .A23 2016 | DDC 303.3—dc23

LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015045913>

ISBN: 978-1-138-90933-5 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-69402-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	viii
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>List of abbreviations and acronyms</i>	xiii
1 The decent society	1
<i>What we expect from government</i>	1
<i>Understanding decent lives</i>	5
<i>Measuring decent lives</i>	8
<i>Social quality and the decent society</i>	13
<i>Conditions for the decent society</i>	18
2 Economic security	21
<i>Resources for survival</i>	21
<i>The wealth of nations</i>	22
<i>The social wage</i>	23
<i>The functions of economic security</i>	29
<i>The sustainability of economic security</i>	32
<i>Measuring economic security</i>	34
3 Social cohesion	37
<i>The cohesive society</i>	37
<i>Domains and functions of social cohesion</i>	40
<i>Governance</i>	45
<i>The scope and sustainability of social cohesion</i>	47
<i>Measuring social cohesion</i>	50

4	Social inclusion	53
	<i>What social inclusion means</i>	53
	<i>Processes of social inclusion</i>	55
	<i>Family, community and inclusion</i>	58
	<i>The functions and elements of social inclusion</i>	64
	<i>Measuring social inclusion</i>	70
5	Social empowerment	72
	<i>Agency and its context</i>	72
	<i>Empowerment and capability</i>	76
	<i>The elements of empowerment</i>	78
	<i>Measuring empowerment</i>	80
6	Social quality in transitional societies: A summary of research	83
	<i>Developing research: towards social quality</i>	83
	<i>The former Soviet Union: countries in transition</i>	85
	<i>Rwanda: a state that recreated itself</i>	92
	<i>From satisfaction to the decent society</i>	101
7	Constructing a Decent Society Index	105
	<i>The need for a different index</i>	105
	<i>Constituting the Decent Society Index</i>	107
8	Using the Decent Society Index	119
	<i>Headline results</i>	119
	<i>The top sixteen countries</i>	121
	<i>Planned social development: the case of Rwanda</i>	125
	<i>The world's poorest countries</i>	131
	<i>Using the Decent Society Index</i>	133
9	Conclusions and future directions	134
	<i>The Decent Society Model</i>	134
	<i>Assessing the Model</i>	136
	<i>Capability, functioning and the provision of prerequisite conditions</i>	140

The uses of the Index 142

Next steps in using the Model and the Index 145

References 147

Appendix 162

Index 173

Figures

1.1	The Social Quality Model	15
2.1	World map: Index of Economic Security	31
3.1	World map of Trust	43
7.1	The computation of primary indicator, domain and quadrant scores	110
8.1	World map: Decent Society scores	120
8.2	Deviation of quadrants from world mean values – the top sixteen countries	122
8.3	Domains within Economic Security for the top sixteen countries (excluding food security)	123
8.4	Scores for the index: Rwanda, the EAC, the DRC and Sub-Saharan Africa	126
8.5	Scores for quadrants: Rwanda, the EAC, the DRC and Sub-Saharan Africa	127
8.6	Domain scores within Economic Security for EAC countries and the DRC	128
8.7	Domain scores within Social Cohesion for EAC countries and the DRC	128
8.8	Selected indicator scores within Trust in People and Institutions for EAC countries and the DRC	129
8.9	Domain scores within Social Inclusion for EAC countries and the DRC	130
8.10	Domain scores within Empowerment for EAC countries and the DRC	131

Tables

7.1	Correlation among the four quadrants	111
7.2	Correlation of domains with quadrant scores	112
7.3	Component structure of domains	115
8.1	Data for the sixteen poorest countries	132
9.1	Correlation of the Decent Society Index with other key variables	139
A.1	Decent Society Index and quadrant ranks, in alphabetical order	162
A.2	Decent Society Index and quadrant ranks, in order of overall rank	165
A.3	Indicators used in the Index	168

Preface

This book comes out of twenty-five years of research and analysis using social indicators to explore how nations function and how governments can improve life for their citizens. The book's title, *The Decent Society*, reflects our firm belief that no society is perfect and that there are many routes towards 'good enough' governance. What we hope for from a government is (a) social justice for all the society's members and (b) a sincere and reasonably efficient plan for giving individuals and groups enough space and resource to exercise agency, fulfil their potential and help each other to live in productive harmony. Life is not just about governance, but in our view governments take on responsibility for offering their citizens a decent life, and this entails social justice and equality of opportunity.

Taken for granted is that societies are more than the individuals that constitute them and more than what is done and believed at any given moment; history, social structures and structured ways of understanding the social world lie behind both government and agency. We are still influenced by the major problems tackled by the foundational sociologists: Durkheim's question of what is it that can hold a society together and make it sustainable and Marx's question of what makes societies function and reproduce themselves when it is so patently obvious that they are structured in the interests of some of their members at the cost of the others. More immediately we are influenced by the Social Quality Model (e.g. Beck et al. 2001, van der Maesen and Walker 2012), which lays out a useful and theoretically important framework for understanding the complexities of social process as they affect the development and sustainability of nations. Our distinctive contribution to it is that we have gone beyond Europe, where the model was first developed, to discover that it is even more obviously applicable to countries which are recreating themselves after some kind of disaster. Our research has looked particularly at the countries of the former Soviet Union after the collapse of their joint economy and system of governance at the beginning of the 1990s and at Rwanda in central East Africa, where a society and economy had to be rebuilt after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi destroyed the economic and social infrastructure and decimated the population. In the process we have developed the model, under the strong influence of the development economist Amartya Sen, to move away from current achievements and theorize more precisely what structures and processes have to be in place for a population to be empowered. To avoid confusion we

generally refer to the outcome of this conceptual development by a new name, the *Decent Society Model*.

We have constructed an index to measure what the model specifies as important, which we have called the *Decent Society Index*. This is not to be taken (at this stage) as a serious rival to other world indices based on available social indicators, however, but rather as a method which shows potential and combines the merits of indices and dashboards. The underlying conceptual and practical organisation which the Social Quality Model brought to social analysis permits the construction of layers focussing attention on more and more detailed aspects of governmental performance. The overall rank or score itself is of very little interest, except for those who like league tables, but the four ‘quadrants’ which go to make it up – aspects of social process and resource – allow us to see whether a society is doing well (or badly) in all of them or succeeding beyond expectation in some but falling short in others, and we can track down through ‘domains’ to, if necessary, the individual indicators. This permits us to see where action might have the most impact on the complex society as a whole.

We claim for this approach that it increases our understanding of what is going on in the world in general while permitting detailed discussion and scrutiny of individual countries’ histories, problems and political goals. The outcome of any discussion of policy and politics must ultimately be praxis – a theorized understanding is not just ‘something academic’ but a basis on which to plan and make social interventions. If it is grounded in a well-elaborated theory of social processes and how they articulate to form a society it should often be able to identify with some precision the area where intervention and change of policy or practice is needed if a desired goal is to be achieved, whether the goal concerns the economy and production, social cohesion, justice and social inclusion or the empowerment of a country’s inhabitants to achieve their potential.

No analytic model determines what should be a country’s goals, but any model which aspires to be useful as well as interesting must offer governments and popular movements a framework within which to make sense of current trends and perhaps bend them in the desired direction. The *Decent Society* approach is unashamedly value-laden; its premise is that governments will want to offer their citizens the broadest opportunity to fulfil their potential that is compatible with being able to offer it to all more or less equally.

Acknowledgements

The research on the former Soviet Union summarized in Chapter 6 was carried out in two substantial European-funded projects: *Living Conditions, Lifestyles and Health*, funded by the EU under INCO-Copernicus (contract ICA 20000–10031), in 2001, and *Health in Times of Transition*, funded by the EU-FP7 programme (contract 223344). The summaries of Rwandan research in the book are based in part on Rwanda's Censuses and periodic surveys, particularly the Demographic and Health Survey series (RDHS) and the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey series (EICV – the acronym is from the original French title); published reports and the databases are available on the website of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. The remainder is based on a range of consultancy projects carried out over several years by IPAR-Rwanda and mostly available on the IPAR-Rwanda and/or ResearchGate websites. This includes a national survey and qualitative study of governance funded by the Rwandan government, *Dialogue and Consensus*, and we are grateful to the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda, who have permitted access to the data for research purposes. We should like to acknowledge the influence on our thinking of colleagues on the *Living Conditions, Lifestyles and Health* project in the former Soviet Union – particularly Christian Haerpfer, Ray Pahl and Richard Rose – and the contributions made to the Rwandan research on governance by Roger Mugisha at IPAR-Rwanda.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AfVS	African Values Survey
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EICV	Rwandan Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey.
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EUROFOUND	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EUROSTAT	European Commission Statistics Agency
ESS	European Social Study
EVS	European Values Survey
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (United Nations)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GINI coefficient	a measure of economic inequality (named for its inventor)
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index/Indicators
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDP	International Development Partner
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture and Development
IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
ILO	International Labour Office (United Nations)
ISSA	International Social Security Association
LLH	the <i>Living Conditions, Lifestyles and Health</i> project
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
nd	no date (of a reference); this may indicate the source website for up-to-date data
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NYC	National Youth Council (Rwanda)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OSSREA	Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
ppp	purchasing power parity
RDHS	Rwandan Demographic and Health Survey
RWF	Rwandan franc
SSA	Social Security Administration (US)
UK	United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division
UNTC	United Nations Treaty Collection
US	United States (of America)
WDI	World Development Indicators
WGI	World Governance Indicators
WHO	World Health Organisation
WNC	Women's National Council (Rwanda)
WVS	World Values Survey

1 The decent society

What we expect from government

A decent life is one where we can concentrate on what we do best and do not have to worry too much about bare survival. It is one where we get enough to eat, where there is shelter and clothing (and heating, in climates and at times where it is needed), where family and social life is possible, where there is decent work and where there is leisure for the ‘flow activities’ which make life more than just an unending and depressing stretch of hard labour. It allows us involvement with others but also some space to ‘be ourselves’; the balance between these two will vary from culture to culture, but both are understood in all cultures. We are protected from disasters and not least from the aggression of others, including unwarranted aggression from those who govern us. A decent life is satisfying and enjoyable, at least some of the time, and a decent society is one which provides these conditions for its inhabitants. Above all a decent society is a just society (Fraser 2009) – a society where there is parity of participation – of distribution, recognition and political representation. ‘Justice’, in the context of sorting out the competing interests and claims of the different groups in increasingly complex modern societies, is at least partly synonymous with the concept of ‘fairness’ promulgated by the American political philosopher John Rawls (e.g. 1971, 2001): that the decent life is a game whose rules need to be set in such a way that everyone benefits equally. Anything else – and most societies have advantaged and disadvantaged groups, at least in terms of affluence and often by gender, marital status, handicap, geographical location and even ethnic or religious affiliation – weakens the society’s cohesion and leads to a decent life for some but at the cost of a less than decent life for others. Fraser goes beyond Rawls in making affluence an issue – that fairness in the distribution of resources is at least as important as fair treatment under the law or political representation.

This book is about the foundations of a decent society – what conditions need to be in place for society to offer a decent life to its members. There are many notions of what a decent or good society is or might be and indeed many different understandings of what we mean by ‘society’. In this book we are generally talking about societies as coterminous with nation states and regarding wellbeing

2 *The decent society*

as the outcome of the totality of political, economic, cultural and social relationships; a decent society is one which provides the conditions for a good life, where individuals experience wellbeing and in which all can flourish. A decent society is one that is committed to social justice; it ensures that all of its people and communities are able to exercise their human (social, economic and political) rights and take advantage of economic and other opportunities. This cannot be managed at the level of individuals; it requires collective agreement and collective action, mobilised and directed by governments, if only to protect the weak against the strong and regulate competition. A decent society has in place the distributional and institutional structures to ensure social justice for all.

Where we use the word 'citizen' to denote a full member of a nation state, this is not usually in its legal sense but more inclusively to denote everyone within the borders or at least those who have been there long enough to regard themselves as potentially full members (or have the intention to stay that long). We tend to use 'citizen', 'resident', 'inhabitant' and 'member' interchangeably. Where we are referring to citizenship as a legal category – being entitled to a vote, a passport and the protection of a country's embassies/consulates – we will say so. Some countries of the Middle East, for example, have generously redistributive welfare regimes for their citizens but do not extend these to the expatriates working in the country (who may form a majority of the inhabitants at any one time). We would regard such countries as being pretty decent to their citizens, but we should look sceptically at any claims to be decent countries overall in terms of the country's residents as a whole. This holds particularly true for any country where a fraction of the population count explicitly or even implicitly as second-class citizens – ethnic groups, for example, or women or older people.

The art and purpose of government is to provide the conditions under which a decent life is possible, and the basis for such a society is social justice. A decent society is an inclusive society – one where there is a political commitment generated by common action and working together for common purpose and where there is agreement about collective rights and obligations. There is mutual recognition of difference and diversity, with everyone's contribution being valued – equal citizenship and a right to diverse identities (Fraser 2009, Lister 2000). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 specifies that all individuals and groups shall have a range of rights which we might summarise as:

- the right to life and security from harm (including the right to healthcare, affordable housing and enough money to feed the family across the life course);
- the right to be free and equal – equality before the law, fair treatment and the right not to be subordinated or discriminated against;
- the right to identity – nationality, citizenship;
- the right to work, to earn a fair wage and to be a member of a trade union; and
- the right to education.

Full membership of society – citizenship – requires people having social, economic, cultural and political rights and being able to exercise them. It requires legal freedoms and freedom from harassment, violence and discrimination, but it also requires access to the society's resources. This means access to work or the equivalent, to education and to health services, but even more, as Peter Townsend (1979) so powerfully argued, it requires sufficient resources that everyone can take part in the normally accepted activities of their society. In a 'human rights' approach to governance, governments are duty bearers and citizens are rights holders; in other words, governments have a responsibility to promote human rights and ensure that their citizens are able to exercise them. Governments that are not responsive to the needs of their people and empower them do eventually fail (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013).

Rights entail obligations, of course – duties to the community and acceptance of limitations determined by law for the purpose of securing the rights and freedoms of others. The essence of the rights approach is that the rights are shared equally by everyone, they are collective as well as individual, and rights entail duties accepted by others. Rights are always exercised in a social context and in interaction with others. Equality and the universality of human rights is a logical necessity: if anyone is not included in the full protection of rights, then potentially *anyone* can be excluded from them, depending on the whim of whoever has power. (However, there remains a tension between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome.)

The original list of rights agreed by the United Nations is detailed and sometimes involves cultural concepts natural and specific to Western and industrialised societies. One can imagine a society whose relations to the means of production did not involve the notion of paid work, for example, but which still protected and promulgated the rights of its individual members. There is no necessity for 'work' or 'employment' to be something salaried or waged; this is not the norm everywhere and for every kind of productive employment. The Declaration also assumes rights to private individual property which might not be recognised everywhere. Some concepts, indeed, might be thought of as applying more to some fractions of the population than others. One of the rights, for example, is 'leisure', which is something that tends to be lacking for married women in their childcare years, even in the West and North; leisure is a male experience in many societies and a concept that does not make much sense at all in some. We should also note that there is no society where every resident is counted as a full member with unlimited universal rights; even the Declaration qualifies the right to get married by age, and no society in the world recognises infants as full and competent citizens. However, the general picture is not purely a product of one culture; it stands as a portrayal of 'the decent society' for people beyond the boundaries of the cultural nexus that gave birth to it. Our experience of teaching, managing and researching in Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and the former Soviet Union is that these are the values that people of quite disparate historical, cultural and political backgrounds do in fact espouse, once economic need has been overcome, and that

4 *The decent society*

they want them if they can get them. We therefore put them forward in this book without hesitation as the values of the decent society.

Three qualifications to this picture need to be considered:

- The Universal Declaration also tends to assume an evolved Western form of government, with some form of representation in the selection of legislators and administrators and with courts and laws which are independent of the administration. In principle the decent society is not necessarily one which elects its governments nor one where the judiciary are independent of the administration; benevolent dictatorial arrangements could achieve the same effect. However, in practice benevolent dictators cannot be constrained to *stay* benevolent, nor can the benevolence of their successors be guaranteed, and history suggests that benevolence at the top has often acted as a cloak for bureaucracy, self-seeking and outright malevolence in the lower tiers of government. There is much to be said for the freedom to monitor and report on officials without fear of reprisal and for being able to replace one's government without recourse to arms.
- In particular, the decent society must be able to encourage citizens to be critical of government and challenge the government's position, both individually and by organizing into groups to put forward points of view. If it cannot encourage this then it must at least tolerate it and give some space for dissident voices to be heard. In other words, a fair measure of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly is a prerequisite; the decent society is one where there is the possibility of (peaceful) conflict over ideas, not just a state ideological monopoly. This is currently seen as something of a Western liberal ideal, but it is necessary for all because the society which suppresses dissent cannot *remain* decent for long.
- Our account, and the whole human rights approach, is predicated on the assumption that governments have as their goal the improvement of their citizens' lives. If they have some other goal – an economic or theological one, for example, or the righting of historic wrongs as an aim in itself or the personal enrichment of those who govern – then the values we are taking for granted here will not hold. We cannot say absolutely that such societies are invalid or 'wrong', though they are not to our taste. We can, however, say that they are not aiming to be 'decent' in the sense in which the word is used in this book, though they might achieve this state accidentally while following some other goal.

It is worth stating at this point that no current society can be held up as '*the* decent one' – as having entirely achieved the goal – and that we do not believe any society will ever reach the stage where no more criticism and improvement are possible. The decent society is never completed but always in the making; it is what *might* be, the kind of society we would like to build and in which we would like to live. Every society – even those held up in this book as good examples – can do better by its citizens than its current achievements would suggest. To take an

example, the 2014 Gallup/Healthways Wellbeing Index, a subjective evaluation of quality of life, found that globally only 17 per cent of the population think they are thriving on three or more of the five elements that make up their scale. This varies from 33 per cent in the Americas to 9 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa (Gallup/Healthways 2014). The UNDP 2014 Human Development Index (UNDP 2015) has an average score of 0.702, ranging from a high of 0.944 for Norway to a low of 0.337 for Niger, suggesting that even the most developed societies still have some room for improvement.

The Decent Society is located, ideally, within a Decent World. Economic security for all and respect for human rights assume that nation states, like citizens and groups within nation states, will share a vision of how to live together peacefully, how to coexist without damaging or threatening each other's interests or those of each other's citizens and how to resolve disputes without recourse to armed conflict. In the Decent World, resources which are needed by all would be conserved for all and not appropriated and squandered by those who currently have the economic or political advantage. In the Decent World there would be both equity and a just measure of equality; all would have access to sufficient food, clothing, shelter, decent work, healthcare and the opportunity to develop and exercise capabilities. This is one of the purposes of the United Nations, expressed for example in the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals which have replaced them; these are the world's commitment that no one shall starve or lack the basic resources for health and education. These efforts made at the level of governments and international agreements do not penetrate very deeply into our everyday consciousness and discourse, but in the Decent World the plight of the disadvantaged would be everyone's responsibility, irrespective of where they are to be found. We do not live in such a world – which is, perhaps, a topic for another book. We shall not attempt to deal with it in this one.

Understanding decent lives

'Quality of life' and 'wellbeing' are often used in ways that overlap and in different ways in different disciplines; 'wellbeing' is more generally used in medicine and psychology and 'quality of life' in sociology and social policy. We generally use 'quality of life' as an evaluation of major aspects of a total society, the context in which people live, and wellbeing to refer to the actual experience of individuals. Ultimately, however, 'quality of life' is something that *individuals* have, and indicators are often validated by the extent to which they correlate with subjective satisfaction. Our approach builds on and is complementary to the Quality of Life approach. This has provided an understanding of the things that make life good for people, in terms of the conditions under which they live. In this book we try to specify the preconditions for a society to deliver a good life for all its citizens. It is beyond its scope to review all the existing approaches (for reviews see, for example, Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000, Hagerty et al. 2001, Phillips 2006, Stiglitz et al. 2010). Rather, we consider what we can learn from them that enables us to understand what a decent society must deliver.

There are essentially two main approaches to measuring the quality of life: objective measures and subjective or evaluative ones. The judgement can be made by individuals themselves or by others. Those who stress the importance of subjective feelings of wellbeing, happiness and satisfaction take a purely utilitarian, hedonic approach; wellbeing is measured by the individual emotional experience of life at the time when the measurement is made. Those that argue for more objective measures of the quality of life that people are living in a society are more concerned with people's way of life and whether they are able to lead a good life which enables them to be happy – a eudemonic measure “which focuses on meaning and self-realisation and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning” (Ryan and Deci 2001: 141) of which, in principle, the people involved might not be fully conscious.

There has been a move away from using objective economic standing (generally GDP) as the sole or main measure of social progress to using a range of objective metrics that measure quality of life and from that to using subjective measures – asking people how they see their life and using the answers either on their own or in combination with objective indicators. For example, the Human Development Index and the MDGs use only objective metrics, while the Happy Planet Index, the OECD's 'How's Life' Dashboard and the Social Progress Index (Porter et al. 2015) use both objective and subjective indicators, and the same is true of the Good Society Index (Anderson 2012). The univariate happiness/satisfaction scales and the Gallup/Healthways Wellbeing Index use only subjective metrics.

There has been a groundswell of support from politicians for adding subjective measures of satisfaction and other objective indicators to GDP as a measure of how well people are doing. Academics have been arguing for this for much longer, especially sociologists and others involved in social indicators research (Maggino and Ruvigliani 2011, Michalos 2011, Noll 2011). There remains a debate about the relative weight that should be placed on subjective measures (taking people as the final judges of the quality of their lives) versus measures of the objective conditions (opportunity structures) in which they live. However, there is a large body of research which shows that the objective metrics that are generally taken as important for people's quality of life – including economic circumstances, health, education, having people to rely on in times of need, being integrated in civil society, trusting other people and having confidence in government and other organisations – do make independent contributions to explaining the variance in subjective satisfaction across the globe. We discuss this question further in Chapter 6.

The aim is to meet the general concern about the extent to which things are getting better, to measure progress and also to inform policy. Governments and international organisations are keen to compare countries and measure progress, and there has been considerable debate about how to do this. Four common ways have been put forward and are in use for comparing countries and/or looking for changes over time:

- GDP (the gross domestic product, an economic measure);
- univariate measurement of 'happiness' or 'satisfaction with life' (subjective measures);

- indexes which combine a number of objective and/or subjective indicators of quality of life/wellbeing to assess underlying ‘wellbeing’ or some similar concept – for example the UNDP Human Development Index (which goes beyond economics into areas which we might call ‘human empowerment’) or the Gallup/Healthways Wellbeing Index, which combines subjective measures of how people evaluate their lives; and
- ‘dashboards’ such as the Millennium or Sustainable Development Goals and the OECD’s ‘How’s Life?’ instruments, which measure progress across different domains and do not combine them into a single index.

We need to keep in mind, however, that the indicators of progress are not neutral; they are collected and used for a purpose and embody assumptions about what progress is. Using GDP, for example, entails the assumption that economic growth is a good and necessary thing, and using happiness assumes that being happy is our major goal in life. The Happy Planet Index developed by the New Economics Foundation includes measures of environmental sustainability, seeing these as just as important as other indicators. Gallup Polls and the Legatum Institute (which publishes the Legatum Poverty Index) are both formally nonaligned bodies but are committed to individual liberty, prosperity and entrepreneurship. The Legatum Institute’s commitment is explicitly to ‘prosperity through revitalising capitalism and democracy’.

One of our concerns about recent research is the way in which wellbeing has been demoted from a social responsibility to something that is the responsibility of individuals, downgrading the importance of social factors (Sointu 2005). Wellbeing has come to be seen as a normative obligation and the responsibility of individual agents. The problem can be summed up as ‘the privatisation of welfare’: individuals are seen as responsible for their own wellbeing rather than it being the state’s responsibility, and people’s happiness and satisfaction are seen as the responsibility of the individuals themselves. If people’s lives are miserable, this is their problem and their fault rather than something to be handled at the level of government and the collectivity (see Davies 2015). However, our experiences are often the outcome of social processes and interactions over which we have little control. As sociologists have argued during the whole history of the discipline, ‘personal experience’ is not just a matter of what individuals feel but an outcome of processes which are both intersubjective and social (i.e. structural); happiness is socially constructed (Hyman 2014, Thin 2012) through the resources which a given society offers.

What are essentially ‘social ills’ have become constructed as ‘personal troubles’ (Mills 1959) or are attributed to the influence of identifiable and often stereotyped fractions of the population when it comes to assigning blame. Unemployment is attributed to the lack of skills and motivation of the unemployed, poverty to the laziness of ‘welfare benefit scroungers’, immigrants are blamed for unemployment in the UK and some other Western European societies, and an attack on ‘Islamisation’ has been an issue across Europe – in Germany, France, Denmark and the UK, for example. Blame is assigned to the will and actions of identifiable (though stereotyped) groups of people rather than to factors which have become

structural within the society and act independently of anyone's will. 'Maverick police officers' become personally and solely responsible for the shooting of young black men in the US and for the ensuing community unrest. 'Inadequate families' are blamed for young people's unhappiness, and 'irresponsible women' are blamed for 'provoking' or 'failing to control/avert' domestic violence or rape. Well-meaning efforts to improve the situation are made, but issues of racism, sexism, class division and sometimes outright xenophobia are pushed to one side, responsibility is assigned at the level of the individual perpetrator or even the victim, and that is where efforts to improve things are directed.

The tendency to privatise and individualise is all the stronger because the welfare systems of, for example, the 1960s and 1970s in Western Europe have become seen as unsustainable. We are now in a world dominated by a neoliberal position that idealises the market and seeks to minimise the role of the state and welfare provision. The main global discourses on social responsibility for welfare adopt an economic perspective which prioritises cost over needs and outcomes. Neoliberalism emphasises the responsibility of individuals for their own welfare and offers market-based solutions to wellbeing. We become atomised economic agents; the gap between rich and poor has widened as the same time as the commodification of everything has sharpened the strain of inequality by making money matter more and more (Sandel 2012). Wealth maximisation has become the dominant goal, to the neglect of social justice and without concern for the suffering of individuals. The worldview shared by the affluent – both affluent people within countries and affluent countries within the world – loses its vision of society as a coherent whole in which each is responsible for all, and without some such a vision a society will not be able to claim that it is decent in our sense of the term.

Putting it another way, where the dominant discourse is framed in terms of individuals, the solutions it suggests to problems will be things that individuals can do. This links to Nikolas Rose's (1999) discussion of identity as a life-project; it sets us goals in terms of maximizing our own happiness and physical and emotional wellbeing or perhaps the happiness and health of those for whom we feel responsible. Because these are open-ended and ill-defined goals, they are impossible to achieve, and the space is created for a self-help industry to direct our efforts and, ultimately, the therapeutic industries which we can 'freely' use to help us (Davies 2015). The roots of psychology lie partly in this 'turn to expertise', to do for mental health and delinquency the same service as health visitors and school nurses were performing for children's physical health and to help mothers bring up children to be happy, which has come to be seen as the same thing as being sane or well balanced. (For discussions of this historic process see Donzelot 1977, Rose 1985, 1989).

Measuring decent lives

Taking GDP as the measure

The dominant approach to evaluating countries' developmental progress has been and remains the measurement of economic growth – often as if it were an end in

itself, measuring the health of the economy rather than the wellbeing of the people. GDP is the measure most frequently used, although the problems of using this as a measure of progress and economic wellbeing have been well rehearsed and are now well known (see e.g. Coyle 2014, Stiglitz et al. 2010). GDP is not even the best of the economic measures for this purpose. Mainly it measures market production and not living standards, and it takes no account of goods and services produced for a household's own consumption nor of voluntary work. It is a measure of gross economic activity, takes no account of depreciation and includes profits that are taxed in another country and therefore make little or no contribution to the welfare of the country whose GDP is being quoted.

It is true that the economic circumstances of a country and of individuals are consistently one major driver of quality of life and subjective wellbeing across the world, as social indicators research has demonstrated. Economic growth is an important indicator of the increasing potential of a country to meet the welfare needs of its residents. Government officials pointed out to us in Rwanda in 2005 that if all the wealth of the country were shared out equally among its residents everyone would be living in poverty, and it is of note that the current per capita share of the GNI in Malawi, if equalised, would leave everyone there living on less than \$1.25 per day (Abbott et al. 2016); one reason for trying to adopt collective solutions is that there is just not enough wealth in a country to fund individual ones. The problem with GDP as a measure is that it tells us nothing about how wealth is distributed or the extent to which there is collective investment in improving the welfare of the population through, for example, investment in education and health, job creation, reducing corruption or improving communications and infrastructure.

Moreover, using GDP per capita as sole outcome measure puts the focus on the needs of the economy and downgrades the needs of people – especially poor people. (As with GDP, the national happiness statistic is an average, not the level of happiness of every individual.) Furthermore, while happiness and satisfaction appear to increase with increases in GDP in developing countries, growth does not have the same effect in developed economies – the ‘Easterlin Paradox’ (Easterlin 1974) – that beyond a certain level of GDP further growth does not appear to result in commensurate increases in happiness/satisfaction. The problem with GDP as a goal is that it has become the master rather than the measure; growth has become an end in itself rather than a means to enable citizens to live better lives. In a world dominated by a neoliberal position that idealises the market and seeks to minimise the role of the state and welfare provision, economic inequalities are growing within and between nations, life is becoming increasingly precarious (see e.g. Dorling 2014, Piketty 2013, Standing 2011) and electorates are increasingly disenchanted with politicians and mainstream political parties. In developed economies ordinary citizens are asked to make sacrifices and forego their own welfare to bring about economic recovery, while the rich enjoy tax cuts and take advantage of tax avoidance schemes and tax havens; the feeling that this is so has toppled governments even in Europe in recent years. In 2012 the top 100 billionaires added \$240 billion to their coffers – enough, according to Oxfam (2013), to end world poverty outright. In 2014, according to ActionAid, 49 per cent of the

world's wealth was owned by the richest 10 per cent, and this was predicted to top the 50 per cent mark in 2015.

Happiness/satisfaction

A second current approach is to tackle the problem of evaluation head on: if governments are supposed to make their population happy or satisfied, let us measure happiness or satisfaction and create national accounts of subjective wellbeing. There is some disagreement about what should be used – whether it should be happiness or general satisfaction – because they are not the same thing; simplifying the difference, happiness is a feeling, an emotional state, while satisfaction is a judgment about how things are going. Questions on one or both of these outcome measures now appear in a range of world and regional surveys, however, including the Gallup Poll, the World Values Survey, the European Values Survey and the European Social Survey. Arguments for using subjective measures of wellbeing have been taken up by international agencies as well as governments: in 2011 the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 65/309) invited member states to pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and wellbeing in development, with a view to guiding their public policies (www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39084, accessed December 2014). Some advocates of life satisfaction measures argue that they should be at the heart of policy, but most see them as complementing objective economic and social indicators rather than replacing them.

Measures of subjective life satisfaction have been shown to be psychometrically sound; they are valid, reliable and sensitive to change provided they have been collected using well-conducted surveys (Diener et al. 2013). They cost relatively little, they are easy to administer and they provide substantive information about how individual respondents evaluate their lives, capturing aspects of life not captured by objective indicators. However, as overall measures it is difficult to link the scores with the factors that have influenced them, because the approach lacks an overall model of society within which to locate them. They also require that people's preferences be taken at face value and that people be considered the best judges of what will advance their welfare. Further, this approach also assumes that *having* a good life is more important than *leading* a good life – the good life becomes reified as an object and so perhaps as a commodity – and this is open to dispute (White et al. 2012).

There are technical problems with happiness or satisfaction as national accounts.

- a Different measures of the same characteristic do not necessarily agree. Comparison of the satisfaction means from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey (Wave 6, 2010–14) and World Gallup Poll data for 2007–12 for the fifty-seven countries that they have in common gives a correlation of only 0.66, which is statistically significant but means they share less than half of their variance.
- b There is no general agreement as to what single indicator of wellbeing should be adopted. Some argue for subjective satisfaction, some for happiness and

others for self-reported indicators of mental health (Huppert and So 2013) – the last of these as a measure of discontent or sadness rather than of satisfaction or happiness.

- c There is evidence that happiness does not always occur where it would be predicted. People can be relatively happy in very deprived circumstances and relatively unhappy in more affluent ones – what Carol Graham (2011) calls the paradox of happy peasants and miserable millionaires. Others have pointed out that some people with health problems that are generally considered indicators of poor wellbeing in fact report comparatively high levels of happiness/subjective satisfaction.
- d There are cultural variations in average happiness/satisfaction. South American countries tend to have higher averages on happiness and subjective satisfaction scores (and other indicators of subjective wellbeing) than other regions of the world and contrary to the general correlation between GDP per capita and wellbeing (Gallup/Healthways 2014).

People's subjective evaluation of their lives, in their different aspects, is clearly important. However, institutions and relationships are also important. Judging societies in terms of average happiness or satisfaction tends to place the emphasis on individuals and their responsibility for their own happiness rather than on social and institutional factors such as state economic and welfare provision. Happiness can become commodified and seen as something that the individual can 'buy' – for example by taking more exercise, going into therapy – rather than something produced by social structures and best tackled at the structural level. Where the outcome measure is privatised and the individual is accorded the responsibility for what are seen as private ills rather than social problems, a stability and inner conservatism can very easily develop which leads to problems being avoided or tolerated rather than solved. You can come to terms with problems by learning to live with them rather than trying to solve them, and 'inner peace' can be bought at the cost of outer stagnation.

Happiness, like GDP, can all too often be a distraction from the main business of government when adopted as an end of government rather than a means to good government. What we want from governments is not to be made happy or well but for the government to so regulate social life that it is possible for us to take control of our own happiness and wellbeing. The preconditions for exercising agency need to be met. The business of government is to ensure we have the conditions for living decent lives and then to leave us alone to live them in a decent society. (However, the full disengagement of government from the control of the governed is not an option, because the decent society is not a once-for-ever achievement but something that has to be maintained from year to year and even day to day.)

Wellbeing

A third approach uses the more rounded concepts of 'wellbeing' or 'quality of life', with a basket of indicators assessing whether individuals are flourishing and

the identification of the variables that influence them. Two main ways of operationalizing this approach are to construct indices or to present dashboards. Both can be made up of objective indicators, subjective indicators or a combination of both. This approach permits not just comparison of outcomes but advice on how to affect them. International agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD), the European Union and national governments are showing an increasing interest in measuring wellbeing to evaluate progress, often by means of composite indicators. GDP and market growth continue to be seen as important, however, and composite indexes often include them. The analyses which follow generally show wellbeing to be influenced by both objective and subjective factors, including material living standards, health, education, work and livelihood strategies, political voice and governance, social connections and relationships and economic, physical and psychological security.

While there may be a theoretical basis for any given indicator, this 'social indicators' research proceeds in large part by identifying empirically the variables which predict the desired end state (generally happiness, satisfaction, a range of legal 'freedoms' or economic growth) and then reasoning backwards to a post-hoc theorisation of why the variables which emerge as significant should be predictive. Sometimes when others take up an approach which has been developed and try to develop it further they take the indicators for granted, and the precise nature of the theory underlying their choice becomes lost in the mists of time. Without sound theory linking indicators to effects, intervention can be misguided or ineffective, because factors can be predictive which are not causal or even influential but are common outcomes of more fundamental characteristics or processes. There is also the risk that when the process of prediction is portrayed as politically neutral ('scientific'), its multivariate models can as easily be used to support neoliberal as welfarist positions. In other words, such composite indicators can easily be used to privatise and individualise both the responsibility and the blame rather than as a guide to how we might take collective responsibility for a solution. Such indicators are capable of sustaining a sociological argument and may be used to map the broad development and transformation of societies (e.g. UNDP's Human Development Index). However, although sociologists have been part of the movement developing quality-of-life measures, social indicators research has been dominated by psychologists and economists in recent years (Ferris 2004, Thin 2012) and has become profoundly individualised in its practical application.

What the research underlying this approach has facilitated is the development of an understanding of the factors that enable people to lead a good life, and while there is disagreement, as we have argued, about how best to judge whether people are leading a 'good life', there is considerable agreement about what is necessary for it. While the HDI and the MDGs specify the minimum that is necessary as a precondition, and the HDI summarises the extent to which it has been achieved in a single figure, others such as the OECD European Quality of Life Framework (OECD 2013) provide a comprehensive dashboard of domains that influence quality of life and a guide as to what a decent society must deliver, recognizing

that the sustainability of wellbeing over time requires preserving natural, human and social as well as economic capital.

Further, while multivariate measures can identify factors that are important on average in enabling people to lead a good life, they also present problems. First, like GDP, when used as measures of progress at country level they do not take account of inequalities *within* a country which may be not random but systematic, discriminating between identifiable fractions of the population. Second, although social indicators research has shown that some variables are drivers of happiness/subjective satisfaction consistently across time and space, the basis of the relationship is poorly justified. This means it is difficult to translate research into policy and modify the values of the drivers to improve wellbeing. This is at least partly because the indicators and indexes are at the level of individuals – they do not tell us much about how a society influences wellbeing. What we find out is the characteristics of those that are more happy/satisfied with their lives or less so, with recommendations for improvement generally being for things individuals can do for themselves or things that can be done for them *as individuals*.

Social quality and the decent society

Following the main line of sociological tradition, our aim in this book is to attempt to determine what makes for a decent *society*, both theoretically and practically. That is, we want concepts and instruments which will help us understand why some societies seem to be better places to live than others and can help governments to plan their countries' development in order to improve the life of individuals; theory and description are good, but practice and practical planning make them better.

We start from a position which is much influenced by the developmental economist Amartya Sen. Sen argues that life should be worthwhile and that this means the expansion of human capabilities so that people are empowered. His 'capability approach' considers what people can do and what real choices they have – what real opportunities are available to them. The focus is on 'being happy; achieving self-respect; taking part in the life of the community' (Sen 1993: 36) and on people being able to lead a life they have reason to value. It focuses on individual freedoms and rights and emphasises personal characteristics as potential barriers to and facilitators of developing capability sets (that is, of people's ability to make use of the available resources – material, institutional and cultural/ideological). Sen's capability approach is particularly salient for the promotion of human rights, which he sees as the outcome of collective agreement as to what should and should not be included (Sen 2009). However, he recognises that social norms and material circumstances as well as personal characteristics influence the ability of individuals to convert the available resources into capabilities.

The Human Development Index is an example of Sen's influence. The approach underlying it emphasises wellbeing and enlarging people's choices: living a long and healthy life, being educated and enjoying a decent standard of living. The index measures basic capabilities that are universally valued. Its emphasis is on

individuals, however, rather than the collective or the social, and it tends not to recognise the importance of collective action in social and economic development (Fukuda-Parr 2003). Sen has defended his work against the charge of ‘methodological individualism’ (Sen 2009), arguing that individuals are part of wider social groups that are themselves the products of wider social relations, and acknowledges the possibility of defining group capabilities. He can clearly be located in the critical social science tradition of interrogating the normative foundations of professional knowledge through public discussion and the promotion of social justice (Burawoy 2005). However, his approach does tend to remain focused on individuals and fails to develop an articulated understanding of the structural, institutional and cultural forces that facilitate or constrain social development. We need more if we are to devise a rounded and applicable framework for understanding how societies can be improved.

The conceptual framework for achieving this is provided by the Social Quality Model (Beck et al. 1997, 2001, van der Maesen and Walker 2012). This is a radically different approach from others we have discussed above, whether economic or happiness-based. It sees the social as central to quality of life and challenges the subordination of social welfare and welfare policies to the economy and economic policies. It rests on the premise that people are essentially social beings and that we are able to live our lives only through our relationship with others. It is structural and has a societal perspective with strong theoretical and ontological foundations; it shows a recognition of the interdependency of human beings and the ‘conditional’ or ‘foundational’ components of their experiences, including opportunities and contingencies. It links theory and measurement, in contrast to many of the measures of quality of life, satisfaction and wellbeing, which are individualistic, provide little or no rationale for a particular choice of indicators and lead all too easily to privatised solutions. In the Social Quality approach the social (collective) quality of a society is seen as more than the accumulation of the experiences and actions of its individual members. The model provides a framework in which to understand as well as measure the quality of a society and the welfare of those who live in it. It provides a framework for thinking about the goals of social development and a theorised basis for measuring social progress and the quality of society. It is also a policy instrument, acting as a guide to how societies can organise themselves to provide decent living conditions. Its touchstone is ‘the extent to which people are able to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of their communities under conditions which enhance their wellbeing and individual potential’ (Beck et al. 1997: 3). The model was developed to give an understanding of European societies (e.g. Beck et al. 1997, 2001), but the globalisation of social policy makes it more generally applicable. Its utility has been demonstrated in South Asia (e.g. Lin 2011, 2014), in Sub-Saharan Africa (Abbott et al. 2014) and in the European and central Asian states of the former Soviet Union (Abbott and Wallace 2010, 2012, Abbott et al. 2011).

We use the Social Quality Model as our starting point in determining the necessary conditions for a decent society – one that may be judged fit to live in. Its distinctive feature is that while most other approaches are concerned to rate societies

on what they are currently delivering – the *outcomes* of social policy – the Social Quality Model follows Sen in being more concerned with the *conditions* for action – what resources are available which make agency and social action possible and available and to what range of the country’s residents. The focus is on the extent to which the quality of social relations promotes both participation in social development and individual human growth and development. However, while Sen is concerned with individual achievement the Social Quality Approach is concerned with the social, and while Sen is concerned with changes in individuals the Social Quality Approach is concerned with the dynamic production of the social. What we become is the outcome of our interaction with others in a world of collective identities (e.g. family, community, school, workplace and nation) that are open and dynamic. The ‘social’ is located in the space created by the tension between the formal world of systems and the informal life-worlds of families and communities on the one hand and between societal development and biographical development on the other. In contrast to the quality-of-life approach, this is about the quality of the society rather than the quality of the individual’s life.

The Social Quality Model groups social processes into four areas, the ‘quadrants’ of Figure 1.1, each of which has a necessary contribution to make to a sustainably decent society. Their four outcome states are *Economic Security*, *Social Cohesion*, *Social Inclusion* and *Empowerment*. The two upper quadrants of the figure are conceptualised as more global and societal and the bottom two as more biographical and individual. The left-hand boxes are powered more by systems and social institutions, while those on the right are powered more by shared values, norms and expectations.

Economic Security is the role of material security as a threshold condition for social action and the extent to which income and the ‘social wage’ (pensions and assurance against ill health and unemployment, health services, education,

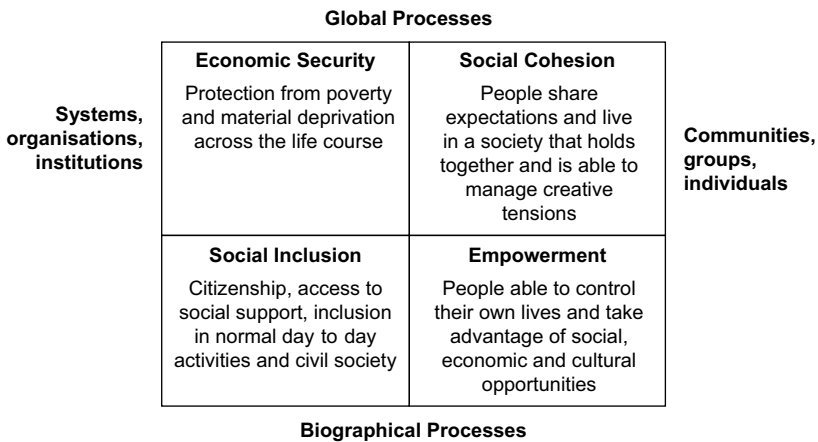


Figure 1.1 The Social Quality Model

infrastructure for daily living etc.) provide the conditions for economic security. Economic surplus is the basis for the free society and necessary for the abolition of poverty in developing countries. A minimum level is foundational for freedom of action: if all of life has to be spent looking for food, clothing, shelter and fuel, there is little time or energy left for undertaking other actions. What makes a society good is more than its economic provision, however. Moreover, the relationships are not all one way – other quadrants, and especially Empowerment, affect the working of the economy at both household and national levels, and adequacy of material resource is an aspect of Social Inclusion – being able to do what everyone expects to have the resources to do. Social Inclusion is also critical; all citizens irrespective of class, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation or other differentiating characteristics are equally entitled to economic security.

The central focus of Economic Security is managing risk and the creation of life chances. If economic survival is precarious, as it is for everyone at some stage of the life course, strategies have to be in place to deal with sudden shortfalls – due, for example, to ill health, old age, accidents and disasters, adverse climatic conditions and many other aspects of normal life – and resources have to be supplied *reliably*. The model does not stipulate how social welfare is to be provided; different societies are at different stages of development, and for the poorest nations the extended family or immediate community may well be the main source of welfare. However, we note that the societies currently seen as the most effective in terms of their residents' economic security are those (mostly in Scandinavia) where the state plays a large part in ensuring it, if only because the 'fair alternative' is that everyone has sufficient surplus resources to be able to deal with any conceivable emergency, and this requires a level of national wealth and a fairness of its distribution that few countries could claim. The creation of life chances is about the provision of tools and knowledge, the essential resources to enable individuals and communities to support themselves. Critical here are education and health services as well as employment services and opportunities.

Social Cohesion is the glue holding societies together: solidarity and shared norms and values, the extent to which individuals and groups of people share social relations, the extent to which groups whose interests may not coincide can tolerate each other and live with diversity (O'Connor 1998). In a cohesive society there is a sense of a shared responsibility. It is the foundation of social order (Jenson 1998), and in modern societies it is based on interdependency of social groups (Durkheim 1893). It is evidenced by the presence in a society of trust, norms of reciprocity, vibrant civil society and institutions of conflict management and by the absence of irreconcilable conflict between groups, whether based on economic inequalities or on other forms of social polarisation (Berger-Schmitt 2000, Scott 2009). It breaks down the social, cultural and economic barriers that divide societies and builds a shared sense of identity and belonging, a shared purpose. Trust in the generalised other and confidence in government and civic institutions, the basis of social cohesion, facilitates cooperation, gives

confidence in the motivations and actions of others and permits the anticipation of positive outcomes (Abbott et al. 2014). It is the foundation on which the acceptance of mutual obligations and reciprocity are built, enabling self-interest to be replaced by a commitment to promoting collective interests. This means that the affluent have to take some responsibility for the poor, but not as a gift or an act of personal charity but as a right and because that is the proper way to run things, implied by ‘the rules of the game’ and required in order to fulfil the principle of fairness in political and social life. (This is why experience has shown that welfare schemes are better administered by governments than left to the goodwill of affluent individuals.) Social Cohesion describes the process by which the decent society integrates different groups and interests at a structural level and how conflicts and cleavages are managed. Shared norms and expectations are essential as a necessary platform for a functioning economy and polity – not mechanical coincidence of interests but an organic ability to recognise the goals of others as coherent and understand how and why they express themselves in different terms from those used by one’s in-group. Where there is social cohesion, all groups recognise and subscribe to ‘the rules of the game’ and regard the ways in which disagreement and conflict of interest are managed as fair, to them and to their opponents – and they recognise the necessity that the rules *should* be fair to both parties.

Social Inclusion is membership of a society – citizenship as the basis for the possibility of participating in the social, economic, political and cultural institutions of a society (Levitas 1998). This requires the dismantling of institutional obstacles to participatory parity, whether economic, social or political: ensuring that people have sufficient economic resources to participate in the taken-for-granted activities and are recognised as fundamentally equal members of society and that everyone’s interests are represented in the decision-making process over redistribution and recognition (Fraser 2009). It is based on the recognition of rights and responsibilities, accountability and judgement and of the fundamental equality of all and on the provision of life chances for all members of society to participate in the activities of society affectively and effectively (Abrams et al. 2004, Sen 2000). It enables individuals to claim and exercise their human rights and use their capabilities to achieve goals (objective wellbeing) through society’s opportunity structures (Sen 1999).

Inclusion is a multidimensional, complex and essentially social process that provides the basis for agency and social action. It is through social relationships that our actions are given meaning and we develop a sense of social identity, belonging and personhood, social esteem, mutual dependency, mutual reciprocity and working together for common purpose (Baumeister and Leary 1995, Sevenhuijsen 1998, 2000). It enables us to articulate and defend our needs and judge if they are being met. It is about more than money, although lack of material resources is one form of social exclusion (Bowring 2000, Giddens 1994). There are three levels of inclusion: the micro – interpersonal integration in close-knit/informal networks of family, friends and neighbours; the meso – civic integration through membership of formal organisations which build trust, shared norms,

solidarity and loyalty and permit coordinated action; and the macro – social, economic and political integration through citizenship rights. To be included we must:

- be visible – to be recognised as having a right to be included;
- be considered – have our concerns and needs taken into account;
- have access to institutions that respect difference;
- have the necessary resources (capabilities) to participate;
- have a voice, the ability to express our preferences and be heard; and
- have agency, the ability to claim our right to participate.

Empowerment is the provision of what is necessary for people to exercise agency and act autonomously; it increases the range of human choices by building people's capabilities to achieve the better life they desire. We are using 'power' in the sense of building capacity that is empowering for individuals and communities (Friedman 1996). Empowerment is a process of awareness raising and capacity building and enables greater participation, greater decision-making power and greater control and transformative action. It encompasses the control over their own lives that people have and the extent to which they perceive themselves as having it – the extent to which they construe social life as giving scope for agency. It thus includes personal, social and political dimensions (Friedman 1992). The decent society, as Sen (2004a) would argue, provides for an *increasing* range of human choice. Human dignity is relevant here, as is the extent to which people and groups have access to and are integrated into the different institutions and social relations of everyday life and the extent to which personal capabilities are enhanced by social relations. This quadrant covers provision of access to the objective conditions for empowerment – for example health and education/skills as human capital – and to voice and agency. Through Empowerment the decent society gives the possibility of capability and the opportunity to exercise it.

The four quadrants form a whole, with each of the four conditions providing the basis for the others in complex and varied ways (Herrmann et al. 2012). Social Inclusion and Social Empowerment are essential for the operation of a Decent Society, while Economic Security and Social Cohesion provide the structural base. Empowerment is essential if people are to act and for them to be socially included (Sen 2000), while Social Inclusion, through the building of social capital, supports the development of Social Cohesion (Abbott et al. 2014). Economic Security provides the material resources that support Empowerment and Social Inclusion. Social Cohesion, through contributing to sustainable economic development, provides an essential foundation for Economic Security (Dulal and Foa 2011, Hamilton and Ruta 2006, Knack and Keefer 1997).

Conditions for the decent society

While our exposition is informed by this Social Quality Model, however, we have interpreted and developed it for our own purposes. The way in which we use and operationalise it in this book is based on our interpretation and development of the

model. Our main focus in this book is on the conditional factors – the basic building blocks for a decent society – and this is what distinguishes the Decent Society Model from similar approaches which focus mainly on predicting outcomes. We are concerned not so much to evaluate societies' current performance as to look at their sociological infrastructure and see to what extent the four functions we have identified are in place – the extent to which the society offers the conditions for economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion and empowerment. In some areas we necessarily use outcome measures and even measures of attitude or satisfaction – but this is because the conditions cannot be distinguished from the fulfilment of them or, more simply, because the outcome measure is the best indicator we can find given a paucity of statistics. We aim to evaluate the foundational shape of societies in a normative way: to what extent are they capable of delivering social justice and human dignity, to what extent are they conducive to solidarity, to what extent are there structures in place for treating all residents as of equal value?

Sociology has always been concerned with what makes a decent society for all, and sociological research is concerned with understanding the causes of social problems and the ways in which they can be ameliorated. Sociology mostly rejects the argument that individuals are individually responsible for their personal troubles. Marx, for example, not only points to the importance of economic circumstances but uncovers the corrosive impact of economic inequalities, while Durkheim highlighted the importance of the social cohesion brought about by interdependence in societies with high levels of social differentiation. More recently Burawoy (2005) has reminded us of the importance of defending civil society and using sociological knowledge to advance the wellbeing of ordinary people.

The quadrants of the Decent Society Model, as in the Social Quality Model which gave rise to it, are not additive but interactive. Each factor (quadrant score) is an outcome of the others and influences others. The relationships are often not simple and linear – in a dynamic model relationships mutate – and they are often different in different countries. The interplay of the biographical (agency) and institutional development (structure) influences the nature of the constitutional and conditional factors and permits changes in them over time to be examined (Archer 1995). In other words social structures are relational and emergent and have irreducible properties capable of exercising causal power, but they are shaped and reshaped by the interplay between their constituent parts and persons. The four conditional factors are analytically distinguishable, but in practice they are not separate, free-standing 'things' but devices for understanding different kinds of social process which have and constitute different foundational properties and often have their effects in different ways.

In the next four chapters we shall examine each of the model's quadrants in turn, confirming the social processes it covers and identifying the elements of social relations that may fulfil its functions. After that, Chapter 6 explores Social Quality research carried out over twenty-five years in the former Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan Africa, exploring relationships between causal/influential variables

generally with regard to their relationship with people's satisfaction, which has been influential in developing the Decent Society Model. Of particular interest are the ways in which countries with similar recent histories differ in what affects satisfaction and the relative importance of different quadrants under different circumstances and in different sociopolitical regimes.

To date there has been little research that has operationalised the Social Quality Model. The European team that developed the model have focused on developing the indicators (van der Maesen and Walker 2012). Chapter 7 describes the trial construction of an Index of Decent Societies as the sum of quadrant scores which are themselves calculated to reflect performance on indicators grouped into domains on the basis of social functioning. This is not a rigorous factor-analytic exercise, and the selection of indicators is driven by conceptual patterns, not patterns in the data. The only sense in which the index is data driven is that we cannot use what is not collected worldwide and available in the statistical literature. (Some promising indicators have had to be discarded, for example, because there is no point in including variables unless their values are known for a reasonably large number of countries, as countries with missing values cannot be scored and so drop out of the analysis.) The selection of variables and their interpretation follows the lines of discussion laid out in Chapters 2 through 5 and is theory-driven rather than empirically determined. The intent has been to try for an overall indicator and, more important, subscores which demonstrate where a country is delivering the conditions for decent living and where it may be falling short. No particular type of political regime is favoured *a priori* – all countries are developing, and not all develop equally and at the same pace in all four quadrants – but it is assumed that the purpose of government *is* to deliver the decent society.

Chapter 8 offers some small-scale analyses of the resultant data, to develop a method for suggesting a *point d'appuie* for social intervention. Of more interest than overall index scores will be quadrant scores (e.g. a country's unexpectedly good or bad performance on Empowerment or Social Cohesion), drilling down into subdomains (e.g. trust or community support or community activism or political involvement) and, if need be, to the level of individual indicators. The chapter is intended to illustrate how this general approach can be used to inform and direct the development of good governance and socioeconomic planning. Finally, Chapter 9 summarises the main lines of the model and the arguments of the book and faces forward to suggest what needs doing next.

2 Economic security

Resources for survival

Economic Security, the first quadrant of the Social Quality diagram, involves there being sufficient resources for current survival (and a surplus, for realising capabilities when survival is ensured) and the assurance that there will be enough in the future to cover risks – emergencies such as famines, epidemics, loss of work and medical expenses and life-stage financial problems such as marriage, childbirth, the education of children and old age. At the level of the nation state, ensuring economic security for all is more about rectifying the maldistribution of resources, both within and between countries, than a lack of resources *per se*. Countries which have the potential for all their inhabitants to be quite rich may not ensure that the available resources are distributed to all, while countries which are relatively poor may implement pro-poor and/or redistributive policies which reduce inequalities. Worldwide there is sufficient wealth to provide economic security for all, but it is very unequally distributed among countries and indeed among continents; Europe and North America are rich in world terms, and Africa and much of Asia are poor. In 2015 1 per cent of the world's population owned 50 per cent of the world's wealth, with the richest 85 individuals having the same amount of wealth as 50 per cent of the world's population; in Britain the richest 100 people own the same wealth as 30 per cent of the remaining households (Elliott and Pilkington 2015), who in turn own more than the national income of some of the smallest nations. Poverty could be abolished, within and among countries, by the redistribution of the world's resources.

However, while economic security is a concept that makes best sense at the level of the individual or the household, for building a decent society the overall wealth of a country is also important; these are the resources with which a government can work to ensure a decent life for the country's residents. While high levels of national wealth are not *essential* for the decent society – some countries manage remarkably well with what little they have – there can be no doubt that economic surplus makes it much easier for a government to provide the conditions for a decent life. The income of the Scandinavian countries, for example, makes a welfare system funded out of general taxation feasible, while in the poorer countries it is necessary to provide welfare through volunteer labour and/or

compulsory savings or else to leave people to the insecurity of paying for welfare out of their own savings and currently available funds or those of their families.

There are four main elements to economic security:

- current resource sufficiency at the level of the household or individual,
- the ability to protect against future risks such as loss of employment, long-term sickness and old age and life-stage expenses such as household formation, childbirth and education,
- the amount of the national income, as the resources available to government, and
- the security of the national income and the risk of falling into debt – countries as well as households have to have the resources to be able to withstand shocks and emergencies.

This chapter will not be much concerned with the affluence or poverty of households and individuals, discussed under ‘Social Inclusion’ in Chapter 4; our focus here is on the conditions and opportunities that a society can offer its residents rather than the residents’ immediate experiences. We shall be concerned with the economic situation of countries – the resources with which they have to work. We shall consider food security here, however, as an important aspect of economic security for individuals and households, and also the extent to which individual lack of affluence may be offset by social and communal provision, generally managed by the government. This ‘social wage’

reflects the recognition that living standards depend not just on the purchasing power of income . . . but also on the benefits provided by government social programs. To take account of taxation . . . without at the same time adding back in the value of the benefits financed by that revenue is both misleading and likely to produce a biased account of how governments influence the well-being of citizens.

(Saunders 1994: 159)

The concept has been used to explain the high levels of satisfaction with Scandinavian political regimes despite high taxation and to identify poor countries which manage nonetheless to achieve elements of the decent society for their residents.

The wealth of nations

At its root economic security is about survival with confidence; it is about having sufficient resources to live on in the present and confidence that this will be possible in the future. In general people with higher incomes face fewer challenges and enjoy better life chances, generally living longer, more fulfilling and healthier lives (Hall and Lamont 2009) – they enjoy a more decent lifestyle. Economic security or the lack of it becomes part of the ‘structure of expectation’; a decent life involves planning for the future (and for the children’s future), and without

confidence in the present and the economic future there can be no rational planning, whether at the national level or the level of households and individuals.

As the recent events in the Eurozone have demonstrated, whole countries as well as households can be economically insecure, and this can have a devastating impact on the security of their citizens; the economic security of a significant proportion of the Greek population is currently threatened by a crisis at the time of writing. Even in the richer countries, and certainly in the poorer ones, economic security is undermined by government indebtedness, a large trade deficit and/or high dependency on development assistance, and this threatens the economic security of their inhabitants. Thus individual security is linked in most cases to the economic security of the nation.

The international community has set the minimum income for basic economic security at \$1.25 ppp per day, although there is much debate about whether this is adequate. The Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty, defined in this way, has been met overall (United Nations 2015), but this still leaves 1.2 billion people in poverty worldwide and more than 840 million people undernourished (and 99 million of them are children). Many developing countries set an 'extreme poverty line' of their own, lower than \$1.25 per day, as the amount necessary to provide essential food, generally measured in calories without any consideration of other factors. This kind of national poverty line is certainly not enough to provide economic security; even \$2 a day would be insufficient to deal with episodic emergencies (health, accidents, unemployment, maternity), to pay for children's schooling where this is necessary, to deal with health emergencies or to provide for old age. Given the extent of inequality within countries that is outlined earlier (see also Sayer 2015, Therborn 2013), an average across the population of \$2 per day or even \$20 per day means a very large proportion of the population who are economically insecure in the sense of not having the means to pay for their own needs from their own pockets.

In Europe the poverty line is generally set at 60 per cent of median income – a relative measure, unlike the measures generally used for developing countries – so the level of the poverty line increases as average incomes increase. This approach is aimed at social status on the one hand and the ability to participate and be included in the society on the other, and we shall deal with it further in Chapter 4. We should note here, however, that talking in terms of relative poverty conceals the fact that even in developed countries there are people who experience poverty in absolute terms.

The social wage

Beyond *sufficiency* of income is the issue of income *security*. This has two main aspects: the ability to cope with unexpected/unplanned shocks such as unemployment and illness and the ability to make provision for income needs across the life course. Ensuring income security can be seen as a private matter, with individuals responsible for making their own provision through saving, accumulation of wealth and/or insurance. Alternatively it can be seen as a collective responsibility,

with the state redistributing income to enable citizens to cope with shocks and ensure income sufficiency across the life course – which amounts to the population as a whole taking responsibility to see that no one starves and that all have basic access to necessities. In practice, even in the most advanced welfare state there is a combination of collective and private provision, with the state generally ensuring that citizens do not fall below a certain minimum level.

Social Quality is about mutual concern and a culture of respect and support as well as economic sufficiency. Nevertheless the two are entwined; to have insufficient resources to participate in the everyday life of one's society almost inevitably results in a loss of respect and the potential for social exclusion. Conversely, economic security is about more than poverty and material deprivation. Article 25 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948) stated that

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood beyond his control.

This sounds very patriarchal as written, but Article 2 of the Declaration makes clear that rights are to be equally guaranteed to both men and women, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations 1979) and a long series of other specific conventions have emphasized that human rights are not affected by gender, sexual preference, handicap and disability, ethnic origin or any other demographic characteristic that might be used as a basis for discrimination.

It is paid employment, by and large, that is primarily responsible for economic security, both directly and as the source of taxation that funds the social wage. Employment is about more than the income, however – it is also a source of identity and social relations, for which reason it will have a role to play in Chapter 4, where we discuss Social Inclusion. Anne Oakley's ground-breaking 1974 work on housewives shows that the discontent of 'nonworking' wives was not just because their work was demanding and never-ending and often went unrecognized and unrewarded but also because of the conditions of social isolation under which it was undertaken. The International Labour Office has been at the forefront of debates about the basic security provided by work and has highlighted seven areas of labour-related security (ILO 2004) which are required for work to be called 'decent':

- Labour market security: macro-economic policies ensuring adequate employment and work opportunities.
- Employment security: employment stability and protection against arbitrary dismissal.
- Work security: occupational health and safety providing protection against work-related illness and accidents as well as a reduction in stress at work and regulated limits on working time.

- Job security: the opportunity to develop a sense of having an occupation or career.
- Skill reproduction security: opportunities to gain and retain skills through lifelong learning as well as apprenticeships and employment training.
- Income security: adequate remuneration.
- Representation security: protection of collective voice through trade unions, employer associations and other representative bodies.

Economic empowerment for women – having control over the product of their labour – has been seen as particularly important in widening choices and giving women greater control over their lives. This is a human rights issue, as women’s economic dependency has often forced them to choose between dependency on men, even if men abuse them and their children, or poverty and in some societies social exclusion. However, we need to be careful that we do not assume that the economic empowerment of women automatically empowers them more generally. Nor should we lose sight of the double burden that productive and reproductive labour place on women, who work on average significantly longer hours than men across the globe. While some countries deal more equitably with women than others, none has achieved full equality.

We are using gender here as one illustration of discrimination, in the workplace and elsewhere. Job security is in fact a growing problem for both genders in developed countries as well as elsewhere, with the growth of what Standing (2011) has called ‘the precariat’. Employers have argued that to compete in globalized markets they need a flexible labour force; they need wage flexibility, employment flexibility, job flexibility and status flexibility. Without this flexibility the costs of production will be driven up, they argue, and the economy will not be competitive on world markets. As a consequence there has been a decline in long-term, fixed-hour jobs with established routes of advancement subject to unionisation and collective agreements. This not only creates income and job insecurity but makes it more difficult for workers to claim their right to benefits such as sick pay, maternity leave and pensions or even paid holidays. The precariat (and indeed other workers even in developed countries) are not only facing insecurity but the loss of cultural, civil, social and political rights built up over generations. At the same time, cuts in welfare state benefits and more onerous entitlement rules make it increasingly difficult for working-age people to maintain a decent standard of living when they are un-(or under-)employed. Meanwhile, climate change and the drive to commercialize and intensify agricultural production in many developing countries endangers the livelihoods of peasant farmers with no alternative means of making a living.

Social protection policies which reduce poverty and inequality, redistributing resources across the life course as well as between social groups (see ILO 2014), play a critical role in realising the human right to economic security. For twenty years the United Nations has included deprivation of healthcare and education in its specifications of the constituents of poverty, both absolute and overall (United Nations 1995).

Health is the basic resource, without which neither the economy nor the polity can function. We discuss the conditions for good health in Chapter 5, as an aspect of Empowerment, but the extent to which health provision is funded by government is also an aspect of the social wage. The importance of health for production and therefore for national income was well understood by the industrialists of the nineteenth century, and the developed world has been making public and central provision for health for well over two centuries. Curative medicine is mostly available in the developed world (at little or no cost in many countries providing the cheaper varieties of medication are prescribed), preventive medicine such as immunisation on the one hand and control of hygiene and safety at work on the other have become the norm, and all this is underpinned by the most important provision of all, the public health infrastructure which provides clean water and disposes of sanitation products safely. Since the middle of the twentieth century or often earlier where colonial regimes started the process, the developing world has also been investing tax and aid revenue to ensure and improve the health of the population. Where the monetary base is not sufficient for what is needed a 'tax' is often levied in the form of labour and/or volunteers are mobilized to carry out the work which the government's revenues cannot cover. (We call this a tax because it covers public works in just the same way as the revenue from taxation might have covered them; the poorest people pay little or no tax, but they have labour which they can contribute to the public welfare.)

After some diminution of health inequalities, the gap between richer and poorer countries has widened again in the last thirty years (Therborn 2013). The AIDS epidemic was one of the factors responsible for the widening gap, hitting Sub-Saharan Africa particularly hard. Endemic civil war and genocide in Africa, Asia and the Balkans also played a part by destroying health facilities and distribution networks and killing medical and nursing personnel. The collapse in around 1990 of the former Soviet Union and its extensive welfare networks brought down life expectancy (and increased morbidity) in Eastern European and Central Asian countries. Within countries, as Therborn points out, class differences in health persist, and even the Scandinavian welfare states are unable to overcome them (Marmot 2015).

Education is the one empowering resource that Amartya Sen picks out as being of universal importance (e.g. in his 2003 speech to the Commonwealth Education Conference in Edinburgh). To be empowered, in a world dominated by the printed and recorded word (perhaps digitally transmitted), it is necessary to be able to read, and literacy is one important resource which states can help instil, doing away with "this basic deprivation – this extreme insecurity – which continues to ruin the lives of a large part of the global population" (Sen 2003). Basic education empowers by giving access to information about what is possible and ideas on how to achieve it, and through Internet use it permits communication over a distance and between the developed and the developing world, overcoming some of the problems of poor education in some countries' pasts. Educational credentials are increasingly acting as the gateways to good employment, not least because they are seen in many places as relatively immune to patronage, nepotism and

other forms of corruption. Education gives access to knowledge of legal rights and to participation in political discussion, and it consistently shows a relationship with both the state of developing economies and the level of health in a country.

Basic education is not just an arrangement for training to develop skills (important as that is), it is also a recognition of the nature of the world, with its diversity and richness, and an appreciation of the importance of freedom and reasoning as well as friendship. The need for that understanding – that vision – has never been stronger.

(Sen 2003)

The Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948) also identified education as a right and insisted that universal primary school education should be free, and the importance given to it is signalled by the fact that this is the only welfare provision mentioned in the whole body of UN regulation which is required to be free to all.

There has indeed been a strong move towards equality of access to education worldwide since the 1980s (Goesling and Baker 2008) and a decline in inequalities *within* countries (Thomas et al. 2000, UNDP 2007). Access does not necessarily entail quality, however, and education in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is demonstrably of a lower standard, mostly, than what is available in the developed West and North. Further, liberalisation complicates the picture, with the availability of ‘education for money’ in most countries. The general experience is that private education is superior at primary and probably secondary level but that at post-secondary level it tends to be inferior to the highly selective public provision (Therborn 2013). Nonetheless, state-provided education is something of a leveller of inequalities in the long term and is something which parents across the world want for their children; education is regarded, in most countries, as an expense as inevitable as the cost of childbirth or funerals. Indeed, those who have no land to leave their children and no accumulated money to pass on may think of education as the only thing they have to bequeath.

Again we shall discuss the conditions for education more thoroughly in Chapter 5, under Empowerment, but its central funding and regulation is a part of the social wage and so also belongs here.

Old age is another foreseeable period of potential economic instability which everyone will face who does not die young; it is to some extent ‘feminized’ in that women tend to live considerably longer than men. In some cultures age is popularly equated with wisdom and in others with loss of mental powers – age is partly a social construction in its consequences – and in countries across the world a few very old men have continued in positions of power as presidents or members of praesidia or cabinets or in senior legal positions. For most, however, employability ceases at some arbitrary age, and if the state does not make compulsory provision, and if they have not managed to accumulate resources (perhaps savings, but more often land or property which generates an income), then they will be destitute or dependent on their families or the church. Even in the developed

world, where such state provision is the norm, it often needs to be supplemented; there have been times in the UK where the level of specific old-age provision has left some old people below the poverty line and has had to be supplemented by other poverty-related assistance, and around 60 per cent of current pensioners are dependent for their decent lifestyle on additional occupational pensions (Pensions Policy Institute 2012). About 16 per cent of older Europeans are in poverty according to Inequality Watch (2012).

That the state ensures one will not starve when unemployed or retired (and even provides some of the wider requirements for a decent life), that there is affordable housing, affordable healthcare, affordable maternity and perhaps some income replacement for mothers of very young children, affordable training and education when needed (including education for one's children, a great expense and divisive if it has to be covered privately and at a time generally before the peak of one's earning power) – all of this has come to be expected in the developed North and West and is generally considered worth the extra taxation in those countries that excel at providing it. Those of us who live in developed countries have mostly come to expect such provision and take it for granted, though there may still be social divisions in the extent to which one can afford to supplement it.

In 2014 only 27 per cent of the world's population had access to comprehensive social security systems as defined by the ILO (nd) – children and family benefits, protection for workers through unemployment, industrial injury, sickness and maternity benefits, old age pensions and universal health coverage. The financial economic crisis has resulted in fiscal consolidation and cutbacks in social protection provision; in 2014 the ILO estimated that 122 countries reduced their expenditure, 82 of them developing countries. Many high-income countries are reducing the range of social protection benefits and tightening eligibility criteria for public services, at a time when there are high levels of unemployment, lower wages, more precarious employment and higher taxes. In the European Union, for example, the social model built up since the end of the Second World War is being eroded, and 123 million people live in poverty; this is 24 per cent of the population. However, at the same time some middle-income countries such as China and Brazil are expanding their systems and some low-income countries are putting social protection floors in place, albeit with very low benefit levels.

Redistribution and ensuring the financial security (and more general wellbeing) of all citizens is about social justice and the decent society. The welfare state was built on the idea of mutual responsibility (Jordan 2008). The present crisis is not just economic but multidimensional, encompassing ecology, society and politics, which are deeply intertwined (Fraser 2014). Responses to the financial crisis jeopardise economic security in the present and into the future, not just by cutting benefits but by stigmatizing benefit recipients, who are frequently portrayed as responsible for their own plight, a political tactic which imperils social cohesion and inclusion. Slashing social spending to reduce budget deficits also makes it increasingly difficult for families and communities to care for their members and maintain social bonds, undermining social reproduction.

The beneficiaries of the welfare state are actually not just the poor and the marginalized but the majority of the population; the middle classes often benefit more than those in relative poverty (Hills 2015, Piketty 2013), particularly if entitlement is at all tied to contributions made as a percentage of salary. This is particularly true of benefits which represent redistribution over the life course rather than between individuals, such as pensions, healthcare and education. As Piketty points out, modern redistribution is not about explicitly taking income from the rich to give to the poor, or not only about this, but is built around the logic of rights and a principle of equal access to public services (mainly education and health) and replacement incomes. State provision in the form of compulsory insurance funded out of taxation is what deals with life-stage economic crises such as family formation and maternity on the one hand (followed potentially by the cost of education) and survival in old age once productive labour no longer brings in an income on the other. It also deals with the unexpected – ill health and structural unemployment, for example. It is not essential that the state actually funds this insurance, but the state does need to regulate it in the interests of all. In many countries, for example, the state does not provide insurance for car drivers, but it does ensure they have bought insurance against the cost of injuries to person and property for which they may be held responsible as a result of driving.

There is also an important gender dimension to economic security. While the European Social Model may embody the concept of the individualized worker and many developing countries may promote women's economic empowerment, married women across the globe continue to be dependent on their male partners, especially while they have children. Women perform long hours of unremunerated and often unrecognized reproductive labour, and when they have employment they generally still earn less than their male partners. While neoliberals argue that individuals should not become dependent on others and are critical of welfare state dependency, their approach still promotes women's dependency on men (Abbott and Wallace 1992, Gordon 2012).

The functions of economic security

Economic Security is clearly foundational for the development of the other quadrants. Where there is extreme poverty and all one's waking hours need to be devoted to worrying about the next day's food and/or impending emergencies, little else can be achieved, and the decent life is ruled out. In the decent society, citizens and residents have enough for basic subsistence, including shelter and clothing, enough to cover what are considered inescapable expenses, and enough for emergencies such as failed harvests, damage to the house, physical disasters, sickness and nonvoluntary unemployment. There must also be provision for life-course events as foreseeable expenses concentrated in one portion of the life course, either funded out of savings or assured by the state – family formation, maternity and childbirth, the costs of raising children, including education, and old age.

Beyond this, economic security is essential for social inclusion and exercising citizenship rights; people can be impeded from full participation by economic structures that they need to interact with others as peers. There is clear evidence that redistributive welfare states reduce poverty and provide for a measure of socioeconomic security (Joumard et al. 2012). Redistribution can take the form of transfers across the life course, equalizing the distribution of resources, or from the 'rich' to the 'poor' alleviating poverty or from men to women to help facilitate the maintenance of family life and the raising of children. The OECD analysis of income poverty in industrialized countries in the 1990s, for example, showed that redistributive taxes and transfers in European countries such as the UK, Sweden, France and Belgium reduced pre-transfer poverty levels compared with the United States (Forster and Pellizzari 2000), while other analysis has shown that income inequality is 25 per cent lower after taxes and transfers, and poverty levels are 55 per cent lower in OECD countries (Joumard et al. 2012). Three quarters of this is due to transfers rather than redistribution. In China, urbanisation and the breakdown of traditional family systems of social support have resulted in welfare policy developments (Abbott et al. 2015e), and in Rwanda, one of the poorest countries in the world, there is still a social protection policy providing for the waiving of fees for community health insurance for the poorest households and income maintenance for the very poorest who are unable to work.

Research has demonstrated the negative impact of income instability and perceived insecurity on wellbeing, including poorer physical and mental health and an erosion of social capital (e.g. Helliwell and Huang 2011, Osberg and Sharpe 2014, Otterbach and Sousa-Poza 2014, Rohde et al. 2014). The hazards of economic life differ depending on age, gender, education and socioeconomic background as well as the generosity and effectiveness of national welfare systems. The impact also depends on the severity of the economic shock and the duration and the level of stigma involved in the acceptance of welfare benefits. Sologon and colleagues (2014) point out, however, that it is not just welfare policies that are important in mitigating economic insecurity – structural policies such as labour market and product market regulations are also important.

For the very poor, as we have said, the economic sphere is a survival matter, and it tends to dominate their thinking and actions to the detriment of everything else. However, Economic Security is about more than protecting the poor and the vulnerable; it is distinct from economic inequality. It is a part of the normative structure of the society – the foundations for believing that the world is predictable. It is about confidence in keeping one's job, about being able to make ends meet – the confidence that income will be maintained in the future and that it will be possible to meet unplanned essential expenditure. It is about protection in the face of unemployment, marital breakdown and retirement and old age. In other words, economic stability is a part of confidence or trust – belief in the dependability of the social world and faith that there is some point in planning for the future. As such it becomes a key element in Social Cohesion, as we shall see.

During the world economic crisis, increasing levels of unemployment, underemployment and precarious employment have certainly resulted in an increase

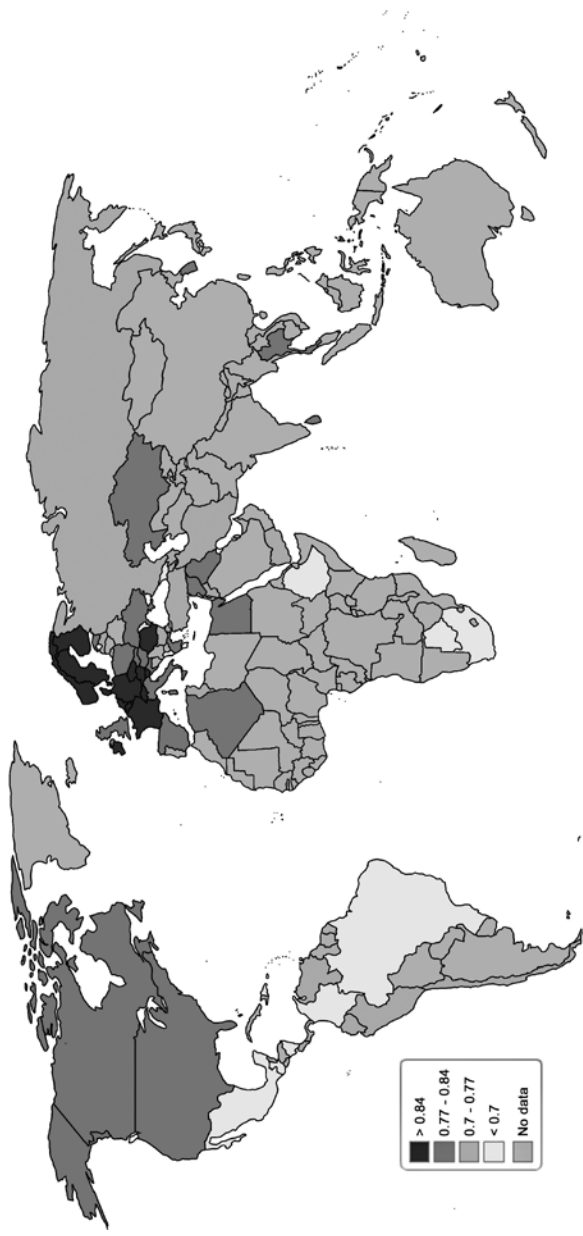


Figure 2.1 World map: Index of Economic Security

Source: Data from Osberg and Sharpe 2014.

in economic insecurity. Osberg and Sharp (2014) found that insecurity was notably higher in the US than in Canada, Denmark or Germany. It was not a simple marker of risk of unemployment but concerned the coverage of other risks such as the financial cost of illness, of single parenthood and of widowhood. Hacker and colleagues (2014) have demonstrated that economic insecurity rose substantially in the US between 1969 and 2010, with especially sharp increases following the economic crisis. It is much higher among people with limited education, ethnic minorities, households with dependent children and especially lone-parent households, older people and younger workers, but in the recent recession economic insecurity has affected US citizens across educational, age, household type and race lines. On average, for example, 25.8 per cent of African Americans and 26 per cent of Hispanics experienced losses in available income across the period of a quarter or more and lacked adequate financial resources to cushion these declines. Using a modest but adequate standard-of-living threshold and assuming older people were in good health, Mutchler and colleagues (2015) estimated that around 50 per cent of US citizens aged 65 or over and living alone were economically insecure, a much higher level of hardship than is suggested by the poverty threshold. Hardship was found to be especially high among the oldest, women, minorities, those with least education and those not in paid employment.

Osberg and Sharpe (2014) extend their analysis to developing countries. Using an Index of Economic Security that covered protection against the effects of unemployment, sickness, widowhood and old age for seventy countries, both developed and developing, they have shown that economic insecurity is a problem across the globe (Figure 2.1). The highest ranked country of the seventy in terms of economic security is Denmark, with a score of 0.915, and the lowest is South Africa, with a score of 0.34. The highest-ranking countries are mainly the welfare states of Western Europe, along with the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Limitations of data made it impossible for the authors to calculate scores for the poorest countries, but they argue that what is available suggests that they offer citizens even less economic security than South Africa and Botswana, which are better off than other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The sustainability of economic security

The sustainability of economic security rests on three pillars – the environmental/ecological, the economic and the social (OECD 2001). Debates about it have been dominated by the trade-off between the environmental and the economic in the context of how to address the impact of climate change. Concerns have also been raised by neoliberal critics about the economic sustainability of welfare systems, given neoliberalism's emphasis on free markets and trade liberalisation as the engines of growth and its emphasis on keeping the role of the state to a minimum. One of the key drivers of the reform of welfare systems is the extent of sociodemographic change and the concern about the costs of supporting an ageing population. While least developed countries have yet to benefit from the 'demographic bonus' (where a country can benefit from a declining dependent population as the

birth rate drops and the elderly dependent population is small), most middle- and high-income countries now have an increasing dependent population because of the increase in the proportion who are now elderly.

Missing from these European and North American debates are concerns about social justice and recognition that the economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability are embedded in social relations. It is often the poor and the vulnerable that have to take the brunt of welfare reforms, seeing benefits cut and more and more restrictive conditions placed on them. Stricter and stricter tests have been imposed on those claiming disability benefits, for example, with people on occasion denied benefits who are clearly not fit for work. The same is true of development aid to poorer countries, with conditions about how countries shall be administered, what their political systems shall be and even who their preferred trading partners shall be imposed explicitly or more often implicitly on the provision of assistance.

In the twentieth century, debates about economic security centred around three competing ideologies: liberalism, state socialism and the welfare state. While liberalism prioritises the freedom of the individual and the market and sees individuals as responsible for their own welfare, both state socialism and the welfare state prioritise social justice and collective responsibility for welfare. Most industrialized countries, especially western and northern European ones, developed welfare states to ameliorate the harmful effects of capitalism and markets. Eastern European countries and China, with some other Asian and African countries, developed communist systems with a guarantee of at least a minimum level of socioeconomic security for life. With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s there is now little alternative to capitalism, and the debate is between social democracy/welfare states and neoliberalism (Crouch 2013). However, the political and economic elites in most countries around the world remain committed to neoliberal policies that encourage affluent individuals and international corporations to invest in the country rather than relocating to a country with lower taxes but which threaten the basic economic security of most of the population. While citizens are expected to live with austerity, controlled wages, unfavourable working conditions and reductions in welfare benefits in real terms, the rich are getting visibly richer. At the same time corporations and firms are benefitting from tax exemptions and incentives or paying their tax in the more favourable tax regime of another country, and therefore they are not contributing to the costs of maintaining and investing in public infrastructure in the countries where they are operating. Justice would not appear to be being served by current practice, however defensible its theory might be.

The rise of neoliberalism since the 1980s, economic globalisation which has increased inequalities and the fragmentation of the labour market all pose threats to economic security globally, not just in the industrialized nations. The global financial crisis represented and continues to represent a grave threat to economic security across the globe. Commodity speculation resulted in a significant rise in food prices which, combined with climate change, has had a significant impact on food security in the poorest countries. While the rise in food prices has moderated,

nevertheless one in eight people go to bed hungry according to ActionAid, and 842 million people were living in hunger in 2014. Food security and food price volatility are exacerbated by climate change, and responses to this include investment in biofuels, which serve to exacerbate the situation by causing volatility in the price of grains and creating the conditions for the transfer of land otherwise productive for feeding the population to commercial agriculture for fuel production (ActionAid nd). Neoliberalism threatens economic and social rights because it equates justice and liberty with freedom from intentional malice. Furthermore, it sees economic growth as an end in itself. Its exponents argue that although the operation of the market may bring about a lack of economic security, this is not an injustice because no one intended it to happen. Redistributive policies that ensure economic security, on the other hand, would reduce freedom and liberty because they are based on bureaucratic decisions made by the state (see von Hayek 1985). Social and economic rights, neoliberals argue, are ‘positive’ rights – freedom *to* rather than freedom *from* – and require a right to resources which would put an unrealistic duty on the state. What such thinkers defend are civil and political rights – freedom *from*.

What are the alternatives to neoliberalism? Is it possible to ensure citizens’ economic security? As we have already discussed, the response to arguments for economic growth to be the main or only measurement of progress has been the advocacy of a broader range of measures of quality of life and wellbeing. One powerful argument for this has been the Easterlin Paradox, that after a certain level of GDP average happiness does not increase. However, without economic growth there will be no possibility for increased economic security for the majority of citizens in developing countries – no surplus to take people out of poverty. In the face of this Colin Crouch (2013) advocates an assertive social democracy – policies that will enable everyone to live a decent life with limited inequalities and encourage people to work together in solidarity for the collective good.

Measuring economic security

Social indicators, among which are to be found the indicators of Social Quality, have relevance only because they reflect societal goals and values; they are normative, in other words. They are designed to assess where we are and where we are going in terms of the goals and values we set (Bauer 1966, McEwin 1995). More recent ones show a focus on living conditions and monitoring how these conditions change over time (Noll 2002). In identifying indicators for Economic Security within the Decent Society Index we are using a ‘subsystem variable’ concept of social indicators (Gordon 2012): what we are looking for is readily available measures which can be used both to compare the current status of societies and to measure progress towards a decent society as defined in this book. The factor limiting our choice (see Chapter 7) is that we want adequate measures which will retain as many countries as possible when those which have missing values on variables we need for the scoring have excluded themselves from the analysis.

The functional definitions of the overall income of a country are GDP and GNI – gross domestic product and gross national income. GDP includes the value of all goods and services produced within the boundaries of the country, generally per annum, and is the simpler measure. GNI is the value produced by all resident producers of goods and services (whether citizens or not) plus taxes not otherwise included but minus subsidies, plus income received from abroad but minus profits ‘exported’ to another country before tax. GNI is preferred here as the better measure of the annual income on which taxation is based and which the government and private citizens/residents have at their disposal. The statistic used should be

- 1 calculated per capita, to control for size of country and population (giving an interpretable measure, the ‘share’ accrued by the fictional ‘average resident’), and
- 2 expressed in \$ ‘ppp’ (‘purchasing power parity’), calculated to control for relative cost of living.

We have included information on other elements which may qualify the impression given by the bald overall economic statistics when it comes to assessing the security of a country’s economy:

- Negatively, Balance of Payments: the extent to which imports take out of the country less or more money than exports bring into it; an adverse balance of payments is clearly not sustainable in the longer term.
- As a positive factor, Gross Domestic Savings, the amount held by the banks as personal or corporate savings and therefore available for investment.
- Negatively, Official Development Assistance, a precarious source of national income which could be withdrawn, delayed or varied at any time and which often comes as a loan or with strings attached in terms of its uses or is seen as a gift that may be withdrawn if there is ‘bad behaviour’ on the part of the recipient country.
- Negatively, Remittances; the inflow of remittances is another source of national income, but again a precarious one, and in some countries it may tend to be used for family festivals and/or emergencies rather than invested (see Abbott et al. 2010, Weeks et al. 2005); it is also precarious because those who are sending remittances may become unable to do so if there are economic changes, or they may withdraw them for a variety of reasons, given that they are a gift, not a right.

The World Bank’s Development Indicators were the source used for almost all of this information, with a very few gaps filled in from a variety of sources found on the web.

We have not included poverty measures in this domain. Poverty – being a person or household that cannot take part in the culture’s normal activities because of lack of resources – is a Social Inclusion issue and is discussed in Chapter 4. At the level of national economic capabilities the national possession of sufficient

resources to guarantee an income of \$1.25 or \$2 per day to all residents is deductible from GDP or GNI. Nationally defined poverty lines cannot be used for international comparison because they are differently defined by the different countries, as various absolute measures of deprivation or as relative measures related to average national income or, more interestingly, to what ordinary people regard as essential for decent living (e.g. Mack and Lansley 1985).

A second domain is food security, which fails to differentiate between developed countries but is important in classifying the less developed ones. The standard measure here is whether a country has sufficient food in aggregate to feed its population (assuming fair distribution), and a number of interesting measures are available which cover not just whether countries have achieved the goal of feeding their population adequately but also the sustainability of the mechanisms they use to do so, but unfortunately these are not available for a large subset of the countries we wish to examine. We have fallen back, therefore, on statistics of the percentage of population who are undernourished – a crude measure of achievement rather than provision but one that is available for most countries. Estimates of the extent of undernourishment appear to vary for some countries, so we have taken the average of two sources where both are available – the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation statistics and data from the Global Food Security Index published by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

The social wage domain covers the aspects of material insecurity that are not conceived in financial terms – health, education, housing and the like and insurance against episodic or life-course periods of high expense. Education and health are considered empowerment measures in the Decent Society Model, but the extent of government investment in them is part of the social wage. Government expenditure on these two may be found in World Bank statistics. It is not practicable to give financial statistics on other forms of social security – countries differ too much in what they report and how they report it – but the US Social Security Administration, in partnership with the ISSA, provides information for a fair number of countries on the provision of five kinds of benefits: old age/disability, sickness and maternity (cash alone or cash plus medical treatment), work injury, unemployment and family allowances.

Many published indices have a further domain or set of indicators to assess subjective perception of economic status and/or hope for the economic future, based generally on the Gallup Polls, the World Values Survey or the European Values Survey. We have deliberately *not* included any such measures, because we are concerned with the resources which a nation has to offer – the conditions for the functioning of the society in other quadrants – rather than output measures such as the actual achievement of a satisfactory economic status by individuals.

3 Social cohesion

The cohesive society

Beyond Economic Security, a society which we would be prepared to call decent provides the conditions for Social Cohesion – solidarity, support, a sense of collective purpose for its members and a shared map of norms and expectations that renders the social world coherent for diverse groups with diverse interests and makes it possible for them to live and work together. Social Cohesion is the name for social processes which lead to a fair distribution of both economic and non-economic resources and promote empowerment and which are seen by all parties as doing so. Achieving it means both providing the conditions in which such solidarity can flourish and maintaining and reproducing a common understanding of what it means to be a society – what the rights and obligations are of the people who make it up. Building social cohesion is an essential element of development or reconstruction for states recovering from war, social disorder or economic catastrophe (see, e.g., Easterley et al. 2006, Ferroni et al. 2008, Hulme et al. 2014, Ritzen et al. 2000, World Bank 2005) but also an essential feature of all sustainable societies.

Social Cohesion is a fuzzy concept; its core elements are clearly identifiable, but its boundaries are difficult to delineate. Where social cohesion has broken down we find societies where nobody can trust anyone else and people cannot assume that they will be offered help by anyone else – nobody beyond their family or close circle of friends would care if they starved. It would be a society where members of the government preyed on citizens in order to accumulate power or enrich themselves and where it was necessary to bribe a public official to access public services even where notionally provided out of general taxation. When societies broke down in the fall of the former Soviet Union there was a retreat into family and immediate friends because the state could no longer be relied upon to provide welfare and powerful people were seen to be lining their own pockets instead of taking responsibility for those they governed or managed. Twenty years after the fall, trust in government and in each other had not been fully restored (Sapsford et al. 2015).

When thinking about the processes which make up Social Cohesion we have found it useful to distinguish between ‘*system* integration’, whereby the different

elements of society are articulated or locked together at a structural level, and ‘social integration’, the way in which different social elements are included in the system and exercise their agency, predominantly in face-to-face interaction between individuals or groups (Lockwood 1964, 1992). This distinction corresponds to the upper and lower ‘rows’ of the Social Quality Model – socio-economic security and social cohesion as system integration and social inclusion and empowerment as social integration. *System* integration is judged by its internal logical coherence and the extent to which people’s experiences do not falsify its assumptions (for example, where egalitarian and meritocratic norms dominate a society’s rhetoric but are at odds with the real and perceptible inequalities which are part of the society’s form of organisation). *Social* integration is better conceived as a ‘social space’, the sphere of agency and the locus of cooperation or conflict; it is judged by the extent to which social processes hold the society amicably together or tend to divide groups and ultimately tear the society apart. The two are expressions of each other, however; processes of group interaction depend on the society’s normative structure and the relatively permanent institutions in which this is embedded, and the institutions in their turn are made up of sequences of rule-following interactions. Social Cohesion is best thought of as an expression or outcome of *system* interaction, however; it is not a characteristic of individuals but a way of describing the structure of society, the underlying bonds that hold it together. ‘Structures’, in this sense, are systems of relations not between people but between social positions/roles (Archer 1995: 106, 159) – or perhaps better, they are cross-sectional descriptions at a given time of continuous social processes involving collectivities and/or individuals holding a given social role (see Dominguez 2000 for a discussion).

Law is an important part of this – the formal provisions which enforce fair and equal treatment, the institutions which implement and monitor prosocial provisions and the way in which law and governance are actually practised. Beyond this, however, Social Cohesion requires a shared morality – common goals and values, despite diversity of origins and interests – and shared norms and expectations – taking ‘decent behaviour’ for granted as what can be expected of others and of ourselves.

Dragolov and his colleagues suggest that the current interest in Social Cohesion is allied to fears of social disintegration brought on by recent economic trends:

One of the starting points for our study was the widespread view that German society – like modern societies in general – is drifting apart: many believe that people are concerned only with themselves, and no longer show solidarity with others. In the public arena, such concerns are often voiced in connection with worries about globalization, immigration, structural changes in the economy, and – most recently – the economic and financial crisis.

(Dragolov et al. 2013: 40)

Theorists of late modernity have pointed to the breakdown of the kinds of social bonds that formed the basis of social cohesion in modern societies of the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They have argued that communities of class and locality have been eroded as work has become more fragmented with the demise of lifelong careers, and family roles have become more fragile, based on personal bonds of love or commitment rather than a traditional division of roles (Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995). Traditional occupational communities and traditional work-based solidarity break down as the meaning of work as an identity is hollowed out and precarity stretches across all social strata and throughout the life course (Standing 2011).

This fear echoes what was being felt at the end of the nineteenth century, when the concept was born as an area of interest and concern. In premodern societies, Durkheim (1893) argued, social cohesion was provided by the structure of feudal authority or the smaller-scale community bonds that held people together through family, religion and the seasonal rhythms of work. This ‘mechanical solidarity’ is concerned with roles: everyone has a place in the society and understands his or her place. Everyone has a role or small set of roles and is expected to stay in role. Not everyone was a full citizen; apprentices were subservient to craftsmen, assistants were subservient to merchants, women were subservient to men (in principle, if not always in practice), children were subservient to adults, and it is only the top layer that had a full array of rights. Peasants, and slaves where they exist, tend to rank broadly with children if considered human at all (for some purposes they ranked with cattle) and are seen as not capable of making important decisions and not licenced to use initiative.

For social theorists in the nineteenth century such as Tönnies (1887) the transition from this moral, rurally based community of the past to the modern complex society posed new problems concerning how to hold societies together. They saw disaster looming as these ‘natural’ bonds of community were undermined by modern society. Durkheim thought that the mechanical solidarity of this preindustrial community based on fairly undifferentiated roles was being replaced by a new kind of ‘organic solidarity’ characteristic of modern societies. Organic solidarity, Durkheim argued, arose from the increasing differentiation of a complex division of labour, resulting in a chain of interdependencies upon which people relied to manage their lives. Fixed roles had become replaced or overlaid by more abstract rules as modern society developed. In the present day people are still expected to act in role, to follow the rules of their roles and ‘act like a father’ or ‘act like a manager’. However, roles are more widely available, so an apprentice can also be a scholar, given the introduction of universal schooling, and a day labourer can be saving up to become a petty industrialist. Given the extension of secondary and higher education over the last hundred years, indeed, the notion that sons follow fathers into their trades is dead in theory – anyone’s child can become anything, in principle. (Status and wealth are still substantially inherited in practice, however, and there is a ‘glass ceiling’ which regulates the possibility of working-class people ‘rising through the ranks’, dependent on family affluence and social connections, and the latter is again still partly a product of affluence in terms of *where* people went to school and university and therefore whom they met. The highly educated children of working-class parents tend to become solicitors or middle

managers or middle-grade civil servants or schoolteachers or lecturers at the less prestigious university; it is *their children* who perhaps become barristers or senior managers/civil servants or lecturers at the most prestigious of the universities.) The important thing for Social Cohesion is that some rules become common and cross-cutting: the rules as to how all people are expected to behave to all other people, the acceptance of the other as at least in some sense an equal (that is, the same sort of being as oneself) and the notion that people have rights as people, not just as owners or workers or peasants or wives or whatever.

A number of 'pathologies' might help to weaken solidarity and social cohesion, among them being *anomie* (normlessness), which can occur when change takes place too rapidly: 'If the division of labour does not produce solidarity it is because the relationships between organs are not regulated; it is because they are in a state of anomie' (Durkheim 1893). Other pathologies are economic instability resulting in bankruptcies, immorality leading to crime, conflicts between labour and capital or other social groups, and so on. Durkheim's general premise, drawing upon biological and natural science paradigms, is that the social organism will revert to equilibrium if given time for norms and circumstances to realign. Hence we are presented with a vision of a stable, functional and interlocking society rather than one in a state of constant change – although he does acknowledge that at least some of the 'pathologies' might be endemic in complex modern society, to the detriment of social cohesion.

Domains and functions of social cohesion

Although there is considerable overlap, it is useful for analytic purposes to consider Social Cohesion under five headings: group harmony, trust, collective understanding of 'the rules', governance and welfare.

Harmony between groups

The first area is the extent to which different factions or fractions of the population work together or oppose each other. In the first place this means considering the extent of economic inequality, because gross inequalities tend to separate people from each other and may form a basis for discontent and insurrection. Second, we need to identify the extent to which societies are homogenous or contain sizeable fractions which remain separate from the remainder in terms of interests and preparedness for cooperation.

Immigration appears to be a factor of this kind in contemporary societies, very publicly in Europe and America but to some extent across the world with the presence of immigrant/refugee populations often with cultural and historical backgrounds at variance to the culture of the 'indigenous' majority. For some countries immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon, sometimes a result of the breakdown of a neighbouring country or in response to the need for cheap and controllable labour; others, such as the UK and the US, have received waves of economic or political or religious refugees over the course of centuries and assimilated them

with more or less ease and more or less willingness. (The increase in immigration in recent decades, however, and the emergence of ‘cultural superdiversity’ [Meissner and Vertovec 2015] has been raised as a potential threat to social cohesion.)

Many countries also have fracture lines of less recent origin, in terms of religion and/or ethnic origin and/or the opposition of indigenous to conquering or colonizing populations. In some countries of the former Soviet Union, for example, there is a substantial group of Russian speakers ‘imported’ a generation or two ago, for some of whom it is true that their culture and history of origin are not shared with the ‘native’ inhabitants and their commitment is more to Mother Russia than to their present nation. Diversity can lead to division and conflict if not managed cleverly and in good faith. It should not be assumed that it always lowers cohesion, but we become aware of it where there has been ethnic conflict or a majority reaction against a minority – for example, the hostility to ethnic Russians in the Baltic States in the 1990s or the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia into civil war; however, there are also many examples where ethnically diverse communities live together with goodwill and tolerance.

We should distinguish between cohesion *within* groups – that which maintains them as a ‘group *for* themselves’ and is a conscious part of their political activity – and cohesion *between* groups in a larger unit such as a nation-state. Social cohesion *within* groups can sometimes serve to unite one social group against another, with group identity maintained by closing the ‘internal borders’ in terms of membership (and sometimes geographically as well). We tend to find that many such ‘fracture lines’ are at least partly created or reinforced by disparities of wealth, privilege or power. Paradoxically, however, the formation of distinct and visible groups could actually improve the cohesion of the wider society, because it brings home to each that the other may not have the same interests nor share the same values and is a starting point for tolerance and mutual accommodation. Social Cohesion does not mean that everyone should be the same; modern societies should be able to deal with diversity – there are many differences among people in terms of age, gender, social class, sexuality, ethnicity, skin colour, religion, disability and so on. In a cohesive society there are ways of understanding and tolerating these differences and bridging divides without obliterating them. Where there are not, it is often where cohesion within the group is strong, long established and ‘backed by history’; for example, Northern Ireland’s strongly cohesive subcommunities are constantly in danger of threatening the unity of the whole region. The problem of peace and reconciliation in postconflict societies is to a great extent one of building social cohesion in a way that is acceptable to all sides and generally requires strong and accepted governance structures.

Trust

Trust within the population – regarding ‘other people in general’ as trustworthy and reliable – forms a second crucial strand within cohesion. (Trust of one’s immediate ‘crowd’ – family, friends, neighbourhood, community – belongs under ‘social inclusion’ in the next chapter.) Trust is generally measured by a straightforward

survey question on whether other people can be trusted and sometimes also whether they are reliable or helpful rather than competitive or fair rather than likely to take advantage. It is difficult to see how it could be managed otherwise; there are no obvious objective indicators, nor any good basis for determining who is an expert and on what evidence they should form their judgment. Figure 3.1 shows the recent distribution of answers on trust across the world.

What we are talking about here is the *a priori* trust into which we are socialized and bring to each relationship, the trust that is implicitly presupposed in social organisation – trust as expectations about others' behaviour (Lewicki and Bunker 1996, Misztal 1996) and tolerance of diversity and disagreement (Inglehart 1999). Trust involves taking risks, but in the decent society the risks can be assumed to be small (Mayer et al. 1995). Trust is what powers social organisation: political scientists have seen it as essential for the working of democratic politics (e.g. Almond and Verba 1963) and economists for the working of a market economy (e.g. Raiser 1998); sociologists have seen it as an essential foundation for the exercise of agency in complex societies (Seligman 1997, Sztompka 1999). Political scientists have pointed out that confidence in the democratic political forms requires confidence that diversity, competition and dissent are relatively safe activities and, for continuing civil stability, some degree of confidence among both rich and poor that their interests will not be overridden.

Trust in this sense is a norm of fairness and the expectation that both individuals and institutions (governmental, commercial, judicial, informational, charitable) will adhere to it. We are working here towards the Durkheimian notion of collective understanding (*conscience collective*). In Durkheim's account (e.g. 1893), collective understanding creates the bonds which hold people together, which is facilitated by having a shared collective purpose which transcends the individual.

The division of labour supposes that the worker, far from remaining bent over his task, does not lose sight of those co-operating with him, but acts upon them and is acted upon by them. He is not therefore a machine who repeats movements the sense of which he does not perceive, but he knows that they are tending in a certain direction, towards a goal that he can conceive of more or less distinctly. He feels that he is of some use.

(Durkheim 1893)

In modern societies, the community's social cohesion is a community of meaning – a community of shared discourse, shared understanding, shared ontology. Central to societies that we would regard as cohesive is a notion of civic responsibility, but this is not just a feeling or belief; rather, it is the basis of rules for how to behave and what is to count as important (Lockwood 1999, World Bank 1998). The lack of such a framework, so there is no figurative 'rulebook' to guide our actions, is what Durkheim meant by 'anomie' (Beck et al. 1997). However, we should remember again that trust and social cohesion in this sense describe societal norms, not individual beliefs and expectations, and is the *community's* or *society's* shared understanding. In this chapter we are not concerned with the beliefs

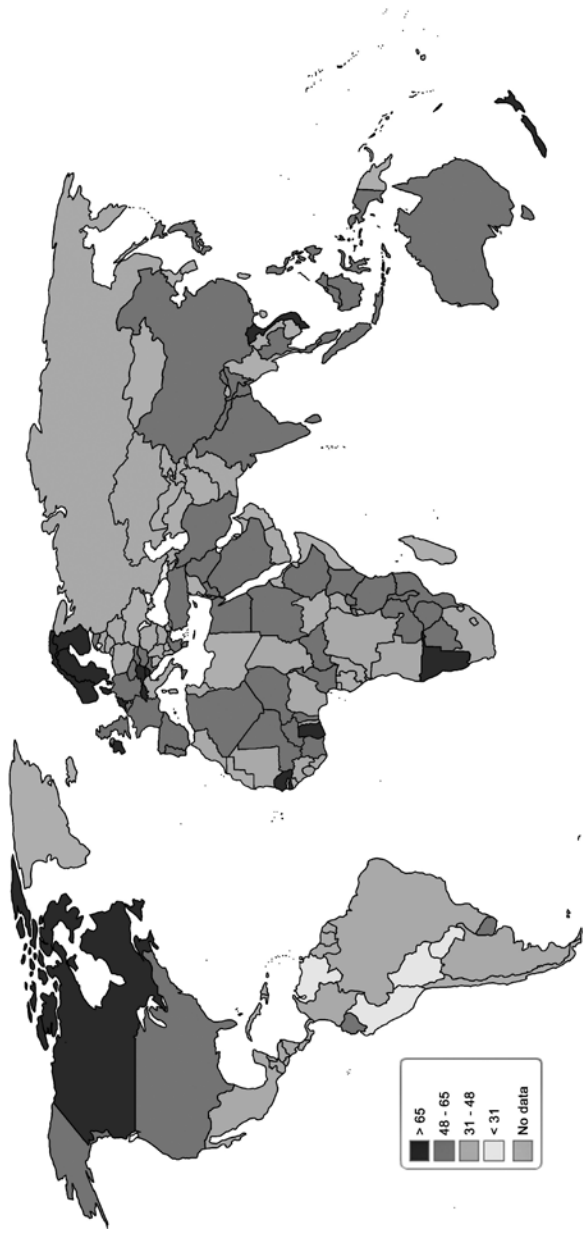


Figure 3.1 World map of Trust

Source: Average of values on the Gallup World Poll, the World Values Survey and the UNDP Human Development Indicators, where all three sources are available.

that individuals hold about themselves and their fellows but with the ideological framework of the society within which these positions are taken and the ‘cultural material’ which makes them possible and plausible.

Collective understanding of the social world

What is important is shared confidence – trust in the socioeconomic order, confidence that there are reliable patterns in the way social relations are ordered. Trust or confidence, in this sense, is both a reason for action and a precondition for it – trust in banks, trust in telephones, trust in doctors, as inclining us against keeping our money under the pillow, waiting till we can travel to speak face to face and using alternatives to formal medicine. It is not impossible to organize business life on principles other than generalized trust, through drawing on complex networks of contacts, and doing so is typical of low-trust cultures such as Japan, according to Kuwabara and colleagues (2014). However, trust remains an important element of broad social organisation: it means assuming others will behave with integrity and honesty. More, it defines the world within which actions take place: even the ‘capital’ of capitalism depends on shared views with regard to ownership and what can be owned (de Soto 2000).

Trust is in turn built upon a sense of justice and fairness – that in general the distribution of rewards and duties in society is fair and that you can demand and obtain justice if you feel wronged. Essential also is the confidence that others subscribe to the same norms and have the same expectations of their own and others’ behaviour. Underlying Social Cohesion is ‘the golden rule’ – the notion that I should treat others as I would want them to treat me. This is not a modern idea – it is preached in both the Bible and the Koran – but it is what powers the rule of law and the attempt at good governance which in turn make economic, financial and commercial order possible. The assumption is that even if you have interests not satisfied by the current situation, or different preferences or customs or customary religious/moral duties from those of someone else, you know that (a) they will take account of these once they understand them, (b) they will explain their own needs, preferences or whatever to you and (c) each of you can trust the other to behave in a reliable and predictable way and to aim for a fair solution. We may not like the other group, we may not share their goals, we may not agree with their beliefs, but the society is cohesive if there is between us at least some tolerable (if minimal) level of understanding of what the other considers to be at issue and the underlying assumption that both parties intuitively know the ‘rules of the game’ with respect to how society works and are probably minded to play by them.

Believing that there are shared rules and regarding people as fundamentally rule bound opens up possibilities. We do not need to know someone personally to know how he or she can be expected to behave. Banks can be trusted, and large shops, and remote suppliers, because people in general can be trusted; we know how people ought to behave and can confidently expect them to ‘behave in role’. We trust them not in their individual identities but in their roles, and the trust comes from our belief that they themselves will believe that they are ‘bound by

the rules'. Indeed, it is not just institutions which generate this kind of expectation; all life involves shared sets of rules for how to behave. We all know how 'drivers' and 'pedestrians' are supposed to behave, for example, and we have to trust them to do so most of the time in order to be able to drive or walk down the road with any degree of confidence.

Governance

The Decent Society, therefore, is predicated on trust in the expectation of fair dealing, reciprocity, cooperation and mutual understanding between its citizens and trust in the social institutions on which the society's continued existence depends. Governments foster this social infrastructure in order to create decent societies. They are also able to produce it directly, by the example of their own actions, or to destroy it by not playing within the rules. The good government is fair, just, rule bound, supportive of the rule of law and moderately transparent in its policies and their implementation. As Rothstein (2011) argues, the relationship between the government and the governed is circular or recursive in this respect. Governments act with the expectation that citizens will 'play fair' with them and with each other. (This is not a blind act of faith, however, nor a prediction, but something that must be monitored and may need to be inculcated or recreated, which is the purpose of laws against e.g. corruption and their active enforcement.) People in turn learn trust in government and each other by the government's continued good faith exhibited in its policies and by its agents, and the continued reliability of such expectations reinforces the belief that fair play is natural and to be taken for granted in day-to-day actions.

The ethics of public officials becomes central here, not only how they do their jobs, but also the signals they send to citizens about what kind of 'game' is being played in the society.

(Rothstein 2011: 174)

The reliance on government to have the interests of its citizens at heart in this way is an important element of Social Cohesion, dubbed 'political trust' by Kong (2014). Kong's own analysis of Arab nations strongly suggests that the two key elements of political trust are the perceived effectiveness of the government and the extent to which it is perceived as benevolent and working for the citizens' interests.

Particularly important for trust in government is confidence in the institutions of control – the police, the courts, the legal system in general and perhaps the military – because if these are not trustworthy then nothing else can be, given that their job is to restrain those who break the agreed rules (Rothstein 2011, Rothstein and Stolle 2008). This includes the civil courts, for the regulation of industry, commerce and financial institutions. Regulating the observance of rules and being seen to do so is an element in a government's being seen as both effective and benevolent. An important part of this is taking an effective stance against

corruption. Rothstein (2011) makes a compelling case for anticorruption enforcement by government. He argues that the belief that we can trust officials and be treated fairly is the basis for the building of generalized trust in a society. This trust (based on anticorruption policies and their implementation), he then argues, facilitates socioeconomic development and socially inclusive societies. One of his case studies is a comparison of Jamaica, high on democracy but also on corruption and with poor economic growth, and Singapore, low on democracy but high on anticorruption and showing strong economic growth. The same argument has been made about Rwanda (see Ingelaere 2011, Mann and Berry 2015 and the case study in Chapter 6 of this book). Financial corruption, and also nepotism and giving power and control over resources to friends and supporters, demonstrates bad faith by devaluing other people and demonstrating that government cannot be trusted to work in the interests of people other than their friends and families. Corruption is also expensive for citizens: it transfers money from the citizenry in general to an elite and thus often from the poor to the rich (Devarajan and Reinikka 2004) and diminishes the social wage by leaving less available for governments to spend on social projects (Mauro 1995).

The social provision of welfare

Another element of trust, which is bound up with Economic Security on the one hand and Empowerment on the other, is the area of social welfare. In developing the Decent Society Model we have tended to see welfare – pensions, the provision of the infrastructure for health and education, ‘social insurance’ against unexpected risks or expenses specific to one point of the life course – as mainly contributing to economic security and constituting the ‘social wage’. Welfare also contributes to Social Cohesion, however, by creating and/or reflecting a collective sentiment that the poor are part of the same society as the more affluent and have a right to a decent life within it – a collective responsibility of each to all, but discharged by those who have surplus resources on behalf of those who do not. (In developed societies this probably works through government and the taxation system rather than as an identifiable gift of an identifiable person, but in earlier centuries charitable benefactors and the church were a major source of welfare for the poor, and in some developing countries they may still be the main source. However, gifts do not convey a feeling of security about the future as rights do.) It has been noted that one product of welfare states tends to be altruism in the population (Titmuss 1970). In this context it is encouraging that, despite showing up in surveys as the most unsympathetic population in the European Community in their attitudes to the poor (see Mack and Lansley 1985), more than 80 per cent of British respondents to surveys in the 1970s thought that government should spend more on them (more than 50 per cent considering this ‘very important’), and Dorling reports similar responses in 2013 (Dorling 2014: 179), so it would appear that collectively we do accept responsibility for alleviating poverty.

We have not included welfare provision under Social Cohesion in constructing the Decent Society Model, but it is worth bearing in mind as an aspect of the

underlying discourse of fairness and equal access that cohesion entails. What is important for Social Cohesion is the creation of a collective sense that all members of society are to be treated with equal justice and that there should be some compensation and compassion for the victims of random misfortunes of fate, and it amounts to a sense of solidarity with those less fortunate. We have argued that the willingness to provide welfare is a crucial building block of Social Cohesion in contemporary societies and that this concept has spread from the developed to the developing world as a way of providing citizens with security and a sense of being part of the nation. Note that it is the *right* to welfare which builds cohesion; charity and the gift relationship do not have the same effect.

Welfare states have been cut back in many countries in recent years. The response to economic crisis (whether in the 1970s or after 2008) has been to argue that we can no longer afford universal welfare. The neoliberal alternative is to privatize elements of the welfare state that were previously seen as social rights and government responsibilities and to withdraw a range of social benefits from those who are worse off. This has the effect of increasing rather than mitigating the inequalities that we have discussed in earlier chapters. In line with the individualized society, social welfare is tending to become individualized – people are increasingly responsible for providing for their own pensions, education and health rather than it being part of the ‘social citizenship package’ guaranteed by the welfare state. In this way the eligibility of various groups such as migrants, the poor and the unemployed is challenged. Again, this is self-evidently divisive.

The scope and sustainability of social cohesion

The concept of Social Cohesion can be applied at any scale or level, except that it makes no sense to talk about individuals as having cohesion – the smallest unit that can be considered cohesive and coherent is the community or group. The study of social cohesion has mainly concentrated on nation states as the level at which it makes sense to talk about the deployment of the unit’s resources (e.g. the provision of a social wage).

There is no reason we should not consider the region or city in terms of social cohesion as well; Jones (2013), for example, looks at the role of local authorities as the sites where social cohesion policies and problems are enacted. At the other extreme it makes some degree of sense to apply the concept to the modern world as a whole, given the basis for norms and values which all societies would accept in their acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see Chapters 1 and 4). Political issues which affect cohesion do increasingly extend beyond nation states.

- An influx of asylum seekers and refugees might begin in places where there is conflict (such as the Middle East) but end in quite different and distant places, such as the channel ports where crossing to the UK is possible.
- Accidents of geography such as long coastlines or contiguity to natural ‘staging posts’ may mean that asylum seekers and refugees or other kinds

of irregular migrants are more likely, for example, to enter Europe via some countries than others.

- Migrant and nomadic people wander across national frontiers, and some social groups, such as the Roma, become excluded in all the countries in which they are found.
- Ecological problems of drought, pollution and climate change are not contained within borders . . .
- and neither are economic crises that can begin with the failure of banks in America and end with demonstrations on the streets of Athens.
- Crime is also increasingly internationalized as capital flows around the world both legitimately and illegitimately.

These are all issues which need to be sorted out at a world level – they are beyond the powers of any one country. Migration in particular can provide countries with difficult internal political problems, as we have seen recently: citizens debate whether they should be let in, there is conflict between countries over who should take the numbers and who should bear the cost, and underlying both is the fear that the influx of refugees will endanger social cohesion in the societies they want to join.

Looking at nation states, as we do mostly in this book, we can point to a number of places where violent breakdown of cohesion has occurred. There are countries such as Syria or Afghanistan which have broken up into warring factions that take up arms against one another so that the strongest, most vicious and most violent will always win. People have no way of knowing whether visitors to their community will kill, rob, rape or protect them. Regions subject to civil war such as the Central African Republic or the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s exemplify this kind of breakdown. There are also examples of less violent social disintegration. There have been countries where change has been very rapid and the governance structures have broken down, such as the former Soviet Union after the collapse of communism. Although not without problems, the former communist system had offered security, social services, meaning, purpose and a way of life to its citizens, but it was replaced by the withdrawal of the state and a market philosophy of ‘looking after yourself’. Piotr Sztompka talks about ‘cultural trauma’ because it goes beyond economic collapse to threaten the kinds of norms, values and assumptions that people hold dear and which enable them to manage their lives (Sztompka 2002). Yet even in the most desperate situations of social disintegration, although people might not have a clear concept of what social cohesion would be in the changed circumstances, they have a good sense of injustice and what is wrong with their world – they still have a sense of how things *should* be done – so the material out of which it can be rebuilt is generally present.

Social Cohesion is not a thing or even an attribute or quality; it is a continuing *process*. Like all elements of the decent society, cohesion has continually to be recreated. (A lot of the formative work on it has considered modern industrial societies, many of which have relatively similar cultures, but the notion does seem to make sense across the world.) As we have argued in Chapter 1, rights

and privileges are not simply conferred on people; they have to be brought to recognition, fought for and defended, and the expectation of social justice has to be built or reinforced. Societies need consensus for social cohesion to work, as Durkheim pointed out, but the consensus is contested and in a continual process of reformulation. For example, Larsen (2013) suggests that it is important at the present time to retell and restate the metanarratives of an inclusive welfare state, which are tending to be overlaid and extinguished by neoliberal ideas. It might be argued that social cohesion is sustainable, but only with a lot of hard work – and this is work that it is necessary to undertake, because differences of understanding and feelings of injustice may not be left concealed if social cohesion is to be sustained reliably.

Social Cohesion does not arise magically or spontaneously; more often, it is governments that ensure a consensual framework of rights and duties in which people have confidence and provide for the welfare of their citizens. (This role can be played on occasions by organisations or associations outside the formal government, particularly where a country is occupied by a foreign power and/or exploited for its resources without concern for the wellbeing of its residents – as is said to have happened with the mafia in Sicily – but by taking it on they become governments to all intents and purposes.) While good governance is an important part of the story it is not the whole of it, however; Social Cohesion implies a collective understanding of what it means to live in a society – what the ‘rules’ are. Cohesion can be fostered and regulated by good governance, and governments can have considerable control over a country’s rhetoric, but rhetoric is not enough; for cohesion to take root effectively we need consonance between the rhetoric and the lived reality of social relations, to the point where justice, fairness and goodwill are mostly taken for granted.

It may be argued that we should be looking to international or transnational organisations to manage the governance of social cohesion and oversee the decency of national and subnational provision, as we do with questions of rights and freedoms (see Chapter 4). International agencies such as the United Nations or the World Bank have taken on many of these issues, and it is the European Union that has been most concerned to address the issue of cohesion. At the level of the EU, cohesion policies are translated into the transfer of funds between rich and poor regions within Europe and calls for solidarity with poorer states. While this can help to create the conditions for social cohesion, it represents an impoverished and economically driven sense of social cohesion which does not capture the complexity and importance of social bonds we have been discussing. Nevertheless, international and transnational organisations can create the framework of governance necessary for nation states to develop cohesion policies.

A word of caution is appropriate:

[P]overty and social exclusions are generally perceived to have negative consequences and . . . it is in everyone’s interests to try to minimise them both . . . Social capital and social cohesion are not quite as straightforward . . . having too much social cohesion in a society can be as harmful as having too little.

So instead of being *maximised* . . . [they] need to be *optimised* – that is, getting just the right amount.

(Phillips 2006: 132)

Imposing or encouraging cohesion can be a form of social control. In China the pursuit of ‘social harmony’ can be a cloak for the suppression of dissent, and in other authoritarian countries social cohesion is ensured by various top-down policies enforcing conformity rather than freedom. Novak (2001: 114), in a way reminiscent of Donzelot’s (1977) account of the birth of the modern family, presents the growth of state responsibility for welfare systems as another tactic for controlling an increasingly politicised working class. Social cohesion does not necessarily depend upon political freedom and democracy, or at least it may also have less ‘noble’ functions. Societies can be cohesive but unfree.

Finally, we note that information technology is opening up new possibilities for cohesion and inclusion which we do not yet fully understand. The growth of digital communications through the Internet has led some to argue that wider, looser communities become possible (Wellman et al. 2001). Does this weaken cohesion? Castells (1996) suggests that rather than weakening solidarity it enables rapid coalescence of social movements and networks around themes and issues. This can certainly help to transform the concept of Social Cohesion but in ways that have not been fully thought through (Wallace 2012). Whilst in some respects social cohesion is dispersed around networks that are not constrained by national borders, it can also be a source of social cohesion through reinforcing and facilitating communications within communities (Wallace et al. 2014).

Measuring social cohesion

The four main domains that we have focused upon are those of governance, trust, economic equality and harmony between groups. Welfare might have been covered by, for example, questions on willingness to pay higher taxes to combat poverty or provide health or education, but the surveys that carry these questions do not cover enough countries, and the Gallup Poll does not ask them.

Governance: social cohesion can be fostered only when the rule of law is respected, people are assured of fair and equal treatment and the style of governance is sufficiently transparent that people can have confidence they understand it. It must also be seen as effective for there to be faith that promises will be fulfilled. Corruption is a major issue for both; where government is corrupt it will be seen as ineffective on the one hand – if only because corruption diverts money from its intended purposes, as we said – and partial to its friends and allies on the other. The absence of corruption and its perception can be important indicators of whether governance structures are seen as fair and just by its population. Although corruption is only one indicator of poor governance, it is quite a good indicator, since if public goods are accessible through only bribes and/or social networks then they are not available to everyone and therefore things are neither fair nor just.

There are a number of useful indicators in world statistical databases. There are no straightforwardly ‘objective’ indicators – any that were selected would be mediated by a process of inference – so we have used expert judgment indicators supplemented by survey results (preferably reporting ‘facts’ rather than expressing opinions). Indicators of government effectiveness in fact tend to correlate very highly with each other (Rothstein 2011: 35–6). We have used World Governance Indicators (World Bank ndc) supplemented as appropriate by measures from Freedom House, the Fragile States Index, Transparency International, the Human Development Indicators (UNDP), and the World Gallup Poll and World Values Survey for explicit survey measures of people’s experience in this area. Where possible we have taken more than one indicator and averaged them. There are a number of other sources for this kind of information, but their coverage by country tends to be limited.

Trust: Social Cohesion assumes a level of trust between individuals, especially trust in general or people that are beyond personal circles of friends and family. Social trust is essential for the functioning of social institutions, including both government and the market. If people in general can be trusted it means that they share a belief in good behaviour with us, and this implies a moral unity in the given population. We can assume that they will treat us in a fair and honest way and that they will not cheat or injure us. This is why social trust is an indicator used very frequently in discussions of wellbeing or social capital and remains a good way of differentiating societies that work well from those that do not.

Our main indicator here is the Gallup World Poll question on whether other people can be trusted, averaged where possible with measures quoted by the World Values Survey and the Human Development Indicators. We note the reservations of Delhey and colleagues (2011) about radius of trust – that the question can mean different things in different countries and so there will be differences in *who* is being trusted – and we will interpret the scores from poor countries and ‘Confucian’ ones with caution, but Gallup do not provide the information needed to apply a correction, and the World Values Survey does not cover enough countries for the current exercise.

For trust specifically in social institutions (a separate domain in the index) Gallup has a range of questions: confidence in the national government, the judicial system, the police, the military and the banks/financial institutions. We have used as many of these as are available, supplemented where possible from the World Values Survey or other sources, to yield a single overall estimate. It would have been interesting and fruitful to consider ‘trust in financial institutions’ separately from trust in governmental institutions, but we do not have data on the former for enough countries to make this viable worldwide.

Economic equality is our third domain. While all societies are unequal, extreme inequality can fragment societies into the haves and have-nots and is often a result of poor or unjust governance structures. When the have-nots are many and represent a socially excluded group, this can be destabilizing for social cohesion. When inequality reinforces other social divisions such as those of ethnicity or nationality it can become a very toxic cocktail. Very unequal societies often suffer

other problems such as poor health, low trust and high rates of crime, all factors that undermine Social Quality and the decent society. Finally, inequality can create a feeling that society is not just and fair, so the moral bonds of the collective conscience are undermined. The obvious indicator here is the GINI coefficient (obtainable from World Bank statistics and reversible to measure equality rather than inequality), with FinScope, the Economist Intelligence Unit and the Financial Times and other summary sources to fill in any gaps.

Harmony: finally, we have discussed the importance of social divisions and the perceptions of divisions as a challenge to social cohesion. One clear indicator to use here, therefore, is the Group Grievance scale from the Fragile States Index, an 'expert judgment' of the extent to which there are divisions and resentments among groups. This can be supplemented by Gallup's measure of the extent to which there are ethnic problems within a country. We can also include the number of immigrants (percentage of population, from the UNDP Human Development Indicators), who could be an important potential challenge to social cohesion, and an indicator of the perception of immigration in the population (the question on whether the country is a good place for immigrants from abroad, from the Gallup World Poll); this is treated as a separate domain in the index, as is fear of crime/feeling of safety when out at night – included here because those who fear to go out do not feel as though the community recognizes them as equals, and it is treated as a separate domain because it does not quite overlap conceptually with any of the others.

4 Social inclusion

What social inclusion means

In order for a society to exist at all there must, logically, be people who are *in* it. This is part of the definition of what we mean by ‘society’ and a truism; for there to be cohesion, there must be something to cohere and someone to recognise the cohesion. Sociologically the structured relations of power and production which make a society sustainable and reproduce it are relations between people and, more so, groups, and the history of a form of social order is the development of the people who are included by these relations. Psychologically, it is difficult to see how shared norms and values such as were discussed in the previous chapter could be created/sustained and people empowered to use their society’s resources unless they recognised themselves as members of the same society and were recognised as such by others.

The decent society, as we envisage it, recognises people through citizenship, employment, community and personal networks. Inclusion in public institutions such as the political system, the labour market, the welfare state and the financial system is important, but inclusion is also about supporting and being supported by friends, neighbours and family more informally, through a complex web of social ties. A decent society should foster and promote social capital as a way in which people and communities can be connected to each other, to wider institutions and to the nation as a whole. People should feel safe and secure – safe on their streets and in their houses, safely assured of work and leisure opportunities, economically secure and secure in their ability to rely on the law and the institutions of government to protect them both from unfair dealing on the part of other people and groups and from unfair intrusion by the state itself. In a decent society people should not feel excluded on account of their gender, religion, ethnicity or sexuality, and they should feel they can live in a safe and supportive environment.

Social Inclusion is both a process and an outcome; it is the state of being a full member of a society and the process by which membership is created, maintained and recognised. It is not the same as equality but is often tied to equality of opportunity and being treated equally – the absence of discrimination, the opportunity for full and meaningful participation in all aspects of life; inclusion as a slave

or serf or inferior minority does not qualify as a decent life. It is about being respected – recognised as having a right to participate – and respecting others. In a decent society we expect social justice: all are equal under the law, which acts to constrain citizens to act fairly to each other but also to protect them from the arbitrary actions of others, be they employers or opinion leaders or the state itself. Beyond these, social justice is served when all are able to follow their own goals and empowered to fulfil their own potential, provided they do not unduly constrain or interfere with the lives of others.

Social Inclusion is related to identity, and this is where its complexity becomes apparent, as Durkheim pointed out. In feudal agrarian societies identity was largely monolithic – to a large extent it predicted and was predicted by economic position. In more recent forms of social order we tend towards multiple identities and are defined by their intersection. Human beings are shaped by an interaction of physical locations (which carry a set of shared histories), social origins and relatively fixed or personal characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age, handicap and physical health) and social locations – poverty and economic exclusion, occupational status and control, religion, and culture in terms of shared history and in terms of practices adopted perhaps through education or training. We live within and define ourselves by a network or system of structures that inform and shape social practices and express power relations. Social Inclusion can involve a variety of overlapping or non-overlapping identities. For example, someone could be fully included through employment but excluded in their society through the fact that they belong to a stigmatised ethnic group or come from a despised neighbourhood. Individuals and groups can experience both inclusion and exclusion through different networks. For example, socially excluded groups may form their own fiercely defended group identity, or people may have close-knit ties with family and friends but be excluded or exclude themselves from participation in the wider society. Exclusion is not just an issue for minorities; majorities can be excluded when a minority captures the state (as in some colonial regimes), and women make up half the population but are excluded from full citizenship wherever patriarchy rules relatively unchecked.

The issue of social inclusion blurs the distinction between developed and developing societies, as both have to grapple with the same issues – providing conditions for individuals and groups to be recognised as members of society and to have the means/ability/conditions for participation. As a process, building social inclusion is about improving ability and opportunity for the disadvantaged to take their place in the society, whatever the basis of their disadvantage. This may involve an entire society in reconsidering what has been taken for granted, the norms and values that underpin and justify ideas of exclusion (e.g. apartheid, patriarchy, neoliberalism, caste, racism). Where they have a profound ideological basis – which generally means where there is an unacknowledged advantage to one group in economic terms or in terms of power and control – practices of exclusion are often ‘hidden’; they are so ingrained that they are taken for granted, and it is only when they are challenged that policies for inclusion become possible.

In all societies we must be aware of people's changing biographies of inclusion as they move through the life course. A study in the EU found that social exclusion was best seen as a dynamic process, with people dropping in and out of it according to changing circumstances (Apospori and Millar 2003). Circumstances leading to risk of social exclusion included leaving school and not finding work, lone parenthood, sickness or disability and retirement from work. Clearly these would not afflict all people in the same way – some retired people are active, involved and quite prosperous – but these were the main risk factors in the study.

Processes of social inclusion

A useful organising principle to use here is Fraser's (2009) classification of the elements of inclusion into *redistribution* (the right to live within the society – having enough resources to survive and participate in the taken-for-granted day-to-day life), *recognition* (the right to be seen as a full member of society – fundamental equal rights) and *representation* (the right to be heard, freedom of association and expression).

Redistribution

Redistribution concerns the sharing of resources among the members of a society. Economic Security was covered in Chapter 2, but it is also an important issue for Social Inclusion. The problems of social inclusion are not confined to poor people, poor neighbourhoods or poor countries, but poverty or lack of employment can be one reason why people are excluded in many other ways, because those in poverty are not able to participate in the lifestyle that is generally taken for granted as acceptable in their society. They may not have warm houses or be able to afford decent food or holidays (or other recreation) for themselves and their families. They may not even be able to afford health or education, given travel costs to access them and the inevitable incidental costs they entail. (See the article by Williams et al., 2014, for an account of the real household costs of fee-free education.) Not having access to what is normally enjoyed in your society can be considered a form of exclusion, even if those who experience it might be considered affluent elsewhere in the world (Townsend 1979), and even 'free' provision may not be accessible to the poorest. People also have the right *not* to become involved, and some choose to exercise it, but this becomes exclusion from the society enjoyed by others if the reason for nonparticipation is lack of the necessary resources. Geography can also be a factor in exclusion. The poor in more remote areas can be excluded because of the cost of accessing services in terms of the time it takes – time taken to travel to a health centre – and this is a problem in affluent as well as poor societies for people living in rural areas. In affluent societies reduction in public transport as well as its increased cost has increased the social exclusion of the poor and others without their own transport in rural areas. Differential access to the Internet via broadband is another geographical factor which works to exclude those in remote areas, whether poor or affluent (Williams et al. 2015).

Recognition

The concept of *Citizenship* is useful here: the possibility of participating fully in the social, economic, political and cultural systems and institutions of a society as of right (Levitas 1998, Lewis 2002). Full citizenship – by which we do not necessarily mean a legal or political category but a functional one – involves other people (the ‘generalized other’) having duties and responsibilities towards you and you having duties and responsibilities in your turn. The World Bank framework for inclusion (World Bank 2013) is based on people as groups and individuals having the ability, the opportunity and the right to be included in markets (land, labour, housing, credit), services (social protection, information, utilities, transport, health, education etc.) and space (political, physical, cultural and social).

The ultimately accountable duty bearer is the state, which in a decent society guarantees that you receive what is due to you – your rights – and that you give or perform what is due to others. As we discussed in Chapter 3, the role of the state is to ensure the framework within which rights can be exercised through legislative/policy changes – ensuring equal rights in law, equal opportunities legislation and the removal of discriminatory laws and legislating against any systematic discriminations which may begin to be noticeable (in response to changed circumstances, for example). Implementation of inclusive policies also requires the promotion of these values and policies, which in turn may require the state to facilitate the transformation of social attitudes and values. This may seem a difficult and risky undertaking, but in practice it is what states undertake routinely. For example, a policy of reducing death on the roads may involve legislation to curb speed on the roads, but this will be effective only if the new, lower speeds become the acceptable norm among drivers, and so every piece of legislation tends to need its sensitisation campaign. Where the campaigns are not effective it may be necessary to attack the problem from the other end by legislating to reduce the speed that cars are able to achieve, through the introduction of mechanical governors (as is done with lorries and public service vehicles in some countries). The manipulation of opportunity is something states routinely undertake; see for example the legislation against the sale and use of Class A drugs, the legislation in many countries restricting the freedom to smoke in public and the detailed and painstaking regulation of what goes into the food and drink that we buy. (Consider also, however, the prohibition of alcohol in the United States in the 1920s and early 1930s, which failed because the population were not prepared to obey the law in this respect.)

Full access to social rights for individuals depends upon being a citizen of a recognised national community in the more restricted, legalistic sense, and rules about citizenship can readily create layers of people and households with sometimes severely restricted rights. In terms of their population as a whole, countries which create such layers have to be considered less than decent, however good a life they provide for their full citizens. Full citizenship is generally the only thing that conveys the right to vote (except for historical anomalies such as the right of

Eire citizens to vote in some UK elections and arrangements made in some countries for ‘permanent immigrants’ who have not achieved or chosen citizenship). It is generally full citizenship or at least a recognition that the person has become a permanent resident of the country (and, generally, has been there for some time, paying taxes) that gives entitlement to welfare benefits and social security. Some residents within a country (indeed, many in some countries) do not have this basic claim to legal recognition and civil rights because they are illegal immigrants or refugees, living temporarily or permanently in another society (or sometimes even the children or grandchildren of such migrants). Displaced people can form a hidden layer within wealthy societies such as the US or Europe. However, they are also displaced into poor societies, where they are condemned to live a marginal existence. The many refugees from Syria living in Turkey or Jordan are contemporary examples, and Palestinians have grown up for decades in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon.

Within societies, there can be many other reasons for lack of full citizenship. For example, migrant workers around the world, even if they are legal, have fewer rights to participate in their countries of residence than other workers. Stringent citizenship laws in some countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland have created generations of ‘noncitizens’ or ‘second-class citizens’ who are in fact technically citizens of another country (Bauböck et al. 1996, Sawyer and Blitz 2011), and some countries which provide a decent life for their citizens in, for example, the Arab Gulf region are reproduced through the work of a large army of immigrant workers with few legal and civic rights. A stratum of non-citizens came into existence in Latvia and Estonia due to the new citizenship laws introduced after 1992, when these countries became independent from the Soviet Union, which restricted the rights of large resident but non-native minorities (Rechel 2010).

Representation

Representation is about the political voice of the different groups and individuals in a society – their right to assess whether their rights are being infringed, to participate in public debate and to hold the state accountable as a duty bearer. For this reason we have dealt with it mostly within the Empowerment quadrant, in Chapter 5. If recognition is about the identification of issues that increase inclusion or abolish exclusionary practice (gender, ethnicity, disability etc.), however, then representation is about having a channel through which those who are excluded can fight for their inclusion by legal and recognised means, being able to articulate their needs and to judge if they are being met. This is where citizenship in the legal sense becomes important; noncitizens have far fewer rights and opportunities for their voices to be heard when policies are being framed.

The internationally agreed framework of human and civic rights (e.g. United Nations 1948) creates a foundation for inclusion, which in turn is based upon universal concerns about social justice. Integral to this framework is the right of people and groups to know what their rights are, internationally and in the context

of their own society's laws and practices, and to pursue social justice where they consider they are not being afforded it. The framework also creates a mechanism for transnational monitoring of whether rights are being respected, and the acceptance of this may be considered an important element in whether a society can be considered fully decent. However benevolent a centrally controlled society may be, if it does not accept any external curb on what it can do, then by accident and inattention or under a later 'new management' people's rights can be over-ridden without recourse.

Family, community and inclusion

In this book we consider mostly the macro level – nation states and what their governments can do to offer their residents a decent life. When considering Social Inclusion, however, we cannot ignore the meso and micro levels of family, community and social networks as sources and locations for inclusion, and these other 'levels' may sometimes pull in a different direction from the broad national trends and policies.

The family and social support

The 'micro' level of the family has always been important in societies which have not achieved overall decency, and indeed in many that *have* achieved it, as the first line of defence for security/welfare, the root of psychological 'centring' within a social milieu and the place where people may safely (we tend to hope!) be trusted to respect one's interests and to fulfil long-term obligations. The family as a coresident unit provides inclusion in emotional relationships and is where infants mostly grow up to be adults, but as a wider nonresident network of support it may act as a social insurance system for its members or offer opportunities for work, education, accommodation and access to resources. In nonindustrial societies the family is key to providing the basis of subsistence, support and social security. Even in industrial and industrialising societies, such as China for example, the wider extended family is an important source of social security and support for young people and in old age (Cheung 2013). In Western societies the family as a unit of social security is supported by the welfare state, which has to a large extent taken over the formal responsibility for care, but the welfare systems still tends to assume that costs can be covered by adult children and/or that a wife, daughter or daughter-in-law will make care in the community possible by giving labour freely and taking on the dependent person as another one of her day-to-day responsibilities. The family is still seen as the primary unit of social inclusion, and in questionnaires most people in most countries still say that the family is the most important source of social relationships. Nordic countries, with the most developed welfare states, enable young people to leave home and lead independent lives to a greater extent than elsewhere and support the domestic division of labour by providing external childcare, but the family is still regarded as the primary unit of social inclusion.

Some have argued that it is the growing fragmentation of family relationships in developed societies that is the major risk factor for the breakdown of social cohesion (e.g. Apospori and Millar 2003); the rising number of divorced and lone-parent households is seen as evidence of this. Emotional relationships are now more likely to be based more upon the ‘pure relationship of choice’ and can take multiple forms; gay and lesbian relationships are more often recognised, and ‘living apart together’ and the shared households of professional workers or students have become more common as residential units (Giddens 1992). Increasingly, people in Western societies just live alone. The fact that young women now feel able to have children without dependence upon a male breadwinner suggests a way forward rather than backward, but the support of the family of birth is still often what makes it possible. Wider family support, for example from grandparents, can also be important as family relationships become more fragmentary (Hank and Buber 2009), and even if family members are not coresident or local the network of familial relations is a source of solidarity, trust and cooperation as well as emotional support (Crow 2002). The pressures of contemporary working lives and the provision of a variety of state and commercial services have not replaced the family but made it more important as a unit where childcare and reproductive work is managed. Our research on work and care relationships suggested that even where welfare states are most developed, such as in Denmark, support from grandparents can be critical in enabling working couples to manage their lives, and this seems especially to be the case in places such as Portugal or Italy where childcare services are less comprehensive (Abbott et al. 2013b).

The state tends to interact with the institution of the family in four related ways:

- A part of the state’s regulatory role in a decent society is to ensure that families are able to exercise their rights *as families*, which is often not quite the same thing as exercising rights as individuals, particularly when it comes to issues of childcare and responsibility for children.
- At the same time families are nominated as in some sense agents of the state, responsible for ensuring that children have a safe and nurturing environment, decent health and a decent education (see Donzelot 1977) and, sometimes, that older people receive the care they need as they become less able to fend for themselves; the state does not necessarily carry out this function, but rather it regulates families in their exercise of it and takes some responsibility for ensuring that the legislative/regulatory and financial conditions are in place to support their endeavours. Issues of the rights of families against arbitrary intervention by the state – parents’ rights to their children, for example – are a part of this. The wider society and the legislation also determine what a child *is*, in terms of age limits for achieving adult respect, rights and responsibilities or having them thrust upon you. In many societies married women are also denied some or all of the rights they would have as independent adults and ‘infantilised’ as vulnerable people under the ‘parental’ care of their husbands or other male relatives.

- Mostly what goes on in families tends to be treated as none of the state's business, but at the same time the family as a small environment full of intense interaction can be a dangerous place for the vulnerable (Cooper 1971), and the state does intervene within it to protect the interests and sometimes the lives of women and children who are being abused and children who are being exploited or neglected.
- *Because* the family is a source of social inclusion and so tends to damp down social discontents that might otherwise flare up into open violence – and, some would say, because it is a source of the implicit discipline needed to run an industrial world – states tend to consider that they have an interest in its survival as a social institution.

From the point of view of the wider society, we should note, more is not necessarily better when it comes to inclusion at the level of the family. In the Social Cohesion chapter we suggested that *very* cohesive societies might be less decent than looser ones, because promoting cohesion can be a form of social control and a limitation on agency. The opposite is true of social inclusion: where the family and immediate circle of friends becomes the main or even the only source of identity and welfare, too strong an inclusion within it may be the enemy of inclusion in the wider society, as happened to some extent in the CIS countries and the soviet satellites after the fall of the Soviet Union (Kochanowicz 2004, Rose-Ackerman 2001). Similarly, while close bonds within a neighbourhood are an obvious source of inclusion, they may not foster inclusion in the wider society.

As part of a study of life for older people in a town in the North-East of England (Abbott and Sapsford 2005) we looked at one 'estate' on the outskirts of the town which had been built to house middle-income workers in the days of the town's affluence but had fallen on hard times when the local industry collapsed.

In Britain in the late twentieth century the . . . demise of traditional working-class jobs, and the impact of social and economic policies, including the rise of flexible labour markets and the residualisation of social housing, resulted in the 'creation' of geographical concentrations of deprived people. In these 'no hope/no go areas' the young grew up expecting to be unemployed/in marginal employment, those in mid-life had insecure, lowly paid employment, and the young elderly became redundant with no prospect of re-employment or were 'forced' to take early retirement. At the same time they are living in areas that are deteriorating physically, with few facilities or amenities and high levels of disorder, public nuisance and crime. . . . [People who live there] experience normative dissonance when they perceive their area as unfriendly and exhibiting high levels of vandalism, when they see it as run down and with few resources and when they do not see themselves as fitting in. Beyond a negative impact on wellbeing, the lack of shared identification also reduces the possibility of collective action for change; the response to normative dissonance is to retreat or distance oneself from identification with or engagement in the community.

(Abbott and Sapsford 2005: 29–30)

Residents in deprived neighbourhoods may have strong local support from family and from friends, but they lack the more beneficial loose-knit ties that transcend social groups and locality. Social capital depends on networks which bring missing elements into people's lives – human capital (skills and qualifications, 'influence'), economic capital (wealth), cultural capital (ways of viewing and understanding the world) and symbolic capital (prestige and personal qualities). All these are lacking in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, except to those who form their main connections and seek their main support outside the area. Inside it they may retreat into the family, or they may receive support from people like themselves, kin and friends also 'trapped' in the estate, but neither strategy brings new resources to bear on the problems of the locality.

At most, close association with those who are equally deprived may create or nurture the conditions for division, dissent and grievance. It has been suggested (e.g. by Wacquant 2007) that in developed countries low-income and deindustrialised neighbourhoods become concentrations of low-income and multiply deprived people, something which the housing market and housing policies may help to encourage; according to Wacquant these groups are increasingly criminalised so that their incarceration becomes seen as the solution to their many forms of deprivation. Bauman (2007) also identifies social exclusion in terms of the 'surplus' or 'wasted' populations of asylum seekers, refugees, homeless people and so on who are multiplying globally, are not wanted in developed societies and may not even feature in the EU and other statistics, since many do not officially exist (Bauman 2003). Recent urban troubles suggest that it is these kinds of excluded groups who are likely to erupt from time to time in rioting or looting, as they lack any other kind of organized protest (Wacquant 2007), and that such eruptions may indeed be necessary in order for the voices of the marginalized to be heard; a major trigger for the 'Arab Spring' demonstrations which have had a substantial impact on social policy in the Middle East and North Africa was the self-immolation of a street trader out of sheer frustration with living conditions. These studies suggest that the new socially excluded are not only poor and under- or unemployed but are also likely to live with other forms of deprivation and may be caught in a 'cycle of poverty' from which they are unable to escape, not on account of their behaviour but because of lack of opportunities (Townsend 1979).

The phenomenon is not, of course, restricted to the developed world. Places of exclusion are found throughout the world as homeless people cluster in shanty towns around large conurbations. Indigenous or ethnic minorities are forced into ghetto-like communities, sometimes after being forced off their own land. In both the developed and the developing world these spatially excluded neighbourhoods can be ones that are difficult to police (or are not policed by the authorities at all), and therefore their denizens are subject to high rates of crime and violence or fear of crime. Spatial inclusion is therefore an important aspect of social inclusion. People should feel safe to leave their homes and to be able to participate in neighbourhoods without fear of crime, violence or stigmatization; they should be able to enjoy living in their physical environments and be able to form social relationships there.

Networks and social capital

Networks do more than offer support; they are a concrete resource for social living. *Human* capital is what an individual brings to a situation – health and strength, education, knowledge and skills, for example. *Social* capital is the value to be found in social groups – the extent to which networks of acquaintance and friendship make human, material or organisational resources available that are not contained within the ‘purse’ of the immediate group. Michael Woolcock (2001), distinguishes among:

- *Bonding* social capital – ties between people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends and neighbours.
- *Bridging* social capital – more distant ties of similar people, such as loose friendships and workmates.
- *Linking* social capital, which reaches out to unlike people in dissimilar situations, such as those who are entirely outside of the community, thus enabling members to leverage a far wider range of resources than are available in the community. (Woolcock 2001: 13–14)

Bonding capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity. Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. They are also a concrete resource for economic and social survival; it has long been suggested, for example, that social ties and networks are important for finding a job (Granovetter 1974). Bridging social capital can be important for offering life opportunities and depends upon loose ties, even if strong ties are important for emotional support (Putnam 2000).

More broadly, inclusion in networks is part of the substrate of social cohesion (Putnam 2000); social capital provides help to reinforce the norms and values of social behaviour as well as building trust and civil society. While a willingness to cooperate, to survive and prosper (Stanley 2003) is a starting point for social cohesion, there needs to be a shared identity (Moody and White 2003) or at least tolerance and respect for difference. This requires building a shared commitment to the same values and goals, underpinned by reciprocity and mutual trust, which supports cooperation and mutual exchange through social engagement in networks and organisations within and between communities (Colletta and Cullen 2000). More formal participation in voluntary activity, socialising with community groups, active membership of community-based organisations, participation in civic activities and participation in government activities facilitate collective action for mutual benefit and act as a form of ‘capital’ by facilitating the exchange of goods and information and reducing transaction costs (Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2002, Knack 1999). ‘Active citizenship’ at the community level may remain at the micro level of interaction with family, friends and other ‘known persons’ if it involves nothing more complex than becoming a classroom assistant or a care assistant or a cleaner or cook or gardener for a church, mosque or local social institution, but anything more complex than this is likely to require

interaction with regional and state agencies or at least familiarity with and the application of their rules and regulations, so voluntary activity may be inclusive at national as well as local levels.

Gibson (2004) has suggested four specific elements as productive of Social Inclusion: building intergroup reconciliation and trust, political tolerance, support for human rights and respect for political institutions. Building social cohesion can be seen as a process of building cooperation, solidarity (Amstutz 2006) and trust. Putnam (1993) showed that the most successful regional governments and economies in Italy were those that possessed high levels of participation in associational life and in which individuals displayed high levels of trust in social and political institutions. Indeed, Coleman (1988) argues that the perceived benefit of participation is more important in driving participation than trust, so it is possible to see trust as an outcome rather than a prerequisite for social capital formation. Portes and Landolt (2000) suggest, however, that membership of civic organisations may be less important than low social polarisation – the absence of unbridgeable divisions between groups – and the existence of rules that constrain arbitrary government action.

Giddens (1994) argues that governments can create the conditions which enable individuals to participate in social groups/networks and build social capital. The key to governments creating social capital is decentralisation of power (Evans 1996, Skocpol 1996, Warner 1999) and a strong civil society that keeps government responsive (Fox 1996, Potapchuck et al. 1997). Government can put in place incentives for individuals to participate in groups and social networks and mechanisms for mobilising collective action at community level and can facilitate horizontal ties between communities and vertical ties between communities and layers of the state (Fox 1996).

As we said, inclusion at the level of friends and family does not necessarily entail inclusion in the broader society, and sometimes high bonding capital can be a disadvantage for a society. A society with high social capital within groups but low social capital between groups can find that this hinders socioeconomic development and leads to societal breakdown (Colletta and Cullen 2000, Knack and Keefer 1997, Woolcock and Naryan 2000). One response to exclusion is resignation and despair, and this can also have mental health consequences (Wilkinson 1996), but another is to develop countercultures that help deal with the immediate problem but in the end only further exclusion from mainstream society. Paul Willis (1977), for example, described the counterculture of working-class lads in school in England who compensated for their lack of educational attainment by despising those who worked hard and valuing their own anti-educational subculture instead. However, this severely limited their choice of jobs when they left school. Similarly, in the United States the counterculture and coping strategies of black excluded communities serve to disadvantage young black males, who find it difficult to make links outside their own communities or to develop aspirations that might improve their situation (Wilson 1997).

Networks are increasingly maintained through information technology, which is an increasingly important aspect of Social Inclusion. As the telephone gradually

reinforced or supplanted face-to-face communications through the twentieth century, so mobile phones and Internet communications have become increasingly embedded in everyday life. These technologies provide the basis for inclusion in information networks, in online discussions and participation forums and provide sources of social networks, reinforcing existing networks through Facebook, exchange of photographs on Instagram, exchanging social information through Whats App or other social media sites in other languages, and so on (Warshauer 2004). However, they can also be a way of creating new networks and exchanges with strangers through participation forums, online games and dating sites (Wallace 2012). Information can bolster civil society relationships, creating a virtual public space for what Habermas called ‘deliberative democracy’ (Habermas 2002). It can greatly extend the reach of existing civil society organisations, whether they are hiking clubs, football supporters or social and political movements (Wallace et al. forthcoming). Indeed, social protests are increasingly organized through online media, as happened both in the Arab Spring uprisings in and after 2012 and in the Maidan and Anti-Maidan movements in Ukraine in and after 2013 (Castells 2012, Kozachenko 2014).

Information technology is woven into the fabric of social and commercial life in developed countries (Turkle 2013, van Dijk 2012). However, it is not just in the developed world that IT is important. Communications technologies and mobile phones play a key role in developing countries. The lack of landlines might have inhibited their use but has been overtaken by mobile communications. Mobile phones are used to check market prices for those selling goods in Africa or for sending money (even by those with no bank accounts). Communications technologies are increasingly important for accessing education or educational information, health and other public services, for paying bills, for news media and for shopping – in other words for being included in the modern world, no matter where you live. In many ways developing countries have ‘leapfrogged’ over more advanced ones in this respect because they can invest in new technologies, not being invested in the old ones. Hence Romania, one of the poorest countries in Europe, has some of the best digital infrastructure because it was able to lay relatively cheap fibre optic cable, whilst Germany is heavily dependent upon the less efficient and more expensive copper wire. Rwanda, one of the poorest countries in the world, has fibre optic cable laid around the whole country, which puts it ahead of Scotland, one of the richest countries in the world. Not everyone can afford to access these resources in poor countries, but they are there nonetheless.

The functions and elements of social inclusion

Employment

Employment is a major source of inclusion. It is the condition for providing access not only to income but also to full welfare rights in many countries. Beyond income and welfare it also provides people with a sense of purpose, a time structure, social contacts and a meaningful identity, according to a classic

study of the unemployed in the 1930s (Jahoda et al. 1933, Jahoda 1982). One of the first questions on meeting someone is “what do you do?”, and the answer to this question defines important aspects of a person’s identity and role in society. Those who are unemployed are usually poorer than those who are not, but they also suffer worse health and wellbeing and other problems of exclusion (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009), and the problems can be exacerbated decades later through their impact on, for example, pension benefits. This is one of the reasons why the EU has focused so closely on issues of unemployment, especially long-term unemployment.

However, not all employment is good from the point of view of inclusion. Many jobs can be low paid, precarious and exploitative, especially for those without full citizenship. Whilst full employment was a goal of postwar welfare states in Europe, it did not include large numbers of women, who were regarded as dependents of male breadwinners (Lewis 2002), and despite great strides in protecting and improving working conditions in the EU the number in temporary and precarious employment has been growing (Standing 2011). The problem of not finding stable employment is no longer one just for the more marginalized and working-class groups in the labour market but also part of life for a growing army of middle-class graduates (Sennet 1998). Further, when we start to look at employment globally we can see that the kind of stable and regular employment contract that is valued in Europe is not very typical elsewhere. Elsewhere in the world many are employed in subsistence agriculture or live from hand to mouth in the ‘informal economy’ outside of registered employment. People employed in household enterprises, especially women and children, may not be paid at all. Nevertheless, the possibility of making a living is an important form of inclusion, and even in less developed societies regular, registered employment is a way of being included in social security and financial systems.

However, there has perhaps been a tendency in European social policy to put too much emphasis on employment at the expense of other issues. While the concepts of inclusion and exclusion have a long history, specific concern with social exclusion as a problem came to the fore in French social policy in the 1970s, referring mostly to the people who were not included in the social security system because they were unemployed, homeless or not in conventional families with a male breadwinner (Silver 1994). During the 1990s the idea was given prominence by the New Labour government which swept into office with Tony Blair in the UK in 1994. They set up a high-level Social Exclusion Unit to report to the Cabinet about tackling deprivation in the UK, with a focus on multiple forms of disadvantage but often at the expense of more universal models of citizenship. The idea was to target the disadvantaged rather than to improve everyone’s welfare, a goal which was also compatible with more neoliberal models of welfare (Byrne 1999, Wilson 2006). At the level of the EU the idea of social exclusion gained momentum in the 1990s, but again the focus came to be mainly upon low income and unemployment as measures of social exclusion. In terms of education, again it was the most deprived who were the focus, and policy considered problems associated with the poor rather than being concerned with the wellbeing of society as a whole.

This focus by the EU on a reduced set of minimal issues is even more strongly reinforced in the most recent EU policy frameworks embodied in *Europe 2020*. (For a variety of views on this document see Marlier and Natali 2010.) These increasingly targeted and explicit models of social exclusion have a number of drawbacks in terms of inclusion:

- Inclusion in the labour market tends to be seen as the main issue, emphasising the productivist turn in social policies (that problems can be solved by increasing employment or inclusion in the labour market) but drawing attention away from other elements of social exclusion.
- They fail to address the problems of low pay and precarious employment, which keep many in poverty, or the exclusionary force of disability or chronic illness, for the sufferers themselves and often for those (generally women) who have to take time to care for them.
- The individualized model of ‘the worker’ overlooks commitments that, for example, women may have outside the work setting; increasing employment for women may be empowering, but at the cost for women of increasing the double burden of industrial/commercial and domestic labour.
- The focus in general is on victims of inequalities rather than on systems of inequality that produce such victims.
- They increasingly involve conditions to which people have to conform in order to qualify for welfare. For example, you must show that you are seeking work in order to qualify for unemployment benefits or undertake tests and training if you are to qualify for disability benefits. Welfare becomes a neoliberal contractual arrangement with individuals rather than a support to enable *everyone* to participate fully in society (Sulkunen 2009).

This tendency to individualise welfare and consider it a gift from the affluent (perhaps the affluent state) to the deprived individual is pervasive, even when not directly making it a responsibility of the individual. It crops up again, for example, in Anderson’s conception of ‘caring capital’, which is interventions considered ‘caring’ because of the motive or state of mind of those who make them:

‘Caring capital’ is that subset of social capital characterized by compassion, caring, and altruism when these actions are intended for the primary purpose of others’ well-being. The object of altruistic or caring capital is to avoid or reduce suffering of all human beings. For individuals and networks of communities to come to value caring capital would transform them into good societies.

(Anderson 2012)

It has long been time to open the field to a larger range of sources of inclusion and exclusion in the three main fields of markets, services and spaces (see World Bank 2013 for a discussion). Markets include land, housing and labour (in some parts of the world access to land is a key issue in exclusion and inclusion, especially

for displaced indigenous minorities and for women) but also inclusion in financial systems and services which can determine access to loans and social security. Services include water, information (IT, telecommunications, media), education, health and electricity. Space includes people being allowed to participate and not being excluded from, for example, sports clubs, shops or cinemas on the basis of their colour, gender or ethnicity (as happened in South Africa under the Apartheid regime or in the US under the Jim Crow laws).

Gender

In all societies gender can be a source of exclusion on account of family relationships, and the social status of women and girls in most societies is very low. Estimates by Amartya Sen (1990) suggested that about one million women are missing in the world; being female gives a biological advantage in developed Western countries in terms of survival and life expectancy, generally leading to female/male population ratios of 1.05 or higher, but the ratios in South and West Asia and China can be as low as 0.94. This is likely to be on account of selective abortion, neglect of girl children, lack of reproductive healthcare for adult women and the sexual and other violence meted out to them (Krisof and WuDunn 2010). Women are often excluded from voting or from going into public space unaccompanied and can be particularly vulnerable in times of war and civil conflict, being subject to rape and/or taken to be child brides and/or slaves. In some societies women are excluded from education and/or employment, formally by civil or religious regulation or informally through the society's expectations (where 'the society' tends to mean the male consensus). This gives us a list of discriminations which we would think a society should tackle in order to include its women and girls as full citizens. Legislating against discrimination, however, may be necessary but is likely not to be enough. Increasing women's legal access to education, asset ownership, employment and political participation will not result in social justice for women unless traditional customs and practices that have subordinated and marginalized them are challenged and moderated. Social institutions have been shown to be the main factor constraining women's and girls' freedom of choice in economic activities and their ability to participate in community and political activities, to access resources such as financial credit, ICT, education and health and to enhance their self-esteem (Abbott and Malunda 2015, Morrison and Jutting 2004).

Including women in the political process, for example through parliamentary representation, can improve the situation for all women, but women are greatly underrepresented in political structures in most countries. Enabling women to participate in civil society, to belong to or form civil associations, is an important way for them to gain a voice in their society. However, in order to achieve this they must be able to have access to public space by being able to go out without fear or censorship. This has been tackled effectively in the Nordic countries, which have an explicit commitment to gender equality throughout public life and many female political representatives and leaders, and in Rwanda, where there has likewise

been an explicit commitment to improving women's representation. It remains the case, however, there as elsewhere, that women universally are expected to take more responsibility for the care of others, which undermines their ability to participate in public life, including the world of work (Therborn 2004). It is also to be noted that having a fair proportion of female members of parliament and so on does not necessarily mean that there will also be a fair proportion of women in the higher reaches of business or the civil service.

Economic benefits of equal access

Social inclusion has instrumental value for societies; social exclusion is costly to societies as well as individuals (World Bank 2013). Economic and social factors interact in, for example, the cost of crime and the cost of poor health and early death (Wilkinson 2005, Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). The social exclusion of some of a country's residents has social consequences for all. Income inequality can reduce growth because the rich are less likely to spend additional income than those that are less well off (Stiglitz 2012), and the elite capture of resources can trap entire countries in low development (Savoia et al. 2010). Cook (2012) argues that social exclusion has been a barrier to economic recovery in the UK and that the UK is locked into low demand and thus low output. He estimates that, excluding health costs, the costs to the Scottish economy of the social exclusion of young people is more than £8 million a week, and while this figure is an indicative estimate rather than a firm measurement the point is a valid one. Bivand and Simmonds (2014) argue that reducing unemployment and low pay has a positive impact on the economic output of local economies and thence the whole economy. They estimate that the average per-capita gain to the government and the economy from out-of-work claimants moving into work at the UK living wage is £14,436 a year. This takes account of benefits savings, administration savings, direct taxation, reduced health and crime costs, direct increase to output and multiplier effects. Zoninsein (2004) argues that the exclusion of those of Afro-Caribbean descent and indigenous groups from fully participating in their countries' investment in human capital and productive employment in Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Peru contributed to slow economic growth as well as to their own lower mean earnings relative to white groups. De Laat and colleagues (2010) argue that the inclusion of the Roma is an economic opportunity for Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia – that there is an economic rationale for their inclusion. Their analysis suggests that the inclusion of the Roma would increase GDP by more than 3 per cent and government budgets by more than 4 per cent annually if they shared the same labour market opportunities as the majority population. Lee Badgett (2014) suggests that stigma and the exclusion of people who adopt nontraditional sexual preferences in social institutions such as education, employment, families and healthcare has an impact on economic development through lower productivity and lower output as a result of employment discrimination and constraints on labour supply, inefficient investment in human capital because of lower returns to education and discrimination in educational settings, loss of output as a result of

health disparities that are linked to exclusion and the cost of the social and health services required to address the effects of exclusion that might be better spent elsewhere. In general, any form of employment discrimination has its costs in loss of labour productivity and output.

The inclusion of women in society as full citizens enables them to make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of their country (Elborgh-Woytek et al. 2013), and when they receive and control income it has a multiplier effect on their family, their community and at the national level, reducing poverty, improving women's health and improving children's welfare (Buvinic et al. 2008, World Bank 2011). Equal access to inputs raises the productivity of female-owned enterprises, and equal employment opportunities enable employers to make better use of the available talent pool.

As well as giving them access to employment and resources, the full inclusion of women as citizens means a dramatic reduction in the prevalence of gender-based violence. Intimate partner violence controls women and subordinates them, and it gives rise to financial costs for the community as a whole. An estimate of the cost of gender-based violence in the EU alone has been made by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2014), taking into account direct costs such as medical expenses, legal costs and crisis centres and indirect costs such as impacts on the productivity and earnings of women who are abused (early death, disability, poor health) as well as loss of productivity and lower tax revenues because of the imprisonment of offenders and the direct costs of their imprisonment. They estimate that the total cost of violence against women in the EU in 2012 was more than €2,250 *billion*. This does not include personal costs and physical and emotional costs.

Division and cohesion

Social divisions, whether they are based on racial/ethnic identity, economic position, generational differences, gender or any other socially created difference, provide seeds around which conflict and dissent can grow. Economic divisions can readily make for social division as well – for example by the formation of 'no hope' communities which see no future, regard 'the outside world' as their oppressors and actively exclude those from outside the 'defensive lager'. Bea Campbell (1993) ably documents one such 'no go' housing estate in England, but there are similar deprived communities, slums and shanty towns across the world. Ethnic exclusion/discrimination can result in civic unrest, civil war and genocide – examples would be racial unrest in Europe, wars between blacks and whites or between immigrant groups (Irish and Italian 'criminal families', for example) in the United States, the continued wariness between the two factions in Northern Ireland, tribal unrest occasionally flaring up into riot and civil war in many African countries and the continued distrust of Tutsi for Hutu and vice versa in Rwanda. Social justice is a human right, but it is also what makes societies sustainable. Social inclusion, together with social empowerment, provides the basis for agency and social interaction. Performance (participation in institutions)

develops a shared understanding of the expected ways of behaving, of values, of interpersonal trust and solidarity and engenders loyalty; inclusion at this level is therefore prerequisite for Social Cohesion.

Our argument is that inclusion, like exclusion, is multifaceted and should be seen as a set of processes rather than an end state. By focusing upon inclusion rather than exclusion, we can address a whole range of issues such as family and social networks, civil society and neighbourhood environments that can help provide meaningful lives and a decent society. Social Inclusion is a positive force for a decent society.

Measuring social inclusion

Our measurement of Social Inclusion covers eight domains: poverty, the world of work, financial inclusion, gender inclusion, friends and family, community activity/active citizenship, community safety and human rights.

Poverty, we have seen, has a strong negative relationship with social inclusion, as well as its role in undermining economic security, because it excludes people from normal activities. There are a number of good poverty measures available; we have used the World Bank's statistics for those surviving on \$1.25 per day or less (corrected for cost of living) and statistics on the share of a country's income or consumption that belongs to the bottom quartile of the income/consumption distribution, as respectively absolute and relative measures.

Work inclusion is a related domain, and here the indicators are whether the person was in the labour force at the time of questioning and whether they were actually employed, as measures of the extent to which people are included in society by virtue of having a work role.

Financial inclusion is another public-sphere issue – whether people have access to financial institutions. Statistics are collected in several countries not just on whether people have a bank account but whether they have savings or loans and even whether they are able to access credit from for example shops, but the first of these is the only form of financial inclusion about which we have information for a sufficient number of countries.

Gender inclusion is the extent to which women play a part in public affairs and public-sphere activities. We have used the proportion of women in parliament and, more generally, the proportion of women in the labour force as a ratio of to the proportion of men. We should have liked to include a measure of women in decent jobs or women in senior posts, but again these are not available for a sufficient number of countries, nor are the various broader 'gender' indices that include health and educational opportunities.

Family and friends is a composite of survey questions on whether people have someone among those close to them on whom they can rely in times of trouble and how easy it is to make friends (and therefore the likely size of this circle). More specific measures – for example, the role specifically of family in providing welfare and support – were not available. Also, one might argue that the family can mean very different things in different parts of the world, being the main

source of welfare and inclusion in some regions but involving a smaller and more emotional set of relationships in others, so it is not clear that this is measuring the same thing in different countries. Whether people feel *safe in their community* is another aspect of micro-inclusion, and we have used survey questions on whether people feel safe to go out in their locality at night.

Community activity (or *active citizenship*) is an amalgam of two concepts – the extent to which people are literally active in their community and the extent to which they are active in a broader sense. The domain covers participation in civil society directly and, more indirectly, political participation.

The final domain is *human rights*: as argued, human rights gives a framework for the conditions of inclusion enabling different kinds of individuals and social groups to participate in society. It is measured here by the acceptance of UN conventions on human rights (assessed from United Nations records) and the breach of human rights as measured in the Fragile States Index.

5 Social empowerment

Agency and its context

People are empowered when they can develop their full potential – the capacities to participate fully in the daily life of their society and actively influence the immediate and more distant social and physical environment in which they live. The concept is also about people being able to claim and exercise their rights – about social justice and collective action – and about the enhancement of both autonomy and solidarity (Stewart 2001). It is about enabling people individually and collectively to make a better life for themselves and changing power relations so that all citizens gain and exert influence over the political, social and economic process and resources that determine their opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, class or other social difference. Empowerment is a process that expands the range of choices that people can make and enables people to make informed choices so that they can lead a way of life they value (Sen 1999, 2009). Achieving the empowerment of its citizens, for a society, involves dismantling structural inequalities and recognising the fundamental equality of all citizens in law and in practice: the rights of citizenship. (The issue of social inclusion and who is to count as ‘a citizen’ has been discussed in Chapter 4.) It is about empowering people socially as well as economically – about both redistribution and recognition – without reducing the one to the other (Fraser 2001). There is a dialectical relationship between agency and structure: structures enable groups and individuals to develop their capabilities and provide an environment in which they can exercise them as social peers on a par with one another, but when groups exercise their capabilities purposively they may well also modify the structures. The term ‘empowerment’ is used in different senses according to the political model underlying proposed social intervention – to improve the living conditions of oppressed groups, to develop in individuals the knowledge of what is possible for them and the will and belief to work towards it, and literally to facilitate actions by bringing about a delegation of power (Fairweather et al. 2001: 135).

‘Power’, as used in ‘empowerment’, is about the power to do (*pouvoir*) rather than power as domination (Stewart 2001). Domination may have to be overcome – people may have to challenge and overcome the force that is used to prevent them claiming their rights – but mostly the concern is with the more Foucauldian

use of the word (e.g. Foucault 1975, 1979), as ‘controlling the agenda’ in such a way that desired activities are declared to be coherent and possible – having the knowledge or perhaps *creating the possibility of knowledge*, by taking control of the discourse, and having the skills and resources to do what then becomes possible and the will to do so. Empowerment is about giving people and communities the capability to change their lives and ensuring that the structures are in place to make this feasible. The concept of Empowerment has been most fully developed in feminist writing and development studies: the empowerment of women and the empowerment of the poor.

Capabilities, the ability to do and achieve something, are empowering. However, being empowered is not just having capabilities but being able to exercise them – that is, recognising that one has them and then having the scope to use them. (Sen uses ‘functionings’ for capabilities which can be exercised.) Being able to exercise capabilities involves access, participation and control and requires that people recognise their self-worth and understand their rights. Furthermore, the effective exercise of power tends to involve identifying with a collective; empowering women, for example, means enabling them as women to claim their fundamental right to equality with men. This means not only giving them equitable access to health services, education, training and political participation but also making them aware of their rights as women and overcoming the deeply embedded patriarchal structures that have subordinated and exploited women historically. The economic empowerment of women by making paid employment available to them all too often just adds another burden to their daily lives while men and governments benefit from their increased productivity; it is not empowering unless there is some reapportioning of domestic labour. It may also involve readjustment of the household’s customary ways of dealing with money if the women are actually to finish up with some of it in their pockets. In other words empowerment in the decent society is not just about enhancing an individual’s performance but about securing social conditions that permit the active participation of individuals and collectives in activities that bring them benefit.

Empowerment is partly about self-understanding – about gaining control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial) and over ideologies (beliefs, values, attitudes). It is about expanding not only the boundaries of possibilities but also the *horizons* of possibilities, of what people *imagine* themselves as able to be and do. Educating working-class children is not just about giving them skills for employment or for life more generally; it is about expanding their understanding of what it is possible for them to achieve. Power is embedded in social relations, and Empowerment is fundamentally about changing power relations, generally through collective action, so that people can exercise choices. The right to do something can be granted by a law or regulation, but it empowers people only when it becomes more than something that can be acquired or bestowed. For someone to be empowered, the normative framework has to change; there has to be general agreement that the right exists, to the point eventually of taking it for granted. Empowerment is an ongoing process, a journey along a path that continually involves overcoming obstacles and setbacks on the way. Empowerment

means there are no second-class citizens; people are fully empowered when (a) they have the same rights as other people, the same knowledge of what their rights are and the same freedom to exercise them and (b) what can be achieved is sufficient for a decent life. Empowerment is not about shared misery but about shared opportunity.

There will always be 'second-class citizens' in all countries, however – people who are entitled to some of the rights of others but not all. Sometimes this is simply a political matter; no state can afford to give the franchise to everyone who happens to be within its borders on election night, for example. Sometimes the limitations are more conceptual and discursive, to do with where boundaries of competence are drawn. No one would argue that human infants are full citizens in the same way as adults are, for example; they may have the full diet of rights (excepting the right to control their own life), but they are quite rightly not considered capable of exercising the responsibilities of an adult or even of forming a full understanding of what their rights are and making a claim for them. Infants are always under tutelage, with key decisions made on their behalf, usually by parents (though the state may assume these duties if the parents are deemed not to be exercising their responsibilities correctly – which is always disputed territory in family law). There will always be dispute about when a child becomes an adult and acquires an adult's responsibilities along with the full range of adult rights. Sometimes children will claim adult rights and adults will resist, and sometimes the adult world will force a right on the child which he or she does not want. For example, children of poor farmers and shopkeepers have always worked in their parents' business, and for the most part they want the right to do so, as a symbol of their progress towards adult status and adult powers of choice, but such work may be seen as exploitation and a misuse of power by those who have power or influence over the dominant discourse, who may assert the child's right to have a 'normal' childhood. The boundaries between these two are disputed, as is the age at which one becomes an adult or 'nearly an adult'. Current or relatively recent age boundaries in England range from 8 (the age at which a child is normally considered competent to act as a witness to a crime – though this may depend on a judge's determination of the particular child's competence, and children younger than this can give evidence if the judge pronounces them competent), 10 (the age of criminal responsibility, subject to a judge's determination of competence to stand trial), through 16 (the age at which one may consent to medical procedures – though *refusing* consent may be overridden by the parents or the courts) the age at which one may join the army (though 18 is actually the limit under most circumstances) and the age of sexual consent (though this can be as low as 13 under some circumstances and as high as 21 for male homosexual relationships until recently). The upper limit is 18, the age of legal competence to vote, contract debts, own and dispose of property without oversight and so on (21 until relatively recently) or even 30 (the age at which many Victorian fathers considered their male children competent to manage financial affairs without advice and oversight, judging by their wills). Women were infantilised in Victorian society – middle-class women were considered frail creatures to be protected from life's

burdens by their men and as incapable of ownership or financial management, though their working-class sisters were considered capable of lumping sacks up from cellars and selling sex for money – and some of the attitude underlying this persists into the present day. Working-class men, and particularly peasants, have been infantilised in the past by landowners and industrialists who do not consider them competent to take political or financial decisions. The boundaries of adulthood, in the sense of full competence, are a disputed area in any case, and they become theoretically more problematic still if the dominant group have control of the information that is made available to the ‘infants’.

Thus while individuals and social groups can be empowered, their empowerment takes place under conditions that are not of their own choosing; structures of constraint act as a brake on their ability to make choices that are in their interest, and the predominant ideology is a part of these structures. While legal and policy frameworks and service provision are enabling, they do not constitute Empowerment in themselves; they become part of Empowerment only when individuals and/or social groups are able to use their material resources and capacities to change the way in which they relate to others in their social world. Giving women joint *ownership* of property with their partners empowers them only if they are also able to exercise joint *control* over the property. Empowerment, then, means transforming social norms and values that disempower some groups and individuals while advantaging others.

This means that Empowerment is always part of a power struggle that involves being able to overcome the resistance of others (Weber 1922). Social power – power which can enable individuals and social groups to claim and exercise their rights or can hinder or even prevent them doing so – is mainly exercised through social institutions. Social institutions generally advance the rights and interests of some groups at the expense of others, thus recreating systemic power inequalities based on class, race, gender and/or other characteristics. While Empowerment can be a win/win situation, it more generally involves those that already have power giving up some of their power/advantage or at least perceiving themselves as doing so. This can be seen as a struggle, with those that already have power/advantage striving to maintain the boundaries of their position against those that are seeking to enhance their own position. Empowerment is therefore a political process; the logic of Empowerment involves dynamics of legitimized sharing, distribution and redistribution. As Michel Foucault (1969, 1979) has demonstrated, institutionalised power is everywhere and is instantiated in even mundane everyday social practices and relations. This means that the empowerment of individuals has to be through their self-organisation and increasing their self-determination in all areas of activity, involving the restructuring of decision-making hierarchies along with changes in ideology (Fraser 1989). This requires collective action by groups sharing similar interests and the dismantling of structures of constraint (Folbre 1994). It means not just opening opportunity structures up and giving wider choice but also raising the awareness (consciousness) of subordinated groups and giving them a voice. Changing institutional practices is often difficult, not just because of the resistance of those that are advantaged by them but because institutional

practices are often deeply embedded and have persisted over long periods of time. Social change requires the production and acceptance of new social truths which can cement social practices – for example, that women are human and have the same human rights as men.

Empowerment and capability

In the Decent Society Model, like the Social Quality Model, Empowerment links how people live together and how they are able to exercise their fundamental human rights (citizenship rights) as individuals and as members of various groups (e.g. by class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, age, disability). It provides the foundation for the social as an interactive process. It provides the capabilities for securing sufficient economic resources (Economic Security), becoming integrated into social relationships (Social Inclusion) and being able to trust relationships (Social Cohesion). Conversely, the preconditions for Empowerment are distributive justice (Economic Security) and reciprocal recognition (Social Inclusion). It is the basis on which the other components can be built, but at the same time it is the outcome of them. Furthermore, it is about enabling people to influence state institutions and decision-making process so that policies take account of the needs of all citizens, requiring the inclusion of all groups in the policy-making process, strengthening accountability and enabling trust to develop between different interest groups, thus increasing social cohesion. This can include new forms of direct engagement as well as European concepts of democratic governance (OECD 2012, Unsworth and More 2012).

Central to understanding Empowerment is Sen's *capability approach*: that social arrangements should be such that people have a genuine, real and effective freedom to promote or achieve the functionings they value (Sen 1999, 2009). The capability approach places an emphasis on achievement, the conversion of resources so that desired outcomes are achieved. Capability is what enables people to use resources to achieve valued outcomes; for example, education (resource) enables us to secure employment (capability) which produces an adequate income on which to live (functioning). Health services (resource) bring good health within reach (capability) and improve our health and how well we function (functioning). Sen emphasises the freedom of individuals and communities to shape their own destiny – to be able to take control of the direction of their own lives. This involves agency and opportunity. However, freedom is conditional on opportunity structures both for gaining capabilities and for exercising them, and our actions are embedded in social relationships and conditioned by social norms. While the capability approach is essentially people-centred, it recognises that individuals and their opportunities are embedded in a social context of social relationships and opportunity structures. Thus while the approach is ethically individualistic, meaning that every individual is taken into account, it is not methodologically individualistic. Sen's focus on an individual's achieving capabilities does de-emphasize the importance of community empowerment (Evans 2002, Ibrahim 2006) and the capabilities that individuals can enjoy only as part of a group; the

capability approach is framed in terms of freedom but not solidarity (Dean 2009). However, Sen's approach can be complemented by incorporating collective capabilities (Evans 2002, Thapa et al. 2012). Collective capabilities are the property of groups such as trade unions, political parties, women's groups; it is by collective action that a group is able to achieve desired outcomes (Evans 2002, Ibrahim 2006). Groups provide an arena for formulating shared values and preferences and instruments for pursuing them even in the face of opposition.

Thus Empowerment involves the growth of individual opportunity but also the removal of external constraints on seizing opportunities. Although the ability to participate in social, economic and political opportunities is facilitated by individual capabilities, it is constrained at the same time by societal structures. While Sen recognises the importance to empowerment of social institutions and the need for a theoretical framework within which to explore intergroup relations (Sen 1993, 1999) he does not develop one in his analysis (Bagchi 2000). Sen's approach does not take account of the ways in which structural inequalities between groups confine human possibilities – he does not analyse the class or gendered nature of the state in contemporary societies. He does not locate the origins of rights and freedoms in social relations of dominance and subordination, nor does he discuss the benefits/incentives for one group to constrain the freedom of another. By failing to do this, capability theory is unable to generate the kind of recommendations needed to *promote* capabilities (Deneulin 2008) – that is, to progress empowerment. It is not only that we live in social relationships of reciprocity but that the terms on which we are able to be members of families and communities matter as much as our individual freedom – how we can be 'selves-in-relationship' (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 2000). Empowerment is not just about individuals' or groups' capabilities but about recognising the rights of others, recognising our responsibilities to others and respecting others as creatures defined by difference (Fraser 2001, Honneth 1995). The capabilities approach points to the importance of empowerment, but because it remains essentially a liberal theory it distracts attention from the politics of need or requires reinterpretation and does not challenge the roots of social injustice or acknowledge the power struggles in which our daily lives are embedded (Dean 2009).

Nevertheless, as Robeyns (2008) argues, the approach does provide a framework for understanding what social and political reforms are necessary in order to empower people while recognising difference. We can, for example, ask what political and economic reforms are necessary for women and men to make genuine choices between the time they spend working in the public sphere and the time they spend providing care in the domestic sphere. Indeed, she argues that it takes a broader account of difference and takes into account being empowered to do things that are not part of being able to participate in society. Furthermore, it does not assume a notion of 'normality' but is concerned to empower *everyone*, whatever the level of disability or frailty, to the maximum extent possible. The capability approach also alerts us to the fact that people need to have the basic capabilities to function as a precondition for participation. Economic Security (redistribution) is essential to enable people to develop their basic capabilities into

functionings. Finally it alerts us to the importance of nonfinancial empowerment. It challenges the economic rationale for investing in improving people's capabilities and their lives. Education, for example, is about more than enabling people to get employment, and empowerment can be about gaining self-respect and esteem as well as making goods/delivering services and earning money.

Sen's approach is deliberately open-ended because it has to be operationalized differently in different contexts and for different people/groups; there are not necessarily universal capabilities (other, perhaps, than education), and what matters is what the individual or group holds as valuable. It is a framework for normative assessment but does not itself define the content of the norms. Using a participatory methodology for eliciting capabilities, as advocated by Sen (2004b), Clarke (2002) found that most people in South Africa shared a common vision of 'the good' which included jobs, housing, education, income, family and friends, religion, health, food, good clothes, recreation and relaxation, safety and economic security. Much the same would be found in any other country.

That what people want should be the sole determinant of what they should get, however, is open to debate. Some would say that subjective indicators are the best and indeed the only appropriate basis for fair and open policy making (see, for example, Veenhoven 2002). Erikson (1993), however, has argued that what satisfies people and what they aspire to may reflect their state of adaptation to current conditions, tend towards preservation of the *status quo* and, paradoxically, limit the extent to which agency can be exercised (see Cobb 2000). The latter tends to be the position we have taken in this book.

The elements of empowerment

A decent society is one that provides equitable opportunities for people to develop their capabilities and to exercise them so that everyone can achieve their potential. To facilitate economic, social and political empowerment on a functional level a society needs to provide access to equitable and responsive education and health services, economic opportunities and social protection, information, political participation and accountability and cultural resources. Empowerment also means having control over one's body, being informed and being able to enjoy leisure and recreational activities; it is about increasing quality of life as well as wellbeing.

The list of Empowerment indicators could potentially be very long, but at the very least they should cover the following issues if possible:

- *Social Empowerment* is about the provision of decent education and health services (public, preventative and curative) so that people are able to participate fully in social, economic and political life. It would also include other basic foundations for achieving one's capabilities, such as the communication infrastructure. Apart from its direct applications to the world of work, education opens up the possibility of change (a) by giving access to information and so showing what is possible and (b) by making critical analysis

of political and ethical concepts possible and so weakening the hold of the discursive *status quo*. Secondary and higher education in particular may increase the likelihood of

. . . providing downtrodden groups with articulate and well informed spokespersons. . . The core of the US Civil Rights movement were college students, a fearless vanguard in the Freedom Summer of 1964. The Feminist movement arose as a mass movement among students and young academics. Gay Liberation Fronts and organised Lesbianism emerged too from the student movements and milieu of 1968.

(Therborn 2013: 142)

- We counted the extent to which education forms part of the social wage and is therefore within the reach of all as an element in the Economic Security quadrant, but the extent to which it is delivered and achieved in practice is a precondition for developing capabilities and so belongs under Empowerment. Good health, similarly, is a precondition for Empowerment – poor health and early mortality prevent people and groups developing their potential – and so while health expenditure is counted in the Economic Security quadrant, the achievement of good health and the range and extent of health-related provision (both medical and public health) assess a condition for Empowerment. The growing role of the Internet and social media perhaps has a similar effect; beyond business, educational and informational applications, they open us up as never before to the views, experiences and aspirations of people and groups we would not meet in our face-to-face lives.
- *Economic Empowerment* is the capacity of men and women to be able to make choices over the productive activities in which they will engage and the availability of decent jobs. There are economic elements in all of the quadrants, and we have counted financial inclusion and inclusion in the world of work as aspects of Social Inclusion in the previous chapter, but the availability of jobs is part of the opportunity structure of empowerment, as is whether people say they have choices over their work lives, and the availability of *decent* jobs is another indicator that would belong here. In developing countries and where people practice agriculture and/or animal husbandry as a necessity for survival, ownership of or access to land is also a crucial issue, but there are no good world statistics which would also give a figure for people in developed countries.
- *Political Empowerment and governance issues*: At the level of the state this means that rules and law should enhance the rights of all citizens and not serve as instruments for the arbitrary domination of one group by another. The ability to claim and exercise rights should not be ‘favour dependent’. Human rights as such – whether states accept them formally and whether they are seen as respecting them in practice – have been counted here as part of Social Inclusion, as indicators of the extent to which we are accorded citizenship and the status of adult human beings, and corruption and its control has been counted as a part of Social Cohesion, but the classic freedoms of thought,

movement, association and religion belong under Empowerment. Political Empowerment, which is about being able to influence policy, make demands and hold the state accountable, depends on freedom of speech and association. While political pluralism and the legitimation of collective action – the right to disagree with how things are being managed and to organise with others to make that disagreement effective – are not essential for a good life, we tend to regard them as essential for a society which is to be regarded as decent. Several regimes which are strong in terms of social cohesion and social inclusion fall short when it comes to empowering their citizens because they will not permit dissent.

- *Psychological Empowerment*, finally, is the willingness to think of oneself as efficacious and the perception of the social and institutional world as one where it is possible to achieve what one sets out to achieve – what psychologists would variously term locus of control, self-esteem, self-efficacy or positive self-image. This is the opposite of the belief that ‘nothing I do seems to have any effect, so there’s no point in even trying’ (because I am incompetent or under the control of powerful others or because the outcome is a product of chance, fate or destiny and out of my control). This, along with trust, is the exception to our general rule that assessing whether the *conditions* for achievement of quadrant values are present rather than whether the values are being achieved in practice. In these cases people’s psychological states are social facts – facts about the societies where people are able to take up opportunities and know that they have such an ability, as opposed to those where this is rare.

Measuring empowerment

Political empowerment

Freedom House has subindexes giving expert ratings of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association, and their Political Pluralism measure is an indicator of the extent to which politics may be debated and opposing views put forward. Other aspects of the concept are not measured for a sufficiently large number of countries in the international statistics. We have not located systematic information on religious freedom worldwide collected in sufficient detail to permit anything more sophisticated than a ‘yes/no’ categorisation or at best three or four categories on a rating scale, and this does not generate much variation among countries and is not adequate for our purposes.

Social empowerment

- *The Conditions for Health*: Access to improved sanitation, and access to improved water supplies (not clean water in the sense of the developed world, that could be drunk safely straight from the tap, but water with most of the impurities and infestations removed) are given as a percentage of population

in the World Development Indicators database (World Bank). Water and sanitation are essential public health concerns, and in the developed world it has been found that their improvement had a greater effect on mortality and child/infant mortality than the preventive programmes (e.g. immunisation) that followed after the major public health reforms (McKeown 1976). The Human Development Indicators (UNDP) give the number of doctors per thousand population and stand for the availability of formal curative medicine.

- *Mortality and morbidity*: Life expectancy at birth in years is given in the World Development Indicators. There is no objective world measure of general morbidity, and we have avoided ‘how do you feel’ questions about health, even though the general experience is that they correlate very well with more objective measures, but the Gallup World Poll has a question on whether people have a condition which prevents them from doing any of the things people of their age can normally do, which though answered by individuals is likely to be an accurate report of the extent to which poor health limits activity beyond the age norm.
- *Education*: The Human Development Indicators give average years of schooling among the population, and the World Development Indicators give primary school completion rate and adult literacy (15+). We should have liked to include secondary schooling and higher education, but there are too many missing values across the world.
- *Communication*: The Human Development Indicators include Internet users as a percentage of population, and the World Development Indicators do the same for mobile telephone subscriptions. The World Bank also has statistics on the percentage of the population with access to electricity, which is essential for both telephony and IT/digital communication, as well as being an empowering resource in its own right.

Information on roads worldwide is available from a couple of sources, but it is expressed in kilometres and would need correction for population size and/or physical size of country, and it is sometimes more than 10 years out of date.

Economic empowerment

As we said, some of the indicators we might have used here are already in service in a different quadrant, and we will not build in correlation between quadrants artificially by using identical indicators. The following Gallup Poll survey items are of relevance here, however:

- This is a good place to start a new business.
- This is a good time to find a job.

and the former can be strengthened by the use of various ‘ease of doing business’ indices. The ILO is also exploring the collection of information on what they call

‘decent employment’, which would be very relevant to this domain, but there is as yet no global output from the project.

Psychological empowerment

Among the surveys, the European Social Survey and both the ‘Values’ surveys are rich sources of data in this area, but they do not cover enough countries for our purposes. Gallup Poll items which are relevant would be:

- Satisfied with your freedom to decide what you do with your life.
- People in this country can get ahead by working hard.

Similar questions can be found in the World Values Survey. Freedom House offers an expert rating of the degree of personal autonomy afforded in the different countries which can also be included under this heading.

6 Social quality in transitional societies

A summary of research

Developing research: towards social quality

In this chapter we chart the development of the current project from its starting point in a broadly sociological analysis of health and wellbeing and a broadly Social Indicators approach to the prediction of satisfaction with life in a variety of populations. We came to use the Social Quality Model to organize our indicators meaningfully, and from this we went on to a more fundamental application of its underlying ‘theory of society’ to provide an evidence base for governmental practice. This has led us to what we now call the Decent Society Model.

Starting with a concern to explain a collapse in health in the former Soviet Union after its dissolution we brought sociological explanations to bear, considering physical morbidity and mortality less as matters to be explained in their own right than as symptoms of a broader social malaise consequent on the collapse of a social and economic system. The extensive knowledge of eight countries which we built up during two long and large-scale research projects made it clear that there were not going to be viable simple answers or monolithic solutions. We became concerned, as many sociologists were at the time, to dislodge economic growth from its central position as the only factor worth considering when comparing countries; while the economic sphere is determining in the last instance, we found we needed to explore the many semi-autonomous social processes that develop alongside economic change. Human rights and justice were important elements to consider in the development of countries in transition, but they were no more sufficient than economic growth as sole explanations of what was going on. We were also concerned to show the constructed nature of the social world – that beliefs, opinions, attitudes have an effect over and above ‘objective’ changes and that the kind of world we think we live in is one determinant of how we behave, individually and as groups and as nations.

After an initial concern with rising mortality we explored the determinants of satisfaction and/or happiness – what appeared to underlie the extent to which citizens approved of how their nation was governed and felt included and empowered by it. It became apparent that the Social Indicators approach was not a sufficient base for how governments should handle societies in transition; it did not identify how the transition should be steered within the available resources. Descriptively

it is useful in producing understanding, and from a careful and well theorised description it is possible to evaluate a country's progress and perhaps suggest courses of action that governments might want to take. Its limitation, however, is that it does not emanate from a holistic and explicit model of society that is separate from the model of welfare which gives rise to the indicators. The choice and definition of domains tends to be based on

an extensive review of theoretical concepts of welfare and an exploration of political goals of societal development at the European level

and conceived as a mechanism

to continuously monitor and analyse the development of welfare as well as general trends of social change in European societies.

(Noll 2002)

This tends to mean that it draws its conclusions at the level of the domain. One could say, on the basis of regression analysis, that education and health were obviously important for satisfaction, and so perhaps it would be a good thing to provide more health or more education, but not why nor how the effect would occur nor what precisely was going on in interaction with other 'social goods'. Also the approach developed in a strongly Eurocentric and welfare-centred way, focused on the more affluent 'older' European countries for which standard measures are more easily available. It represents the fruit of several decades of work and campaigning by sociologists and others to develop a series of indicators to understand wellbeing/quality of life which go beyond the purely economic. However, more is needed if understanding is to be turned into praxis.

Thus the need for an underlying model of how societies work began to be obvious, and this is what the Social Quality approach allowed us to provide. Once we moved to Rwanda, where two of us spent a number of years, it quickly became obvious that understanding alone would not be sufficient and that what the country needed was advice on what to do about it. What was needed was to get inside the 'black box' of government and understand how theories of change bring about their results in particular places at particular times, affected by history and political will as well as by current circumstances. We needed to look at the effects of current changes and stability in relation to the foundations of policy frameworks, and it was evident that in Rwanda the government was already thinking along these lines and working on the basic 'conditions of society' to bring about social changes which would render the events of the past unnecessary and unrepeatable; 'never again' is one of the country's slogans.

Rwanda was something of a blank canvas when it came to policy analysis; the destruction of the regime of the past was not latent/underlying but patent and evident on the surface, and all policy was new and focused on building a stable and sustainable, civilised society. This led to a move back from experiences and perceptions towards the physical, structural and discursive infrastructure – the

‘conditions for providing decent lives’ – which is manipulable by, for example, government. The model we eventually developed remained faithful to the notion of constructed realities in that it allowed for choice and agency but carried out in circumstances which were not necessarily what the agent might have chosen. Our research using this model has demonstrated that the Social Quality framework offers an analytic basis for examining societies outside the developed world, even those which do not fit the original assumptions of a Western/Northern democratic form of government and a more or less developed welfare state. The paradigm is a very useful lens through which to regard countries which are still developing and/or recovering from socioeconomic catastrophe or in the process of postconflict reconstruction. We have shown that even in the most deprived societies all four quadrants contribute towards explaining satisfaction with life.

The former Soviet Union: countries in transition

The Soviet Union broke down as a viable collective state in the period around 1990, and we have carried out research to identify the societal consequences of this dramatic transition and the variables that had the greatest effect on citizens’ satisfaction with their lives.

- The countries that emerged in that period suffered an enormous decline in wealth, quality of life and wellbeing following the transition. Their economies collapsed and were slow to recover even to their former level. GDP per capita had declined between 1990 and 2001 in all of the eight countries we studied, in three of them by more than 50 per cent (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). All had recovered to some extent by 2011, but in those three and Kyrgyzstan the GDP per capita was less than twice what it had been twenty years earlier (World Bank 2013).
- In 2001 six of the seven countries had more than 15 per cent of their population in poverty (less than \$2 per day) – in Moldova the figure was higher than 55 per cent – and while this problem had been mostly solved by 2011, three countries (Armenia, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan) still had substantial amounts of impoverishment.
- The economic and political transformations had profound implications for social life, and this was manifested in human stress, rising morbidity and increased mortality (Haerpfer et al. 2013).
- Compared with 1990 figures, economic inequality rose dramatically across the seven countries; the GINI coefficient rose by 10 percentage points in Belarus by 2001, 15 in Moldova and more than 20 in Kyrgyzstan, Russia and the Ukraine.
- Socioeconomic security was undermined by the loss of jobs and/or the failure to pay pensions and salaries, which also threatened the roles established for men and women, parents, grandparents and children.
- Youth unemployment became a problem in all countries. The security of most people’s lives had been shattered, with an increase in crime, a rise in

unemployment, a dramatic decline in living standards and a sharp reduction in public spending on education, health and housing.

- There was a dramatic rise in the death rate for men in mid-life, particularly in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.
- The late 1990s saw a massive outmigration of people from countries such as Moldova, Georgia and Armenia seeking work abroad, which overturned ideas of how people were connected to their own societies and the traditional relationships between parents and children.

This collapse of previously stable societies resulted in a breakdown of social cohesion, and norms and values had to be reformed – a process variously described as ‘de-modernisation’ (Yanitsky 2000), ‘involution’ (Burawoy 1997), ‘cultural trauma’ (Sztompka 2002) or ‘anomie’ (Abbott and Beck 2003). Social inclusion was also threatened by the disappearance, privatisation or breakdown of previous collective provision, the loss of opportunities to participate in collective activities associated with Soviet communism, and rising poverty. All of this had profound implications for people’s sense of empowerment and agency, which resulted in the breakdown of personal as well as collective wellbeing. Survival strategies had to be built up (often in the informal economy), and the state was no longer seen as guaranteeing the conditions of existence (Abbott and Wallace 2007, 2009, Wallace 2002, Wallace and Latcheva 2006).

Our analyses are based mostly on a large-scale survey carried out in 2001, the *Living Conditions, Lifestyle and Health Project* (LLH), which covered eight of the countries of the former Soviet Union. The survey used face-to-face interviewing, with versions of the questionnaire translated into the appropriate language, administered by local organizations trained and briefed by the project’s lead researchers. The sample size was 4,000 in Russia, 2,500 in Ukraine and 2,000 in the remaining six countries. Response rates varied by country between 71 per cent and 88 per cent. The countries – Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and the Ukraine – were chosen as exhibiting considerable differences in life expectancy, culture, religion and lifestyle, included both Europe and Asia and represented both Christian and Muslim populations. Samples were selected using multistage sampling with stratification by region and area. A second, similar survey, *Health in Times of Transition* (HITT), was carried out in 2010/11.

The projects were driven initially by a health agenda, focusing particularly on the suddenly decreased life expectancy of men in mid-life. The research team included sociologists as well as medical and health specialists (including two of the authors of this book), however, and their interest quickly turned from charting (un)healthy behaviours and circumstances (e.g. Cockerham et al. 2005, 2006a, Hinote et al. 2009b) to health worldviews (Abbott et al. 2006, Cockerham et al. 2006b), ‘malaise’ and psychological distress (Hinote et al. 2009a, Roberts et al. 2012) and survival strategies around Chernobyl after the nuclear accident there (Abbott et al. 2007, Abbott and Wallace 2007). Interest began to focus on quality of life, with poor health and health-related behaviours as perhaps just one

symptom of a broader collapse, and thence on satisfaction and/or happiness as dependent variables to be predicted from the data.

In one of our earlier LLH papers (Abbott 2007) we explored the effects of normative disjuncture and anomie following the collapse by comparing Moldova and Belarus in terms of the variables which influence satisfaction, very much in the Social Indicators tradition. People's material life chances had been transformed (and, for many, for the worse), but so had their understanding of how to make life choices and their ability actually to do so; culturally shared templates were no longer appropriate in the changed socioeconomic and cultural context. A fuller understanding required an analysis of the ways in which the change had been interpreted and its impact on the agency of citizens. This meant going beyond economics; the ability to cope in the new situation, maintain an acceptable standard of living and secure a sense of wellbeing is influenced by factors beyond measurable financial security. The article went beyond description of objective living conditions to take account of the subjective understanding by citizens of their life situation and the extent to which they felt able to make the necessary choices to secure their wellbeing. There is evidence, for example, that while actual economic circumstances influence general satisfaction, *satisfaction* with these economic circumstances also has an independent influence even after controlling for actual circumstances.

Moldova and Belarus differed in the extent to which the collapse of the USSR constituted a major economic catastrophe; the economy of Belarus was worse in 2001 than in 1990 by about 14 per cent, but in Moldova the GDP had still not recovered to even half of its 1990 level. In Belarus 60 per cent reported paid employment as their main source of income, but less than a third in Moldova did so. More than 70 per cent had some land, in both countries, and a quarter described it as their main source of subsistence in Moldova but only 8 per cent in Belarus. While a majority rated the economy in the times of the USSR highly or fairly highly, and also the government of that time, few were impressed with the economy or the government current at the time of the LLH survey in 2001; indeed, the economy in Moldova was seen as failing by the overwhelming majority of respondents. Only 30 per cent of Moldovans and 50 per cent of Belarusians were definitely opposed to a return to communism. There were high levels of poverty, with only a small minority reporting the economic circumstances of their household as definitely good. Around 18 per cent in Moldova and 26 per cent in Belarus said they could afford to buy major consumer items such as a car, but three quarters of the respondents in Moldova (but only 36 per cent of Belarusians) reported having to do without basic food (bread, sugar, milk) at least some of the time, and more than 80 per cent of Moldovans and 55 per cent of Belarusians said they could not always afford to buy essential clothing. Levels of perceived personal control were also low. More than half the respondents reported feeling that life was too complicated, and around 40 per cent said that they were unable to enjoy normal everyday activities, while only just over half the respondents reported a high level of freedom and control over their lives.

In regression analyses for Moldova and Belarus with general satisfaction as the dependent variable, age, education, employment and gender did not make a

significant contribution to the prediction. Social context variables (marital status, social resources, personal support, trust in government and institutions) explained a significant but relatively trivial amount of the variance (around 8 per cent) when entered by themselves. Material circumstances explained 17 per cent of the variance in Belarus and 23 per cent in Moldova. Social control variables explained a noticeable amount (around 9 per cent), and health status explained 10 per cent in Belarus and 15 per cent in Moldova. On the other hand, adding the specific domains of satisfaction raised the amount of total variance explained to more than 40 per cent in Belarus and nearly 50 per cent in Moldova. Belarus and Moldova, which differed in their economic situation, differed correspondingly in the amount of satisfaction with life they report. The average score for the eight LLH countries was 47.2 per cent, ranging from a high of 62.2 per cent in Kyrgyzstan to a low of 13.9 per cent in Georgia, at a time when the level of general satisfaction varied between 80 and 90 per cent in the fifteen core countries of the European Union and stood at 62 per cent in the new member countries (Delhey 2004). The level for Belarus was 56.4, not far below the new EU member countries, but for Moldova it was 41.3. The measured level of satisfaction was strongly affected by the economic and normative breakdown across the eight LLH countries. The effect of economic changes was strongly mediated through respondents' *perception* of their economic situation, however.

In another early paper (Abbott and Sapsford 2006) a similar analysis was carried out comparing two of the most developed of the CIS countries, Russia and Ukraine, and results are broadly similar. Satisfaction with specific aspects of life – mostly the household economy and the work situation – explains most but not all of the variance in satisfaction; the state of the actual economy adds to the explanation, and variables such as health and personal control also make a contribution. The Ukrainians were significantly less satisfied than the Russians with government and the public services. The overall regression excluding 'domain satisfaction' variables explained 30 per cent of the variance in Russia and 33 per cent in the Ukraine, with health and actual economic circumstances making by far the largest contributions (and the contribution of material circumstances is substantially higher in the Ukrainian analysis than the Russian one), followed by the extent of personal control. When the satisfaction domains are added at the end the percentage of variation in satisfaction that is explained rises to 41.4 per cent in Russia and 43.8 per cent in the Ukraine, with satisfaction with household income becoming by far the largest contributor, though satisfaction with work, the extent of personal control and the availability of personal support make a substantial independent contribution over and above satisfaction with economic circumstances. The actual economic situation of the household also continues to contribute significantly, but at a much lower level once satisfaction is entered, and the contribution of health remains significant but also decreases substantially.

A problem with 'social indicator' research such as this, however, is that it may be illuminating, but it does not readily lead to practical recommendations. Even when the independent variables are grouped into composites or blocks such as 'material circumstances' and 'social context', they remain *ad hoc* and are linked

into no kind of theory and therefore have little connection with practice. In more recent work we have adopted the Social Quality Model as a schematic for identifying different social processes and institutions, and in focusing on *where* in the complex set of relations and relationships that constitutes a society a difference in performance may suggest a point of application for social intervention, using a well-formulated social map. The relationship between the economic and social impacts of transition has seldom been theorised, since most of the analysis of the transition has drawn upon liberal economics. These economic forces are very real; the recession and the privatization of large segments of the economy after 1991 have had a negative impact on the economic security of a majority of citizens in the former USSR. There was also a real decline in the social wage – state and employment-related nonmonetary benefits. But how do economic transitions at a national level lead to specific problems, such as a decline in health, at the micro level of the individual and the household? To understand this connection we need to take into account the role of *agency*, meaning the scope for households and individuals to act within the context of structural changes.

In addition to the survey in the LLH project, five qualitative case studies were carried out, in a more affluent area and a more deprived area in Russia, Ukraine and the Chernobyl Region of each of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. The qualitative case studies included interviews with adult men and women, focus groups, expert interviews and essays written on the subject of *Me, yesterday, today and tomorrow* by older secondary-school children in the Chernobyl region. This material indicates that economic circumstances were paramount in their accounts – the bottom had fallen out of life and there was no security any longer – but that this is mediated through lack of hope for the future, lack of faith in the government and a feeling of powerlessness in the face of changed circumstances (Abbott and Wallace 2007).

The overall impression from the qualitative material is that a life has gone downhill and a majority are struggling to survive and that in large part they see this as a consequence of the economic and social policies that have been introduced after 1991:

- *Everything has deteriorated visibly since 1991. The main thing is the economic problems. All the rest happens as a consequence.* (Focus group, Ukraine)
- *Over the past 10 years? I can't even have a life these last 10 years (sighs sadly). It's survival.* (Male respondent, Ukraine)
- *It gets worse and worse. The salary is small. We used to be able to afford everything, now we cannot.* (Female respondent, Russia)
- *In the past my parents could buy almost everything from their salary and now it is not possible.* (Essay by Chernobyl youth)

Informants reported having to work much harder, often working at more than one job, working on their plots of land to provide basic food, not being able to relax in the evenings or at weekends and no longer being able to afford to go on holiday.

They felt that the implicit social contract had been broken with their employers on the one hand and with the state on the other (which was often the same thing). While in the past they worked for low salaries but were assured pensions, basic healthcare and other services, they could no longer be sure of these things.

Pensioners worked all their lives and now they don't have anything. (Female focus group, Ukraine)

Respondents had lost faith in their government and looked back approvingly at the communist regimes, which were better able to manage the economy and ensure social cohesion and economic security. One focus group clearly blamed the government for the present situation – *It is the state that has led us to this* (male focus group Belarus) – and some of the others clearly thought that things would be better if communism were to return – *I liked the regime that was. We lived communism* (male respondent Russia).

The overwhelming impression from our informants was that people did not feel in control of their lives. They spent all their time surviving. Many of the respondents expressed a sense of resignation and hopelessness.

- *There was hope – now we don't have it.* (Female focus group, Ukraine)
- *Have a drink and forget about it.* (Male focus group, Ukraine)

In matters of health,

- *You can give up smoking, you should take care of yourself but it does not work. Having a job is the most important thing – a normal well paid job. Nobody has that here.* (Male focus group, Belarus)

One of the medical experts suggested that lack of control was a major reason for the poor health status of the population.

Another factor, which I think has a lot of impact on the health of the population, is the current instability in the society and lack of confidence among the population I remember that in my early years in the former Soviet Union I never woke up thinking that tomorrow I would not have enough to eat. There was no sword of Damocles which forced me to think ahead and be anxious, to think what I would eat the next day, how I would pay the rent. Today the overwhelming majority of the population lives under the sword of Damocles.

Analysis of corresponding survey data from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus (Abbott and Wallace 2010) showed that few of the respondents thought they had any ability to influence political decisions, only just over a third thought they were free to engage in political activities, more than 50 per cent were afraid of illegal arrest and only half thought they had freedom of choice and control. The 2010 article

used a structured regression analysis to explore the extent to which the Social Quality model provided an explanatory fit to the data. First we checked for the influence of age and gender on self-reported quality of life; it was significant, but the amount of variance explained was very small and disappeared altogether when other variables entered the equation. In terms of the four quadrants of the model, economic security was the most important in explaining variance, with subjective satisfaction with the household's economic position being the most important indicator of this. Social and cultural empowerment was the next most important – self-reported health, satisfaction with health and psychosocial health, together with a malaise scale summarizing the 'symptoms' that were presented; in Russia and Ukraine a composite measure of freedom of choice and control was also significant and in Belarus a composite measure of political influence. For social inclusion the variables that contributed to the model were those that measure social support at the local level – being married and being able to rely on personal support. In terms of social cohesion, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with political developments (i.e. the norms and expectations which the government and legislature were imposing) made a small contribution, and in the case of Russia and Ukraine agreeing that most people can be trusted also bore a significant relationship to satisfaction with life.

This suggested that the main influence on people's evaluation of their quality of life in these transitional societies was their satisfaction with their material circumstances and (to a lesser extent) their actual material circumstances. Health and feeling in control were also significant influences, as were social inclusion at the micro level and satisfaction with political developments. Thus while objective economic factors are important they are not the only ones that influence subjective quality of life even in societies that have witnessed a dramatic decline in the economic situation of a majority of the population. Objectively the transformation had a direct impact on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the majority of citizens of all three countries. They were aware of this and not only dissatisfied but also at a loss to know how to change it. The impact is not just from the direct effect of, for example, poverty but also a consequence of the fragmentation and restructuring of a framework of norms and of a whole style of life. The transition involved a change in ideology, from one where the collective was emphasised to one based on individual self-reliance and responsibility, but in circumstances where many felt they could not control their lives.

Thus in understanding the impact of the transition it is necessary to understand individuals' location within the opportunity structures which have been (re-)created. A connection has to be made between larger societal changes – generative mechanisms, infrastructural conditions – and their social consequences. Analytically this involves making the distinction between *system* integration or disintegration and *social* integration or disintegration. Theories of transition and transformation centre mainly on the former, emphasizing structural changes in the economic or political situation. In the 2007 and 2010 articles we tried to go beyond such explanations by exploring relationships of social inclusion and examining the role of agency as well as structure. Explorations at this level of

analysis can give rise to middle-range typologies which take into account the role of social factors and subjective wellbeing, since the capabilities of individual agents are embedded in their social as well as material circumstances. Attention also begins to focus on what is likely to work to make the society more decent for its citizens: the economic problems have to be overcome, but equally important is assuring citizens of some degree of economic and work security, and problems of perceived control over life have also to be addressed.

A more recent article (Abbott et al. 2011) turns away from Eastern Europe to look at the Caucasus and Central Asia. Satisfaction has been extensively researched in the European nations of the former Soviet Union, but we cannot just assume that change is the same in all places. The 2011 paper draws on the responses for Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia in the LLH data. Like their European counterparts, these four countries have undergone fundamental transformation accompanied by economic depression, increased inequality, greater poverty and unemployment and a decline in state welfare provision. The main conclusions are

- 1 that wellbeing is clearly influenced by more than economic factors, here as in Europe – perceived system and social integration and personal empowerment are also important,
- 2 but in societies that have undergone sudden and dramatic negatively perceived economic and political change, financial security is a major influence on wellbeing, and other variables that influence wellbeing are themselves influenced by material circumstances.
- 3 The lack of social cohesion and trust in the newly formed societies also clearly has a negative impact on wellbeing,
- 4 as in the European states, those who are integrated into family and kinship networks are happier and more satisfied,
- 5 and so are those who are empowered and able to exercise control over their lives.

While the details differ across the countries, the general Social Quality model and the notion of economic influences much modified by social perception makes an interpretable picture for these four countries.

Rwanda: a state that recreated itself

Our second case study is Rwanda, one of the poorest societies in the world. With an estimated population of 10.5 million (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development/NISR 2014) and an annual population growth rate of 3 per cent, it is the most densely populated country in mainland Africa and one of the most densely populated in the world. About 39 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line (NISR 2015b), and economic inequalities are relatively high. The economy is mainly dependent on rain-fed agricultural production based on small, semisubsistence and fragmented farms. About three quarters of the

population live in rural areas and are dependent on mainly subsistence agriculture, but loss of topsoil, soil depletion and smaller farm sizes are making farming less and less viable. There are few relatively well trained workers, and the country faces environmental degradation, poor-quality infrastructure, high business operating costs, limited natural resources and difficulties in economic management (Abbott et al. 2013a).

Rwanda is of particular interest because:

- 1 It is not in Europe and does not share a European cultural tradition. It was a country that the slavers and the early colonists did not penetrate – it was a cohesive kingdom with strong rulers and a formidable army, and its hilly terrain and lack of coastline made it relatively inaccessible before the advent of air travel – and its colonial history (the Germans and then the Belgians) is of relatively recent date. It achieved independence peacefully in 1963.
- 2 Like the countries of the former Soviet Union, it underwent catastrophic change in the 1990s – specifically, in the Genocide of 1994. In the hundred days of the Genocide against the Tutsi the Hutu faction killed at least 800,000 of the Tutsi and moderate Hutu and some of the Twa. Many more of the Tutsi and some Hutu fled the country during or just before the killing, and there was an exodus of Hutu when the army of the Rwandan Patriotic Front took control of the country.
- 3 The result of the Genocide was that the country was nearly destroyed, not just in terms of the economy but physically and socially. The schools and hospitals were looted or demolished, agriculture was disrupted as was the market even in food, there were virtually no educated professionals or medical staff left in the country and even the rudimentary water and sewage systems were badly damaged.
- 4 Beyond this, the Genocide constituted a total systemic breakdown, the destruction or dispersal not only of the physical infrastructure, the economy, human capital and the institutions of governance but of the very fabric of society itself, the norms and values that provided the basis for a shared social life.

The country was rebuilt and, twenty years on, Rwanda's reconstruction is in many ways a success story. The success is due to careful planning, not ad hoc reconstitution nor adherence to the dominant socioeconomic models being purveyed by the major aid agencies. From the start the new government was aware of the need for a vision of the country as cohesive and inclusive, with acceptably good governance, and not just the reestablishment of the economy. The new regime adopted most of the formal social institutions favoured by the West and North. It has respect for human rights (though less respect for political rights and freedoms), is concerned with the wellbeing of citizens, puts formal limits on the power of the ruling party and has adopted parliamentary democratic forms, but it is not a democracy in the Western and Northern sense. Instead it takes a different path towards establishing a decent social environment and empowering its citizens.

Looking at Rwanda's policies, we found that it is in fact implementing the Social Quality model to make a decent society: it has independently identified the quadrants of society and is taking the actions which it identifies as necessary to improve life in each of them, apparently in the full knowledge and understanding of their interrelationships. The four key elements of Rwanda's development vision are:

- economic growth and transformation – essential given the low GDP per capita;
- inclusive development – pro-poor growth, gender equity, equal rights for disabled people and others who are socially disadvantaged;
- a commitment to good governance – to fight corruption, to decentralise decision making, to empower people to make and implement policy in partnership with government; and
- an intention not to return to the divisions of the past, underpinned by a commitment to dialogue and consensus – a preference for nonadversarial policy debate and decision making by consensus – backed by control of the ideologies and the mechanisms for their dissemination which helped to bring the Genocide about.

Some of this is more rhetorical than real, because the power remains with the government; the consensus which is reached is generally the government's consensus, and partnership very often means a commitment to implementing the government's policies. Underlying the social control, however, is a genuine vision of a reborn country which mirrors the Social Quality Model. The key thing for us was realising that Rwanda was explicitly implementing policies to deliver all four of the quadrants, which reinforced the claims of those that argue that for a country to move onto a path of sustainable development it needs to do more than focus on economic transformation and growth. Rwanda's planning, however confused and contradictory it might sometimes be in its execution, illustrated for us that just procuring satisfaction or happiness for the populace was no more the road to development than just improving the economy; sustainable improvement requires a clear vision of the future based on a clear analysis of the nature of the social order.

Since 2000 there has been sustained economic growth and a sustained reduction in the extent of poverty. Inflation is under control, and the climate for business investment has improved dramatically. While Rwanda has not achieved all of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, where it has fallen short it has nonetheless shown commendable progress (Abbott et al. 2015a, b, c, d, NISR 2015a, b). There has been growth in agricultural productivity, in government revenues and in investment in the private sector, near-universal primary education has been achieved and maternal and infant mortality has been much reduced, as has mortality from AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. While the local water is not potable without at least boiling, water free from major infective agents and toxic substances is now available to most citizens and improved sanitary arrangements

to many. There are good main roads throughout the country, electricity reaches all districts (though by no means all homes), the radio reaches more or less everywhere in Rwanda, mobile telephones are becoming relatively common in the towns and are found quite frequently even in remote rural areas (and there is now virtually national network coverage) and fast broadband is available in the capital and the major towns and along the major roads joining them where the cables run. Rwanda's success in establishing good governance is also widely acknowledged: the country is stable, peaceable and well policed with relatively little crime, the legal system is seen as fairly administered and independent of government, successive elections have been deemed generally fair and relatively independent by international observers and the major United Nations Conventions on Human Rights have been adopted into Rwandan law. The country has also been widely acclaimed for the progress it has made in fighting corruption – monetary corruption has been more or less eliminated and other forms are being tackled – and in promoting gender equality.

Problems remain, however. Rwanda is highly dependent on official development assistance, in the World Bank's 'High Aid' category and with official development assistance contributing 14.6 per cent of GNI in 2013 (authors' calculation from WDI data). There is low unemployment but high underemployment; around 73 per cent of the labour force are employed, but mainly in agriculture and for relatively few hours per week. More than 60 per cent have more than one job – which suggests that having a second job may be necessary for survival or a way of improving a household's standard of living – and 85 per cent cultivate their own farm. High birth rates are exerting pressure on the land, with 70 per cent of the land surface already being farmed, and most households dependent upon subsistence farming own less than 0.5 hectares, too little to support a Rwandan household (NISR 2012). Poverty, and at the worst starvation or at least undernourishment, are what most surely divide a society; those who are extremely poor are excluded from exercise of the rights that the society supports and from access to the services that it is capable of providing. The drive to alleviate extreme poverty has succeeded in terms of Rwanda's own extreme poverty line, which represents bare subsistence, but there is still a lot to be done; some 63 per cent of the population still live on less than \$1.25 per day. The central drive of Rwanda's policy for the future is to strengthen the economy and maintain economic growth in order to lift the population out of its poverty altogether.

Economic security requires a stable economy subject neither to the fluctuations of season and climate nor to the depressing effects of other countries rising beyond it and monopolising world resources. Rwanda needs food security, and it needs an economic situation in which bare survival is not an issue and people can have some freedom of choice. It is in the process of transformation from a low-productivity agrarian economy to a semi-industrialised service economy led by the private sector. This presents a number of challenges, not least of which are raising productivity, providing decent employment for all and ensuring that the poor benefit from economic growth. Economic growth by itself is not enough to ensure that the poor will benefit or that there is decent employment for all.

Indeed, it can disproportionately benefit those who are already better off while creating unemployment – for example, through a reduction in the demand for farm labour as agricultural production is modernised. The challenge is not just to create employment but to create decent jobs that pay a non-poverty wage.

From the start of the rebuilding process the second essential was to overcome the division between the factions of the Genocide. The government's solution was a sustained rhetorical attempt to build a discourse of unity – one language, one country, one people – that denies that there are differences or that they are of any interest even if their existence is admitted. This is reinforced by laws which forbid the expression of divisive and genocidal ideology – akin to the racial hatred laws of some developed countries such as the UK, but very imprecisely drafted; because no-one is quite sure of their scope and definition, the result in practice has been that the names for the factions are very little used in public and this has the effect of suppressing political opposition. There is inconsistency here; the names for the factions *have* been used openly during the week of group discussions that have traditionally made up the bulk of the Genocide Memorial Week.

One important element of social inclusion from the start of the new Rwanda has been the empowerment of women. Rwanda has made a strong commitment to gender equality in all areas of social and economic life and recognises the importance of women's involvement in public life. The significant proportion of women in Parliament in Rwanda as well as in other political institutions and public life more generally reflects a general shift in their participation since 1994, albeit achieved in part through quotas set in the Constitution. The Genocide helped destroy confidence in traditional society and acted as a catalyst for change; it enabled women to seize openings, challenge ideologies about women's place and make significant political gains. However, traditional cultural attitudes to women in everyday life continue to construct them as inferior and subordinate to men, especially in rural areas. While there is no doubting that the government of Rwanda is committed to gender inclusiveness and promoting the rights of women, it is not evident that the policies have yet had a significant impact on the lives of the majority of Rwandan women (Abbott and Malunda 2015). The emergence of an educated stratum of women at the top in business and politics does not mean that the position of the great majority of (rural) Rwandan women has improved.

The idea of the right to a decent life extending to all members of society and all social groups was largely imposed by the leadership in the first instance rather than forming a pre-existing foundation for change. Unusually for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Rwandan Patriotic Front and its allies are relying on building broadly based support by a long-term plan for providing more and better public goods, funded by economic growth, rather than pleasing powerful minorities – an approach which has been labelled 'developmental neo-patrimonialism' (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012). The system which Rwanda has developed for involving its populace and negotiating differences is a form of democracy, but not the adversarial, pluralistic democracy of the developed world. The key words in Rwandan rhetoric are 'dialogue and consensus'; problems are discussed with the intention of obtaining a joint commitment from all rather than pitting opposing

views against each other in debate. It has been suggested (Golooba-Mutebi and Booth 2013) that there is indeed political debate within government but that it takes place behind closed doors and that the issues are put aside if consensus cannot be reached. The political settlement is based on power sharing among parties that are firmly aligned against a revival of ethnic separatism but also on the search for an alternative to clientistic political competition.

The importance attached to the principle of dialogue and consensus is demonstrated by the number of policies and mechanisms in place to promote and sustain it. Among the many institutions that express this principle (see Abbott et al. 2014) we might list

- *Gacaca* (historic ‘people’s courts’ adapted to deal with the question of the release from prison and reintegration into communities of those who were imprisoned after the Genocide),
- *Umuganda* (monthly voluntary community service maintaining and improving the infrastructure, followed by village-level meetings which receive and discuss information about current government policy and priorities and pass on information about a range of topics, from compliance with registration requirements to issues of sexual health),
- community development committees,
- *Ubudehe* (the meetings at local level which classify people in terms of their need for social support and allocate the local budget for it) and
- *Itorero* (events somewhere between indoctrination/training sessions and encounter/sensitisation groups, where attitudes are formed and reinforced in, for example, school leavers on their way to university).

Where a welfare benefit is to be distributed, the allocation is made as a result of local discussion. Family disputes and disputes between neighbours are dealt with in the first instance by appeal to the views of other villagers and then by the *Abunzi* (volunteer elected mediators) before being taken to the law. Councils representing special interests – the National Women’s Council, the National Youth Council – are federations of local small-area branches which report up through a pyramid of larger units to the central organisation. Annual discussions starting at the level of households and villages and progressing through sector, district and region to the centre look at last year’s governmental performance and propose targets for next year, along with a summary from the discussion of what contribution the unit can make. Every public official or civil servant signs a performance contract annually which outlines his or her proposed contribution to the fulfilment of national policy, and the same is true collectively for every department of central and local government. Dialogue and consensus permeates all levels of society from the national to the smallest administrative unit and includes the private and nongovernmental sectors as well as the government. It is hoped that social capital will be created, which will in turn drive the development of generalised trust and social cohesion and encourage communities to invest collectively in their own future. The role of the government is notionally as a facilitator, investing in

the development of social and human capital. The downside of this is that it is difficult for civil society to organize itself to represent conflicting interests, that public discussion tends to be limited to implementation and that people in general are careful not to disagree with decisions openly once they are implemented (Ingelaere 2011, Mann and Berry 2015). NGOs also tend to be constrained by the legal frameworks to service delivery rather than advocacy and support of pressure groups (Abbott and Rica 2014).

The government's policies and its regulation of business and government practice follow the same goals of building and safeguarding social cohesion and integration. There has been a concerted fight against corruption at all levels. Government policy is pro-poor and aims to reduce inequalities. Economic and employment policies have supported the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises as well as encouraging investment in large ones. The establishment of the *Umurenge SACCOs* (local savings and credit cooperatives) offers the majority of Rwandans a secure and safe means of saving, close at hand. Agricultural policies have been designed to enable subsistence farmers to increase the productivity of their land and benefit from commercialisation through land consolidation and crop specialisation, which is the government's declared solution to some of agriculture's problems. The land tenure regularisation process is to give people a stake in society by giving them legal title to their land.

The progress Rwanda has made in achieving good governance is generally confirmed by international indicators; Rwanda scores well in most areas. The area in which Rwanda does *not* score well is democracy and civil liberties. On the World Bank Governance indicators, for example, Rwanda's scores have increased across the board, but with the notable exception of 'voice and accountability', where there has been little progress. The low score on the latter is seen as problematic in allowing genuine participation in the political process by citizens.

Working together, it is hoped, will result in bonding, trust and a concern with furthering the interests of the community rather than self- or group interest. As regards trust, however, it is worrying that a significant proportion of Rwandans still fear civil war (authors' calculations from the African Values Survey (AVS)) which suggests that an overwhelming majority think that there are still cleavages between groups that could lead to violent conflict. Nevertheless, 90 per cent felt secure in their neighbourhood in the 2012 AVS, and the crime rate was perceived to be relatively low. In addition the study captured views on trust in various institutions at national and local levels. Trust in politicians and the forces of law and order were high, with more than 80 per cent of respondents saying that they trusted them and more than 97 per cent expressing trust in the president and the army. Political parties were the least trusted institutions (World Values Survey Wave 6 data). However, qualitative research which accompanied another household survey revealed that although the level of trust in the army was said to be high, the level of confidence in the police was much lower. It was evident that the informants in a noticeable number of focus groups had little confidence that the police would deal with those the community thought had committed crimes. It was also evident that people generally did not completely trust either chamber

of the Parliament. Informants frequently did not voice an opinion as to whether they trusted them or not but said that they ‘had never met them’, that ‘they do not come to our community’, and a number of groups said that they did not trust them *because* they had not met them. The level of altruism is low (with a mean of 4.3 on a 10-point scale) and most people are said to be motivated by self-interest (73 per cent), but 70 per cent of respondents thought that people could be relied on to fulfil their obligations. The level of trust in other people in general was relatively high, with a mean of 7.1 on a 10-point scale (Abbott et al. 2014). In the qualitative fieldwork of the study there were two tests of trust: whether you would trust someone to look after your children and whether you would trust someone to pay you back if you lend them money. Informants in focus groups mostly indicated that people in their communities trusted family, friends and neighbours to look after their children, but there was much less certainty that you could trust even those you knew well to pay back loans.

On whether processes of dialogue and consensus are succeeding in building consensus, cohesion, inclusion and social capital the 2014 Abbott et al. research shows mixed results. An important question is the extent to which people *are* resolving differences and conflict using the mechanism of dialogue and consensus. A number of interesting points can be made from the survey results.

- 1 A high proportion said they ‘did not know’ or did not give a view when asked to evaluate some of the mechanisms.
- 2 The findings from the qualitative research suggest that, with the notable exception of dispute resolution between neighbours, there was little evidence that most people actually do take part in dialogue and consensus. In other words, members of the community were not meeting and discussing issues and agreeing how to resolve them. Generally the informants said that leaders make the decisions, and the community discusses how to implement them.
- 3 Some of the mechanisms were valued not in themselves but for their outcomes. The mechanisms that were most valued are ones that were thought to bring or are likely to bring the greatest harmony to communities, but they were not the ones where consensus is most obviously achieved through dialogue.

Results suggested a relatively high level of community engagement, with 84 per cent of respondents having participated in community meetings on several occasions over the previous year and 76 per cent having worked with others to develop a programme. Men, on average, have a denser engagement with the mechanisms than women, but the differences are not large. (In the qualitative side of the study, however, while the main motivation for participating in community work was said to be commitment to improving their community, high levels of engagement were sometimes said to be motivated more by the fear of being fined for nonattendance.)

The Women’s National Council (WNC) and the National Youth Council (NYC) have a central hub but reach out into quite a low level of social organisation. A clear majority of informants thought that the WNC does represent the interests

of ordinary Rwandan women and that it plays a key role in solving conflicts and problems affecting women, and there were similar findings for the NYC. However, the perceived effectiveness of these state-organized ‘representative’ councils is probably what ‘crowds out’ the formation of civil society organisations to promote the interests of women or young people independently of government. The level of engagement in civil society organizations in general is relatively low, and younger people are less likely to be involved.

What did come across in the qualitative research was significant involvement in dispute resolution at a local level. Focus group participants told us that citizens at local level had learnt how to resolve disputes themselves, and if they could not, then neighbours in the village discussed the issues and made recommendations. Disputes were less frequently being referred to village leaders and especially to the cell and the *Abunzi* than in the past.

What is being built in Rwanda is undoubtedly to some extent a decent society. In some ways it is more decent than the societies of the developed West and North – it genuinely values community and cooperation and is much less individualistic than those formed within the European tradition – and there is strong emphasis on the inclusion of all within the mainstream of society irrespective of gender or birth origin. However, it is equally clearly a very controlled and centrally directed state despite the participatory forms of organisation. Western liberal forms that contribute to social cohesion are in place – a ‘discourse of government’ which puts the interests of the population above those of the rulers, control of most corruption, a commitment to the rule of law, a democratic and electoral form of government with limits on the control of the dominant party and electoral mechanisms for selecting the current government. However, power tends in practice to emanate from the top. The nationwide mechanisms for devolved participation tend to bind participants into society more strongly than they give them any kind of route for changing it, the emphasis on consensus and the limitations on organizing dissent limit the possibility of adversarial politics and thence the success of parties other than the dominant one and government’s vision involves substantial control, to prevent a resurgence of what has happened in the past – to the point where it is not clear when and by how much government can ever let go of that control.

All of this does not appear to be greatly distressing to the populace, however. The findings from the African Values Survey are that ordinary Rwandans’ priorities are for economic growth, a stable economy and maintaining law and order. They are less concerned about having more of a say in how things are done at the community or national level or protecting freedom of speech. Seventy-five per cent see economic growth as a priority and 74 per cent maintaining a stable economy, while 87 per cent of respondents think that maintaining law and order should have a high priority. The respondents to the Abbott et al. 2014 survey generally thought that things had improved over the last five years (92 per cent), and the vast majority were confident that things would improve for them and their households over the next five years (87 per cent). In the focus groups and key informant interviews, except at a very small number of locations, informants agreed that

things had improved over the last five years and that the quality of their life was improving. However, a majority were less satisfied with their lives than would be typical in Europe, and economic circumstance was clearly one important reason; satisfaction is affected by agency – by the possibility of taking action and having the resources to do so (Dawson 2013).

Regressions were carried out on the 2014 survey data to determine the correlates in each quadrant of general satisfaction with life. The Economic quadrant shows by far the largest effect, and within it measures of deprivation and household economic situation are significant; views of the economic state of the country as a whole do not add anything of significance. Social Cohesion is dominated by trust in others, and Social Inclusion marks the fact that those who involve themselves in civil society organisations are more satisfied than the majority who do not. The Empowerment quadrant throws up health, education and measures of empowerment to participate as significant factors. A further regression on satisfaction included all the variables that had turned up as significant in the separate quadrant regressions. In combination they explain 40 per cent of the variance, which is marginally more than was explained by the regression using only economic factors. The economic variables make the greatest contribution, but trust in others, education and not feeling left out all make a significant contribution. The *Ubudehe* category (a poverty indicator) makes a contribution at a lower level of significance, as does participation in civil society organisations. As has been found in other research, where poverty levels are high, economic factors tend to explain much of the observed variance in subjective life satisfaction, and this is not surprising. People who are struggling to survive are unlikely to be very satisfied, especially when they see others around them who do not have to struggle to survive. However, even controlling for economic circumstances the model suggests that trusting others (social cohesion), participating in civil society organisations and being empowered are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. Moreover, for a government to deliver economic security for all requires that people are empowered, and a basic condition for sustainable inclusive economic growth is social cohesion. Social cohesion is built through social participation, which creates social capital.

From satisfaction to the decent society

The analyses we carried out on survey data from the former Soviet Union were largely in the Social Indicators tradition, predicting satisfaction from an ordered range of indicators. Increasingly, however, in the later LLH papers and in the quantitative analysis of Rwandan survey data we have been using the concepts of the Social Quality Model to organize the independent variables and have found that this gives some purchase on the ‘how’ question as well as the ‘what’ question. Encouraging analysis of the ‘system’ as a whole, it yields valuable clues to what might need to be reshaped in order to improve governance and achieve the goal of decent lives for the country’s inhabitants. We tended in the CIS and in Rwanda to find a larger contribution from the economic sector than would be

true of similar analyses in the developed West and North, which did not surprise us, but all four quadrants made significant and independent contributions to the size of the dependent variable score. In the 2014 report we combined analysis of citizens' satisfaction with qualitative work on how Rwanda is governed and how its governance is perceived 'at the grassroots', and the combination of the two approaches provided sometimes surprising insights.

The analyses have demonstrated that the framework for understanding and classifying social processes put forward in the Social Quality Model, originally developed for the European Union and useful for explaining variations of satisfaction within it (Abbott et al. 2013b, 2015f, Wallace and Abbott 2014), is also useful across the rest of the world. Though quadrant weightings may differ and additional indicators may need to be considered in order to capture the nature of societies in transition and particularly non-European societies, the fourfold quadrant structure of the model continues to make sense of variations in satisfaction in a wide range of countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Africa and Asia. This has also been demonstrated in analysis of data from China, Thailand and South Korea (Abbott et al. 2015e, Lin 2011, 2014). The paradigm is a very useful lens through which to regard countries which are still developing and/or recovering from socioeconomic catastrophe or in the process of postconflict reconstruction. It helps to demonstrate that economic factors are not the whole of the story; other aspects of the quality of society, such as social inclusion and empowerment, are also important for people's subjective state of satisfaction.

Although all governments work on the hearts and minds of their citizens, too much of telling people how they should feel and how they should act has often proved counterproductive. What effective governments do well, however, is to build the infrastructure for citizens to make their own choices and the regulatory frameworks that ensure that the choices made by one person or group will not unduly constrain the choices available to others. In this book, therefore, we have moved away from citizen satisfaction as the sole or main measure of government effectiveness and more towards itemising what infrastructure is needed for a decent life that gives exercise to capabilities. Some of the elements of such an infrastructure are physical or material – economic security depends at root on a sufficiency income or equivalent resource. Some are intangible but nonetheless real – the normative frameworks which give rise to the rule of law, for example, and to dependable commerce and industry. Many are undertaken with the future in mind – for example, compulsory saving through taxation when in employment to permit transfer of resources along the life course or the provision of healthcare paid for when healthy in order that it may be called on when sick. Some are aimed at future generations – provision for the health and nutrition of infants, for example, and education for a future world of work and sociopolitical participation – because governments have to take the long view as well as dealing with the immediate needs. Some are relational; family, friends and social networks remain an important part of life, a source of support and part of the 'capital' which makes life decent. Relational issues are not private in the sense that they can be left unmonitored, however, or the war of group against group

can develop as people lose faith in the fairness of the system to deal equitably with their problems and reflect their interests.

Although we have emphasised the importance of infrastructure at the expense of experience, this does not mean that a country's inhabitants are kept in the dark. In a recent small-scale analysis using European Social Survey data (Abbott et al. 2015f) we classified people's subjective reports of their circumstances and opportunities and of the nature of the social world around them, using the Social Quality framework to organize the material. Doing so makes perfect sense. For the Subjective Index we selected those ESS questions which provide indicators for each of the quadrants. The 'usual suspects' ranked in the usual positions overall: the country with the highest Subjective Index score was Norway, closely followed by the other Scandinavian countries and Switzerland; Ireland, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands formed the second-highest group; Ukraine had the lowest score, alongside most of the other former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. There was a significant correlation between the index score and subjective satisfaction (0.58) and happiness (0.54), but this figure is low enough that more is clearly at stake than a 'halo effect' of the country offering a satisfactory life in general. Men were significantly more likely than women to experience their society as decent, but the difference was very small. Of more interest, however, was *which* of the different conditions for wellbeing the society was seen as meeting. The top-ranking countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden) were perceived by their citizens as ranking high across the board, but Switzerland and Finland were brought down by their slightly lower score for Social Inclusion. Iceland, on the other hand, scored lower on Economic Security and Empowerment than on the two more social quadrants. Further down the table, Germany, Israel, Italy, Czech Republic, Albania and Bulgaria all ranked as high as they did because their Social Inclusion score was higher than their other scores would predict. All of Eastern Europe except Poland and the Czech Republic scored below the midpoint on Social Inclusion, but so did Portugal and Cyprus, and France and the United Kingdom fall on the median. Inhabitants have a strong sense of their country's strengths and weaknesses, and if our concern were how each of these different societies could be improved in the eyes of its citizens the answer would not be the same in all cases.

Given that the social order is complex, with every element interacting with every other, a comprehensive and comprehensible framework is needed within which to evaluate the effects of each element of government. We have therefore developed the insights of the Social Quality Model into an index and scheme of working which we have labelled the Decent Society Model, and in the remaining chapters we look at our first attempts to apply this concept to world data. To provide optimum insights for government into the effects of their policies and the problems experienced by their citizens, what is needed is an instrument which will combine readily available information from a variety of sources and can be updated on a regular basis. The instrument must allow for broad generalisations – that the root problem lies in the economic sphere, or in lack of confidence in economic provision (which is an issue of social cohesion) or in discrimination which

limits access to the provision (a social inclusion issue) or in the existence of the means to access and use the provision and the knowledge that these means exist (with is what social empowerment is about) or in a combination of inclusion and empowerment.

Though single-figure indices are useful for broad comparison of countries, a dashboard approach is to be preferred in order to provide data on the complexity of what is occurring. Several good measuring instruments exist already, and we would single out the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which gives a wealth of social and governance information for the continent, and the Social Progress Index (Porter et al. 2015). Both have a structure which permits drilling down within domains and subdomains to composite indicators or even single variables, as required to make sense of the circumstances and find a ‘handle’ to drive an intervention. The Social Progress Index presents an overall score which decomposes into three domains – ‘Basic Human Needs’, ‘Foundations of Wellbeing’ and ‘Opportunity’- which in turn can be decomposed into an array of individual indicators. It is fairly easy to line these up, using colour coding to indicate good, bad or indifferent progress as compared with fifteen countries with similar GDP and so to see what can be achieved in a given ‘price bracket’. However, none of them is built on a coherent theory of society, and consequently they lack coverage of what the Decent Society Model considers to be essential elements of social policy. We have therefore constructed a trial version of our own index and battery of indicators, described in the next chapter.

7 Constructing a Decent Society

Index

The need for a different index

The focus of this book is what characteristics a country needs to exhibit in order that its residents can live a decent life. ‘Decent’ we have left deliberately as a fuzzy construct, but core elements would be the ability to live reasonably happy and satisfied lives and to ensure that conditions are no worse (and preferably better) for the next generation, that such compulsion as is used on individuals is no more than they admit is necessary for the protection of each against all and that no one is excluded from living a full and productive life by gross demographic characteristics such as ethnic grouping, gender, sexuality, religious persuasion or physical handicap. These are the negatives – ‘freedom from’. The positive contribution we expect from our social order is that it will allow people to develop themselves and their contributions to the best of their ability, that it will provide a social environment which is conducive to such development and that it will allow us to obtain the information we need to discover what we can do, what we would like to become and what is possible for us. We expect the freedom to develop in any direction we choose, within the constraint that everyone else shall also be able to experience this freedom. A minimum prerequisite condition is that there be economic security for all: the precept ‘from each according to ability, to each according to need’, which is perhaps the ultimate encapsulation of the notion of a decent society, cannot be achieved in conditions of scarcity, however nobly and decently the poorer countries may try to do so.

Outcome measures – the extent to which a given goal or set of goals is achieved – do not offer sufficient information for planning and building the decent society. GDP (affluence) is not sufficient to guarantee satisfaction. That a majority are satisfied with their lives or happy with their social environment is also not sufficient to guarantee that a society meets our criteria for decency.

- (a) Satisfaction is not enough – people can be satisfied with conditions which are not decent because they know no better or because they think that how they live is the best that can be achieved in a far-from-perfect world. Slaves and serfs can be content with their lot, but we would not regard their way of life as decent. As we said at the beginning, the notion of ‘human rights’ is a useful

one here – that there is a set of conditions which should pertain in order for life to be ‘fully human’, a set of minimum conditions for being a free adult and a full citizen.

- (b) Economic success is far from enough. Economic sufficiency is probably necessary for the decent life – it is difficult to think of a situation where this would not be true – but it does not in itself define or guarantee decency. The wealth of a country does not guarantee the economic security of its citizens; there can be gross inequalities of wealth within a nation. Similar, among the poorest countries or even some middle-income ones the overall level of poverty may not be as critical and crippling as lack of food security – that there is insufficient food to feed the population or that a proportion of the nation are going under-nourished even if food is sufficient in aggregate terms. Having affluence as a goal for all is also not a royal road to a decent life but a potential substitution of something easily measurable for the complex pattern of opportunities and resources needed for a decent life. Historically it is a perversion that has particularly characterized Western and Northern societies influenced by the work ethic of protestant Christianity.
- (c) Indeed, no basket or dashboard of single measures is sufficient to guarantee the achievement of the decent society. Our definitions of ‘decent society’ are fuzzy precisely because there is no single defining characteristic; a balance of conditions has to be fulfilled before individuals, households, groups and communities can maximize their quality of life.

We have developed yet another index for this book on which to rank countries; our project is different from the search for Social Quality or Wellbeing, and a different project requires a different instrument. What the Decent Society Model borrows from the Social Quality project is their schema of society, identifying four conceptually different quadrants within which to organize aspects of life; we have found this useful and important when trying to identify what might count as a decent life:

- 1 *Economic Security* – the extent to which a nation has sufficient resources for all individuals and households to procure food, shelter, healthcare, education for themselves and their children and the kind of work life and/or leisure activities that will enable them to use any of their capabilities, according to choice. Within this quadrant we consider measures of (a) the national income and the extent to which it is stable or precarious, (b) the extent to which a country has food security (is able reliably to feed its population) and (c) the ‘social wage’ – the extent to which centrally provided services may substitute for or complement the ability to purchase them of private individuals or households.
- 2 *Social Cohesion* – the extent to which a country is *not* riven by grievances and/or discrimination. This entails trust – the ability to trust other people to ‘act in role’ rather than pursuing individual advantage, faith that organisations will fulfil the functions assigned to them and trust in government and in financial institutions. Another way of expressing this is to say that people and groups know the rules by which policies are to be developed, resources

allocated and disagreements mediated, they approve them as fair, and they have confidence that all others understand them and will employ them. This is the issue of good governance – whether you can rely on legal rights and freedoms and the extent to which government is fair and open and works in the interests of all – but it goes further and ultimately requires a shared discourse which defines what the best way of doing things is to be.

- 3 *Social Inclusion* – the extent, broadly, to which all inhabitants are full members of the society in terms of the ability to exercise their capacities and to make a contribution. Human rights are an important aspect of this – to what extent the country accepts internationally defined rights, the extent to which they acknowledge the external world as having the right to police the application of these and the extent to which the commitment to rights is actually honoured in practice. Feeling safe is another. Poverty is an obvious second aspect; those who are very poor are excluded from a wide range of normal activities. Gender is a third – are women citizens, or do they have ‘second-class rights’? Other ‘fracture lines’ could also give rise to exclusion and/or second-class status – physical or mental illness or handicap, sexual preference, old age, ethnic differences, country of origin or anything which can divide the population into groups with interests which they do not hold in common. The international statistics are not very helpful here, but we have managed to capture the extent of and the attitude towards immigration and a general expert indicator of the level of grievance that groups within the country hold against the government, the majority or other groups. We have also considered the social institutions that bind people into the society or some lesser unit within it: community, family, friends, financial inclusion and the world of work.
- 4 *Empowerment* – the fourth quadrant concerns what the country provides to build capacity and to make people aware of what they could do and be and the barriers to exercising choice and capacity. Education and health are prerequisite, along with the infrastructure of communication, the availability of work and the opportunity for entrepreneurship. Political freedoms and the opportunity to contribute to political debate without fear are also factors here. Psychological categories form important preconditions for empowerment – the extent to which people are aware of having any freedom of choice and the extent to which they think things can be changed by their own efforts.

This fourfold structure from the Social Quality Model is used to identify and organize the elements of what might count towards making a society decent, grouping together those which play a similar role in maintaining and developing social structures and relations.

Constituting the Decent Society Index

Selecting indicators

The fundamental use of the Decent Society Index is not to compare countries on what their residents experience and enjoy nor even on what the countries are

achieving; there are many other measurement schemata which can be used for these purposes. Instead we have taken Sen's argument about capabilities seriously and are trying to measure and summarize the extent to which and the ways in which a given country is providing for its residents the *conditions* to achieve each of the four quadrant themes. This means that where possible – where information is available for a sufficient number of countries from a readily accessible international source – we have looked for indicators for some or all of the stages that turn capability into functioning:

- whether the country has published policies which make a capability or its preconditions accessibly to all who desire to acquire it (or to some, at least, but the limitation of access makes the country less decent);
- whether the policy is written into law or regulation and makes concrete provision for the conditions required for the capability to be developed;
- whether people are able to take advantage of this provision;
- whether they know they can do so;
- whether they do acquire the capability and
- whether they then exercise it.

Which of these stages can be covered depends on what statistics are available for a good number of countries. We have been less concerned with the last three of the six, except as indicators that the earlier stages are in place or, under 'Empowerment', where acquiring a capability is a precondition for being able to exercise it. More concretely, under 'human rights' we looked for measures of whether the internationally agreed diet of rights is accepted by a country, how much of its control over the population the government is prepared to give up as part of turning the rights into realities and whether the country is judged to maintain human rights or to be in breach of them to a greater or lesser extent; when it comes to health, we have indicators of what the government spends on health as part of the social wage, what 'public health' works have been undertaken (water, sanitation), the extent of medical provision and measures of mortality and morbidity.

Because we are concerned more with the conditions for agency than the experience of it, where possible we take our measures from 'objective' sources – national statistics which are required to be provided to international organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations, often supplied as reports or databases drawn from national accounts or a national census and/or regularly conducted survey series. (In the poorer countries the census and surveys are often funded by development assistance and carried out by or with the help of international experts.) In other areas we have drawn on data produced by expert judgment or by extensive, rigorous and systematic search of scholarly and semischolarly publication (e.g. the subindices of the Fragile States Index). We have tended to avoid opinion/attitude surveys where possible. However, international surveys do supply useful indicators in areas such as Social Inclusion and Cohesion where it is difficult to see what would constitute an objective measure or how it could be collected even if it one could be identified, and they are fundamental for measuring

the conditions for Empowerment. Survey measures are taken here not as facts about individuals but as social facts – the *society* is characterised by the size of the majority that would take one position or another on them.

Where possible, particularly where dealing with matters of opinion/attitude/belief or with data which might be difficult to measure accurately such as the percentage of the population who are undernourished, we have taken more than one source and averaged them. This also allows us to minimize the number of countries for which a given indicator cannot be scored, by taking the average of those parallel indicators that *are* available where one or more is missing. The objective is not necessarily precise and scientific measurement but a best estimate of the condition of a country. A driving concern was to retain as many countries as possible in the analysis. We started with well over 200 countries or territories/dependencies in the World Bank's World Development Indicator database, but there are missing values in the data, and any country which had a missing value on an indicator cannot be scored and is therefore lost from the analysis. Some promising variables were discarded because they were not available for enough countries, and some important countries have been lost because data are missing. We finished with 121 countries, listed in Table A1 of the Appendix.

What we did *not* want is an output-driven composite measure of a supposed latent variable (or set of variables) – something which summarised the predictive variance of independent variables – so the index did not use regression analysis on a criterion variable such as satisfaction or wellbeing; the ultimate criterion for inclusion, other than the availability of the data, was the extent to which sense could be made of the variable within the four-quadrant conceptual structure and whether it was an element that one would expect to see in a given quadrant. Factor-analytic techniques have also not been used to 'explain' variance, because there can be multiple indicators of a concept which have no need to correlate with each other. Physical disability is perhaps the simplest example. If you have lost a leg, you will be counted as disabled, and also if you have lost an arm, and also if you have lost hearing or sight. All of these are valid indicators of disability, and if you lived with more than one of them you might count crudely as more disabled than someone who had only one. However, there is no reason to suppose that the different handicaps correlate with each other: having lost a leg is not very predictive of having lost an arm or having no sight or no hearing.

Constructing the index

The process of construction involved successive averaging of variables to add their effects together, as illustrated in Figure 7.1:

- 1 Where we have multiple indicators all scored in much the same sort of way (e.g. percentage of population giving a 'yes' response to similar survey questions), the percentage scores were simply averaged to give a total primary indicator score.

- 2 Where they were not compatible in this way (e.g. where percentage saying they trust is to be added to mean level of trust on a scale) the scores were normalised to a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10; they are then all expressed in the same units – standard deviations from a common mean – and so may be averaged. This destroys the absolute value of the individual indicator, but it does reproduce the shape of the distribution and show the extent to which the scores on one tail or both are extreme in terms of the majority.
- 3 These primary indicators are then added together, after standardisation if necessary, to make up a domain score – for example ‘social wage’ within Economic Stability. Sometimes there is in fact only a single indicator forming a domain; the Economic Equality domain within Social Cohesion, for example, is simply a standardized GINI coefficient with its polarity reversed. Domain scores have been restandardised, with a standard deviation of as close to 10 as we could easily get. In general and in principle all primary indicators counted equally towards the domain score, because we had no good theoretical reason to do otherwise, but in the National Income domain of Economic Stability we applied weighting. National per capita income carried twice the weight of any other indicator, because it is the fundamental basis for many of government’s actions (it determines, for example, what can be offered as a ‘social wage’ of centrally organized services paid for out of taxation). Remittances and Development Aid were given half the weight of other indicators; both are precarious as sources on which to depend, and Remittances tend not to make a long-term contribution to a country’s economic growth – see the discussion of remittances in Moldova in Weeks (2005) or Abbott and colleagues (2010) – but neither has the same negative impact as, say, an adverse Balance of Payments or a low level of Foreign Direct Investment.
- 4 Domain scores were then averaged to give an overall score for the quadrant. Again a restandardisation process was applied to spread out the points along the scale, as adding variables together which are in fact correlated reduces the overall standard deviation; we aimed for a standard deviation close to 15 in each quadrant.

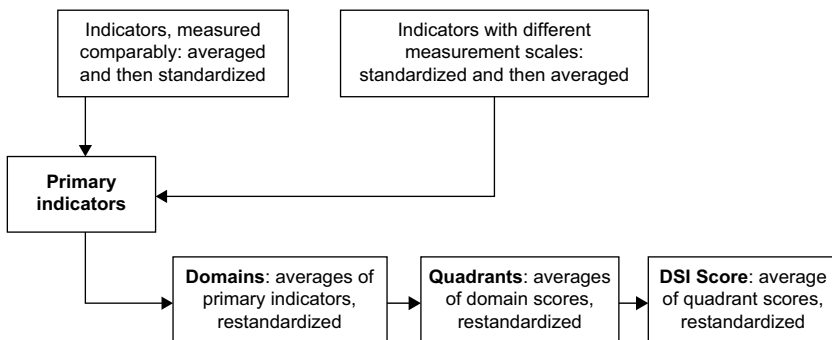


Figure 7.1 The computation of primary indicator, domain and quadrant scores

- 5 Finally the four quadrant scores were averaged to give an overall score on the index itself after yet another restandardisation process to spread the standard deviation. (Our target this time was to ensure that the top scores fell in the 90s on the scale, out of 100, and the bottom scores were below 10 though higher than 0; this makes the distances between them more immediately interpretable to the reader.)

The indicators and their main sources are listed in the Appendix (Table A.3). The main sources of ‘objective’ indicators have been the World Bank – World Development Indicators, Education Statistics and the specific Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) – together with UNDP’s Human Development Indicators and statistics from United Nations Statistical Division. For particular purposes we have used the Global Food Security Index (Economist Intelligence Unit nd), the FAO/IFAD reports on the state of food insecurity in the world, the reports of the US Social Security Agency and International Social Security Agency, the United Nations Treaty Collection, Freedom House, the Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace nd), the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International nd), the AidData website, the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organisation. Attitudinal/belief survey variables come mostly from the World Gallup Poll, the WGI and the World Values Survey, supplemented if necessary by ‘regional’ sources – the Afrobarometer, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s Index of African Governance and the European Social Survey. The odd missing figure was filled in from other sources found on the web – survey reports and academic articles, research reports commissioned by international NGOs, government websites and even national newspapers as a last resort. Data are mostly relatively recent (2014, 2013 or 2010–12, depending on the source), but a few of the figures may be considerably older than this. In two cases (acceptance of UN Conventions on Human Rights and provision of social security) an index has been constructed from nonnumerical data offered by the source – see the Notes against these indicators in Appendix Table A.3.

Table 7.1 shows the extent of correlation among the four quadrants in the Decent Society Index, which is about what we would have expected. We were not attempting to produce orthogonal measures of latent variables, so correlation is predicted, and doubly so because the model posits that every quadrant

Table 7.1 Correlation among the four quadrants

	<i>Economic Security</i>	<i>Social Cohesion</i>	<i>Social Inclusion</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>
<i>Economic Security</i>	1	.467**	.576**	.689**
<i>Social Cohesion</i>		1	.759**	.543**
<i>Social Inclusion</i>			1	.711**
<i>Empowerment</i>				1

**: $p < .001$

is a precondition and/or consequence of each of the others. All correlations are statistically significant and reasonably substantial but not so large that they could be considered aspects of a single underlying variable, and variations in Economic Security are clearly not the only explanation for what is going on. Empowerment shares about half its variance with Economic Security and Social Inclusion and a bit less (around 30 per cent) with Social Cohesion. Social Cohesion and Social Inclusion share about 58 per cent of their variance. Economic Security shares 22 per cent of variance with Social Cohesion and 33 per cent with Social Inclusion. There is enough variance left over to suggest that each of the quadrants is partly dependent on/related to the others but also partly independent of them.

Table 7.2 gives the correlation of domain scores with each of the four quadrants, and again there is no neat one-to-one relationship between domains and

Table 7.2 Correlation of domains with quadrant scores

	<i>Economic Security</i>	<i>Social Cohesion</i>	<i>Social Inclusion</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>
Economic Security				
<i>National economy</i>	.618**	.484**	.522**	.565**
<i>Food security</i>	.842**	.322**	.373**	.562**
<i>Social wage</i>	.685**	.248**	.392**	.383**
Social Cohesion				
<i>Good governance</i>	.611**	.801**	.835**	.758**
<i>Trust in people</i>	.229*	.835**	.564**	.387**
<i>Trust in institutions</i>	.062	.597**	.287**	.166
<i>Economic equality</i>	.481**	.542**	.412**	.218*
<i>Group harmony</i>	.445**	.738**	.677**	.580**
<i>Acceptance of immigration</i>	-.142	.277**	.106	-.035
Social Inclusion				
<i>Absence of poverty</i>	.410**	.304**	.426**	.265**
<i>Financial inclusion</i>	.571**	.537**	.733**	.587**
<i>Work inclusion</i>	-.143	.114	.176	.061
<i>Gender inclusion</i>	.319**	.531**	.716**	.374**
<i>Friends and family</i>	.516**	.472**	.710**	.732**
<i>Active involvement</i>	.143	.366**	.523**	.415**
<i>Feeling of safety</i>	.330**	.576**	.568**	.269**
<i>Human rights</i>	.391**	.441**	.582**	.445**
<i>Political empowerment</i>	.458**	.530**	.610**	.644**
<i>Conditions for health</i>	.753**	.396**	.562**	.770**
<i>Education</i>	.685**	.301**	.542**	.755**
<i>Communications infrastructure</i>	.768**	.351**	.548**	.771**
<i>Availability of work</i>	-.370**	-.107	-.225*	-.122
<i>Awareness of choice</i>	.435**	.557**	.651**	.787**
<i>Belief in efficacy of work</i>	-.182	.057	.007	.206*

** : $p < .01$ * : $p < .05$

the quadrants to which we have assigned them, though by and large the highest correlation for a given domain is to be found in the column of its ‘parent’ quadrant. The three domains of *Economic Security* correlate significantly with all four quadrants, and the correlations of the National Economy and Food Security with Empowerment are fairly substantial, as is the correlation of the National Economy with Social Inclusion. In *Social Cohesion*, again, most of the domains are correlated with all quadrants. The exceptions are the two trust domains, where the main correlation outside the domain is with Social Inclusion – trust in people does show a correlation with the other two but at a lower level, and trust in institutions is relatively unrelated to both Economic Stability and Empowerment. Good Governance makes a strong contribution to all factors; its highest correlation is in fact with Social Inclusion, by a narrow margin, but it belongs under Cohesion because its effects are structural rather than relational, forming the conditions of perceived fairness under which the other processes can function effectively. Immigration was included, separately from Group Harmony because of its topicality, but it is not much correlated with any of the other quadrants, and its contribution even to Social Cohesion is relatively low worldwide. In *Social Inclusion* there is a strong relationship between Avoidance of Poverty and Economic Security, as would be expected, most of the rest show correlation across the board, and the importance for Empowerment of integration with friends and/or family is underlined by the size of the correlation. Work Inclusion, on the other hand, appears to be a rather separate factor from the others. Most of the *Empowerment* domains correlate across the board, and the three ‘government spending’ indicators (Health, Education and Communications Infrastructure) also correlate substantially with Economic Security. The psychological domain of ‘belief in efficacy’ appears to be relatively autonomous, but ‘awareness of choice’ correlates with all domains.

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation shows an underlying structure to the domain data which does not follow the ‘quadrant’ pattern but rather emphasizes functional areas of life and governance, each of which draws on processes from several of the quadrants. (We attempted an oblique rotation [deliberately correlated factors], but it did not give better separation of the elements, and oblique analyses do not yield percentages of variance explained.) The orthogonal analysis explains nearly three quarters of the variance overall.

- 1 A first factor, accounting for about 22 per cent of the variance, we have named ‘Economy and Resources’, and it covers material provision. The size per capita of the national income falls here, along with Food Security and Financial Inclusion (having a bank account). The component also covers the extent to which the country benefits from the three elements of welfare normally provided communally – Health services, Education and ‘Communications Infrastructure’ (by which we meant mobile telephone services, access to the Internet and the provision of electricity to homes). We have regarded

these last as elements of Empowerment, because they are preconditions for the exercise of certain kinds of agency, but we placed state expenditure on health and education in the Economic Security quadrant as part of the 'Social Wage' domain, and the two sets of indicators share variance which has been picked up here. Interestingly, 'Family and Friends' also loads here as well as in its more obvious location of Social Cohesion/Inclusion, which perhaps reflects the extent to which family and community are important resources.

- 2 The second component combines elements of Social Cohesion and Social Inclusion, putting social processes together with the structures within which they occur. It comprises Human Rights, Political Empowerment, Good Governance, Group Harmony and the Acceptance of Immigration, plus Gender Inclusion and Active Involvement in community and politics. It accounts for almost 20 per cent of the variance.
- 3 The third, 'Work and Agency' (13 per cent), contains inclusion in the world of work, belief in the availability of jobs and/or opportunities for setting up business and the two psychological domains, belief in the possibility that hard work will bring success and awareness of having a range of choices in life.
- 4 The fourth element (12 per cent) is Trust in other people and in institutions (government and its agencies, banks). Economic Equality (the converse of the GINI Coefficient) also falls here, as well as showing a positive loading on Economy and Resource and on Social Wage issues, but it loads negatively on Work and Agency.
- 5 The fifth, small component (6.7 per cent) combines the absence of (extreme) relative and absolute poverty with the Social Wage domain; the combination is interpretable but not very interesting. In a four-component solution the Social Wage has its highest loading on Inclusion/Cohesion, and Economic Equality loads with Trust and with Work and Agency.

Thus the analysis shows that the theoretical structure which the model imposes on social processes and structures is not simply reflected in the structure of the data; what the correlation and components analyses reveal are areas of social life and social structure, and the processes defined by the model are active within all of them. Because of intercorrelation and the multiplicity of causal/influential links in both directions (and sometimes patterns of reflexive, mutual causation), the quadrants are not separate from each other but work interactively to produce and reproduce the society. Nonetheless, we have been able to detect elements in the data structure which suggest the partial separation of the economic base, the social structures and processes of cohesion/inclusion and the world of work within which people strive for agency. We also note that trust, for us an essential element of Social Cohesion, appears as an at least partially separable component, not precisely predictable from either the economic base or the remainder of cohesion/inclusion.

Table 7.3 Component structure of domains

<i>Domain</i>	<i>1 Economy and Resource</i>	<i>2 Cohesion/ inclusion</i>	<i>3 Work and Agency</i>	<i>4 Trust</i>	<i>5 Social wage</i>
Communications Infrastructure (EM)	.890	.195	-.202	.062	.220
Conditions for Health (EM)	.865	.199	-.177	.120	.216
Education (EM)	.842	.236	-.193	-.001	.183
National Economy (EC)	.694	.086	.057	.425	-.153
Food Security (EC)	.662	.126	-.205	.021	.447
Financial Inclusion (SI)	.620	.415	-.237	.328	-.013
Friends and Family (SI)	.574	.442	.347	.077	.148
Human Rights (SI)	.129	.825	-.219	-.082	.182
Political Empowerment (EM)	.334	.824	-.160	.002	-.025
Group Harmony (SC)	.226	.788	.167	.221	-.037
Good Governance (SC)	.522	.700	-.063	.398	.033
Gender Inclusion (SI)	.095	.679	-.092	.232	.183
Acceptance Of Immigration (SI)	-.524	.613	.219	-.140	.141
Active Involvement (SI)	.172	.494	.455	.109	-.335
Belief in Efficacy of Work (EM)	-.143	-.034	.825	.054	-.085
Availability of Work (EM)	-.352	-.247	.784	.017	-.096
Work Inclusion (SI)	-.169	.014	.628	.134	-.022
Awareness of Choice (EM)	.394	.546	.596	.132	.056
Trust in Institutions (SC)	-.005	-.080	.396	.825	-.048
Trust in People (SC)	.071	.305	.211	.812	.104
Feeling of Safety (SI)	.225	.094	-.063	.780	.065
Economic Equality (SC)	.294	.076	-.385	.472	.388
Absence of Poverty (SI)	.247	.021	-.227	.259	.749
Social Wage (EC)	.229	.397	.175	-.150	.540

Key to domain quadrants: EC – Economic Stability; SC – Social Cohesion; SI – Social Inclusion
EM – Empowerment

Information that was not available

A number of variables do not appear in the index which we would have liked to see there, mostly because their inclusion would reduce the number of countries we could cover, but sometimes for other reasons as well:

- In *Economic Security* we should have liked to expand the ‘food security’ domain with a proper measure of aggregate food supply, but this was not available for enough of the countries we wanted to use; we should also have liked to include clothing and shelter, but what is required differs from country to country according to climate, so the best that could have been done would have been to use crude survey questions on whether these were deemed adequate by respondents, and not enough countries are covered by surveys using such questions. Third, we should have liked a measure of the size of social security provision in the social wage as well as its presence or absence, but again this information is not available for all countries.
- In *Social Cohesion* it would have been useful to be able to separate banks from government institutions when examining trust and confidence, but separate information is not available in enough cases.
- In *Social Inclusion*, beyond just ‘number of people with a bank account’ there are world data on use of ‘financial products’ – loans, savings, credit, money transfer – and women’s employment in senior positions is also collected, but by too few of the world’s countries. It would also have been useful to be able to state the extent to which countries have enacted international human rights provisions in their own national laws and the extent of laws forbidding discrimination on a variety of grounds, but we could not find a source for this, and desk research on each country individually would have been a dauntingly large undertaking.
- In *Empowerment* we would have liked statistics which were not available for a sufficient list of countries – on secondary, higher and vocational education and on certified workplace training, on school performance against some international standard, more on medical health provision than just the number of doctors and a more general measure of morbidity, something on roads and railways that controlled for size of country and/or population and was reasonably up to date (the available world statistics are sometimes very old here!), more on over- or under-supply of jobs, more on decent work as opposed to transitory/insecure and ill-paid labour. Finally, we should have liked the range of attitudinal questions worldwide that is used in the European Social Survey, from which it is possible to compute second-order psychological variables such as optimism, flexibility of attitude and locus of control.

A word of caution is always required when making secondary use of published statistics, and particularly when combining statistics from different sources and interpreting the results.

- By and large we have tried to use a single source to cover the entire range of countries or to combine more than one source which offers information on all

the countries in order to have assured comparability of definitions and collection practices. We have favoured the World Bank as a prime source because of the number of countries they cover. However, gaps have been filled in from other available sources, some regionally specific such as the various ‘value surveys’ and ‘barometers’ and the IIAG, and very occasionally it has been necessary to range more widely in order not to lose a case from the analysis because of a single missing value. There may therefore be slight variations sometimes in precisely what is measured.

- The data sources which the world statistical series compile come from published work and ultimately from questionnaires, interviews or data collection sheets which are not all in the same language. This is necessary and to be expected, but we need to remember that translation always has its problems. Particularly with words/concepts such as ‘trust’ or ‘satisfaction’, we cannot be entirely confident that the finer shades of meaning are the same even across a linguistic community such as the English-speaking world, let alone when a second or third language is involved.
- Comparisons should not be tied too firmly to a particular date and the events which occurred in a country before or after that date. We have tried to use the most recent data available, but this may vary from source to source or even from indicator to indicator. We have 2014 data for some sources (e.g. Gallup), 2013 for others (e.g. much of the World Bank information), but in other cases the most recent date is something in the 2010–12 range. To fill in missing values we have sometimes had to go further back in time, following the same practice as the major world statistical series, which means that the year of data collection is not always the same even within a given indicator. Differences among countries are quite inevitable when using some sources, such as material based on demographic and health surveys and/or the country’s census, which happen periodically rather than annually and do not have the same periodicity in different countries, and some major surveys such as the WVS work in ‘waves’ of data-collection which may mean that the collection date in different countries may occasionally be four or even five years apart.
- Expert judgments and, even more, *vox populi* surveys are unreliable in themselves and liable to both sampling and non-sampling errors; sometimes these will bias results. We have tried to get round this by averaging several measures where possible.
- While in our experience there is less of it than is popularly supposed, it is always possible that a government or a government agency may suppress or distort results in order to put a good ‘spin’ on a country’s figures, and there is certainly some tendency to prefer the measurement scale or start date that will show the country’s performance to best advantage. We cannot have total faith even in the official statistics (administrative returns) of some countries – particularly in developing countries, but mistakes and distortions are not unknown even in the developed world. (See Sandefur and Glassman 2015 for a discussion of the problems of administrative statistics and government management information systems in developing countries.)

Nonetheless we offer the new index, for what it is worth, and the ways in which it can be put to use are explored briefly in Chapter 8. We have shown that it is useful for comparing the most developed countries but also the poorest, that it can distinguish between countries with fairly equal but not outstandingly good development in all four quadrants from others that achieve their score through excellent performance in one or two quadrants but fall short in the others, sometimes seriously. A case study of a single country which we know well, Rwanda, set against the Anglophone countries of the East African Community which it would regard as its peers but also a large and imperfectly controlled Francophone country on its other border, begins to show how we can drill down, within a country and between countries, to identify possible targets for policy implementation and remediation.

8 Using the Decent Society Index

Headline results

Scores and ranks for the 121 countries are given in Appendix Tables A.1 and A.2 and mapped in Figure 8.1. It will be noted that on the map the distribution of countries between the four score categories in the map is to a large extent similar to what we would expect on satisfaction/happiness/wellbeing/human development indicators:

- The Scandinavian countries are at the top, along with the UK, most of Western Europe, North America, Uruguay, Japan, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand.
- The second category contains most of the rest of Europe, Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Central America, Argentina and Ecuador, Namibia, Botswana, Ghana, Senegal, Kazakhstan, China and some other far Eastern countries.
- The third category contains the Russian Federation and some other CIS states, Iran, Jordan, Bangladesh, South Africa, the East African Community (but Rwanda is in Category 2), several countries in West Africa and most of the rest of South America.
- The bottom category holds the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, Yemen, Iraq, India and Pakistan, Venezuela, Paraguay, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

Looking at the rankings (Table A.2), the three top countries are Scandinavian, and most of the top twenty are in Europe or North America. Of the bottom twenty-three, seventeen are in Africa.

However, for purposes of policy intervention the overall ranks or scores are not actually very interesting. Being a decent society is not some sort of competition – there is no prize – but a never-ending process of improving what governments are able to offer their citizens and the extent to which they are able to integrate other residents within the society. Overall ranking systems get headlines – the press, the public, most governments and many academics love ‘league tables’ – but they are not always very informative. In what follows we shall try to decompose rank positions to show the quadrants which are determining them. Within the quadrants we shall frequently want to look at domain scores, to see what it is that is raising or depressing the score, and quite often we shall want to look at

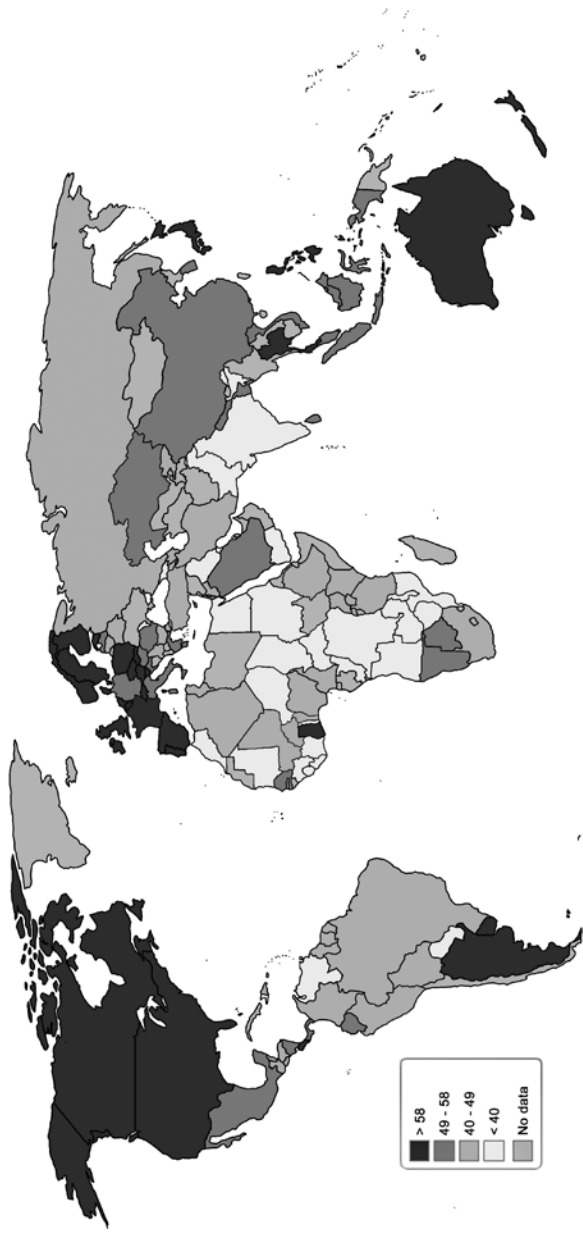


Figure 8.1 World map: Decent Society scores

the particular indicators within domains, where the effect is not uniform across a domain but lies predominantly in one specific area. In this way it is possible to go from vague commendations or ambiguous warnings to quite specific advice on what governments probably need to do next in order to render their society a more decent one. It quickly becomes apparent that there are many different routes to becoming Decent as a society; the main use of the index is the ability it gives to drill down in a structured way to quadrant scores, domain scores within them and even individual indicators within domains if that is what is needed, to see *where* a society achieves its high or low score and what might need to be done to improve conditions for its citizens. The rest of this chapter looks at three case studies – the highest-scoring group of countries, the poorest countries in the world and then a single developing country (Rwanda) in more detail, in order to explore how an index such as this may be used and what it can tell us.

What is of practical and policy interest is

- where successful countries are deriving their high scores – as a model, perhaps, for others to imitate,
- where the low-ranking countries fail (sometimes across the board, in which case one will suspect weak governance allied with extreme poverty, but sometimes in identifiable aspects of governance) and
- even more, what a country can do to use this kind of index to shape social policy.

Where a country is scoring highly on a number of quadrants but falls down on one, this may be an indicator of what it is urgent to improve in the next planning period. Uruguay, for example, ranks seventeenth overall, sixteenth for Social Cohesion – higher than the UK and the United States – and sixth for Empowerment – better than Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands – and its rank for Economic Security is reasonably high at twenty-fifth. Its overall score is depressed, however, by a lower ranking for Social Inclusion – forty-first, about a third of the way down the list. Armenia, with an overall rank of 100, has a fairly flat performance across the quadrants (ranking between 80 and 100 on all), but Honduras, at rank 97, has a performance depressed by a very low score for Social Cohesion, and this is undoubtedly affecting the extent to which its residents are able to take advantage of empowering conditions and may therefore even be affecting economic performance. Sierra Leone, next to it, is depressed in the rankings by low performances on Economic Security and Empowerment.

The remaining sections of the chapter will look at groups of countries from this point of view, seeking out discrepancies between the quadrants and asking where good performance can offer a lesson for other countries and where poor rankings suggest something which needs further attention.

The top sixteen countries

Let us begin by looking by quadrant at the sixteen countries that have the highest scores on the overall index (Figure 8.2). All their overall index scores reach 75

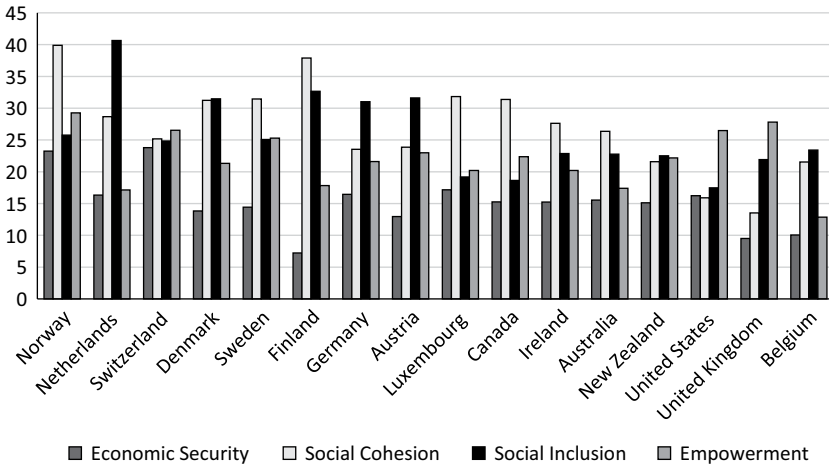


Figure 8.2 Deviation of quadrants from world mean values – the top sixteen countries

Note: Countries are arranged in order of their overall rank on the index.

or higher, with the next-highest country, Uruguay, coming in at 71. They are all in Western Europe or countries which share a history with the United Kingdom – Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Four of the first six are the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland; Switzerland and the Netherlands fill the other two places.

All of the top sixteen have scores in all four quadrants which are well above the world mean, but they are by no means identical in the way in which their overall index score is achieved. Only Switzerland has a flat profile, with all four quadrants reaching the same level (and perhaps New Zealand, but Economic Security is a little weaker than the other quadrants there). In Norway, Luxembourg, Canada and perhaps Sweden the level of Social Cohesion stands out as definitely higher than the other quadrants; none of the countries is particularly weak in this respect, but the United Kingdom has the lowest score among the sixteen. In the Netherlands, Germany and Austria it is Social Inclusion that stands out; the weakest among the sixteen are Luxembourg, Canada and particularly the United States. Denmark and Belgium are high in both, compared with the other two quadrants, and the United States and the United Kingdom stand out in the level of their Empowerment score (but below the scores of Norway and Switzerland); the lowest Empowerment scores, still creditably high, are for the Netherlands, Finland and Belgium.

Thus affluence alone does not predict the score on the Decent Society Index, even among the most affluent. The lowest rank for Economic Security among the sixteen is for Finland, ranking forty-second and about a third of the way down the overall distribution, followed by the United Kingdom (thirty-second)

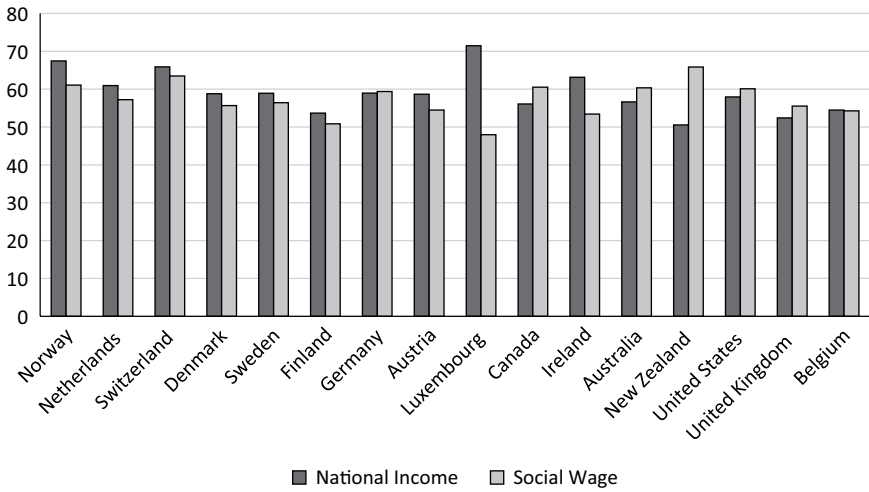


Figure 8.3 Domains within Economic Security for the top sixteen countries (excluding food security)

and Belgium (joint twenty-seventh with the Slovak Republic). The Economic Security quadrant is important in creating a relatively decent society, but we can see that it is by no means the only factor determining which country achieves a decent score. The range is actually fairly restricted at this top end of the overall distribution; the top sixteen countries have only seventeen points separating them, or ten points if we ignore Switzerland's high score. At the level of domains within the quadrant, all of these sixteen countries exhibit the highest score for Food Security awarded by the statistical sources – they feed 95 per cent or more of their population adequately. GNI per capita is not the only factor determining Economic Security, however, despite carrying a double weight to emphasize its importance; the size of the 'social wage' makes a difference, even among these high-scoring countries (Figure 8.3). All of the countries have a national income well above the overall mean score, and the differences between them are relatively small at this end of the distribution. The social wage component is higher than the contribution of the national income, however, in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom – these countries make a strong 'welfare state' provision (though the statistics do not show *how much* they are spending on social insurance). Luxembourg, which has the fifth-highest GNI per capita of any country covered in this book, offers a social wage which is below the mean score for the world as a whole. (Qatar, which has the highest GNI per capita of any of the 121 countries, ranks only twenty-third in terms of Economic Security; what social provision it makes is limited to citizens, and citizenship is a very restricted category in Qatar.)

We cannot tell from our data precisely the extent to which the state supports social welfare (except in regard to education and health, where what we have measured is percentage of spending) and to what extent it expects private citizens or employers to do so but regulates and enforces their contribution. Regulation is a frequent mechanism of the state for controlling transfers across the life course, particularly to deal with emergencies. In all countries, for example, the state does not provide motor insurance out of taxation, but it legislates to make such insurance compulsory and enforces the legislation (though it sometimes comes to arrangements with insurance companies to ensure that provision is available). Similarly, in some countries of the world the state enforces ‘longitudinal transfer’ by compelling people to save for their ill health or old age, while in others it collects the money in the form of taxation and redistributes it when needed; the two procedures are morally equivalent, but the second is more effective in terms of being certain that the money is available when needed.

What this kind of analysis shows is the complexity that underlies the index; to be ‘decent’, a society must take responsibility for a wide range of areas of its citizens’ lives and succeed in a wide range of different kinds of activities. Even those countries that achieve the highest per-capita national income have more to do in order to provide economic security: there must be equity in the distribution of the nation’s wealth, policies must be devised and implemented to overcome economic risks which change throughout the life course, and cohesion and inclusion are also important factors. We note, for example, that Qatar and Saudi Arabia rank respectively first and sixth in the world on GNI per capita, but they do not appear even in the top twenty in the Economic Security quadrant because they make little provision for the welfare of many of those that live within their borders; Qatar also shows relatively low Social Inclusion and imperfect Social Cohesion. Kuwait ranks seventh in terms of GNI and in the top twenty in the Economic Security quadrant as a whole, but a very low score for Social Cohesion brings it down to the thirty-second rank overall.

It is instructive, continuing the line of thought, to compare the United Kingdom with the United States of America. The two nations occupy adjacent ranks on the Decent Society Index and share a culture, a history and a language. Both are affluent in terms of national income, the United States more so in GNI terms. They both invest in the Social Wage, the United States more so than the UK, contrary to popular belief (though this may be influenced by the higher cost of healthcare). In terms of Social Cohesion the quadrant scores are broadly similar: the UK scores higher on governance, government regulation and legitimacy but lower on government effectiveness, there is more trust of other people in the UK but they are broadly similar on trust for institutions (with the UK trusting government more and the United States trusting banks more), and they are they are broadly similar on group grievances and on immigration. In terms of Social Inclusion the UK leads, most of all in the score for acceptance of UN Conventions; the United States tends to treat them as subordinate to the American Constitution and to decline to allow US citizens to be tried abroad or political decisions to be taken by supranational bodies, which subverts the intent of the Conventions. Otherwise

the UK leads in the share of national income at the disposal of the bottom quintile, in financial inclusion (having a bank account) and in feeling safe in the neighbourhood at night. The United States leads in active involvement, with substantially more time volunteered. In terms of the Empowerment score the two are broadly similar, with the UK having better health (five years' longer life expectancy) and more access to mobile phones and the web but the United States scoring higher in terms of work empowerment (not business opportunities but belief in the availability of jobs). So there are differences of detail, reflecting differences in habitual behaviour and attitudes, but overall one gets the feeling of two similar cultural/social maps.

Planned social development: the case of Rwanda

In the latter part of the twentieth century, Rwanda was torn apart by dissension between a majority fraction, the Hutu, and a former ruling minority, the Tutsi. In the space of a few weeks the male Tutsi population (those that had not fled the country) was literally decimated by the Hutu, the women were killed or maimed or raped, 'moderate' Hutu died as well and there was also slaughter among the Twa, the indigenous Central African people in Rwanda. Rwanda's social and physical infrastructure was destroyed along with its economy. It has been the business of government since then to restore all three.

Their targets fit the quadrants of the model outlined in this book:

- Economic Security has been a long-term project, aiming for a sustainable sufficiency for decent living rather than short-term gains and putting the country's welfare over the welfare of even powerful individuals. The strategy for political survival has been the provision of public goods – health, education, work – rather than the enrichment of potential allies or opponents. The goal is to eradicate poverty and transform Rwanda into a middle-income society with a strong middle class.
- Social Cohesion has become a major target – 'one people, one language, one culture, one Rwanda'. Ideological praxis which emphasises the differences among groups and is intended as divisive is an imprisonable offence. Rwanda does not encourage pluralistic politics; the officially encouraged approach, from the settlement of private disputes through to the government of the nation, is dialogue leading to consensus rather than debate leading to a vote. Gender and age are recognised officially as political issues: a structure of committees from the local to the national is mandated by law to monitor and support the interests of women and of young people and align them with government policy.
- The other side of this approach is the determination that all Rwandans shall be included within the society. There is concern for the welfare of the poor, within the constraints of a small tax base and a GDP/GNI which has been growing faster than that of many of the surrounding countries but is still not large. The inequalities that tend to follow from industrialisation and

commercialisation are being curbed as far as possible, and there is safety-net provision for the poor. Human Rights Conventions are mostly accepted by Rwanda without reservation and, once ratified, take a place in Rwandan law second only to that of the Constitution. Crime is low and corruption lower; every effort is made to give government the appearance and often the reality of being fair, transparent and responsive.

- Education, good health and widespread ICT use are seen as the essential fore-runners of a workforce that will attract investment. Beyond this, however, there is not the public money to run the country and expand the economy, so the government expects and gets volunteer labour to deal with social welfare and infrastructure issues, and it expresses the wish (backed by vocational training, support for agricultural improvement and some degree of public works) that people will become increasingly entrepreneurial and create their own work opportunities.

Rwanda ranks sixty-seventh in the world on the Decent Society Index. By comparison, in the East African Community (EAC) of which it is a part Uganda ranks seventy-ninth and Kenya and Tanzania come in at respectively eighty-seventh and joint eighty-eighth. (Burundi has missing values on key variables and so cannot be scored on the index.) The Democratic Republic of Congo, its neighbour to the West, has also been included here for further comparison; it is a very different country from those of the core EAC but in some ways comparable with Rwanda as a former Belgian colony (which has remained Francophone). The DRC ranks 118th out of 121 on the DSI Index. The average rank for Sub-Saharan African countries is about eighty-nine (see Figure 8.4 for the distribution of scores).

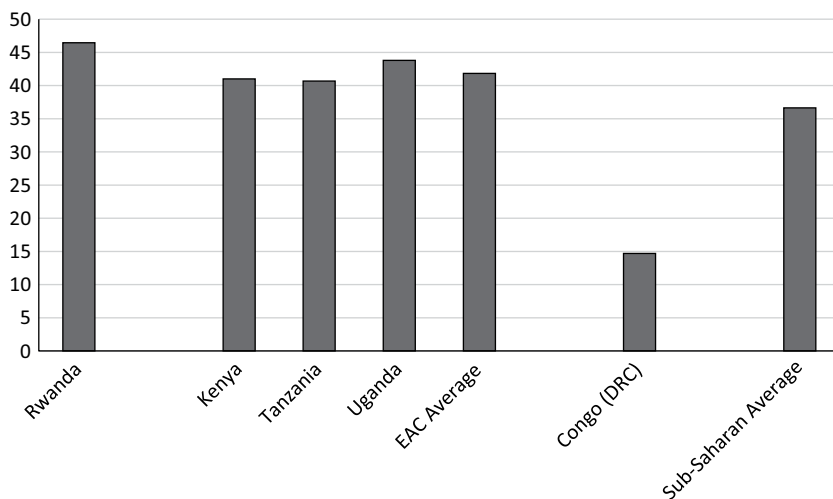


Figure 8.4 Scores for the index: Rwanda, the EAC, the DRC and Sub-Saharan Africa

Figure 8.5 shows the pattern of quadrants for Rwanda and three other EAC countries, plus the DRC. Where Rwanda scores is on Economic Security, Social Cohesion and, particularly, Social Inclusion. The Economic Security quadrant score is above those of the other EAC countries except Uganda, which scores much the same, above the average for Sub-Saharan Africa and well above the score for the Congo, but the Congo is not much behind Tanzania and Kenya in this respect. In terms of food security Rwanda lies below the EAC average, with around 30 per cent of the population undernourished, and the Congo has a very similar score. Rwanda's GNI per capita is below that of the other EAC countries and indeed slightly below the Sub-Saharan average, and although its balance-of-payments problem is no larger than that of the other EAC countries it is not successful in attracting foreign direct investment, and the share of its GDP contributed by development aid is twice that of any other EAC country, both of which count against it in the scoring. What brings the domain score up is Rwanda's substantial investment in the provision of welfare; the 'social wage' component is much higher than any other EAC country and indeed above the world average. In the Congo what depresses the score is that, despite having the highest rate of foreign direct investment of any of the five countries and the lowest rate of remittances and lying on the average for the other indicators within the 'National Income' domain, it also has by far the lowest GNI per capita, half the amount even of Rwanda. Overall the Congo does no worse than some East African countries in terms of food security and the social wage, and the Economic Security quadrant is not what is responsible for its score on the index as a whole.

In the Social Cohesion quadrant all four of the EAC countries score similarly, at around or just under the world mean; Rwanda scores a little less than Tanzania but more than Kenya or Uganda. Looking at the domains that make up the score (Figure 8.7), Rwanda scores badly in terms of economic equality – it has a relatively high GINI coefficient – and no better than the others on group harmony or

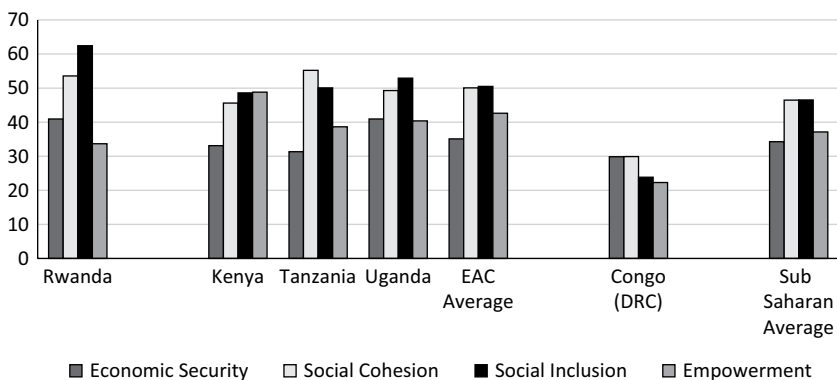


Figure 8.5 Scores for quadrants: Rwanda, the EAC, the DRC and Sub-Saharan Africa

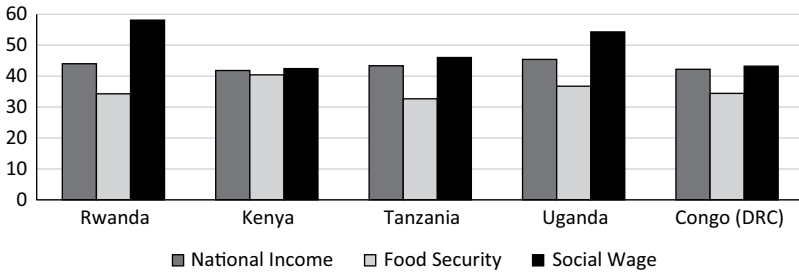


Figure 8.6 Domain scores within Economic Security for EAC countries and the DRC

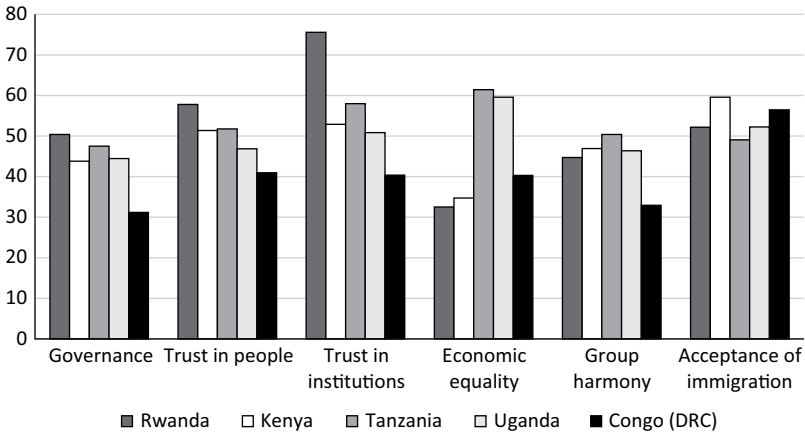


Figure 8.7 Domain scores within Social Cohesion for EAC countries and the DRC

the acceptance of immigration. It leads slightly on governance – it is stronger than the others on Regulation and Control of Violence and much stronger on Control of Corruption – and in the two trust variables. As well as expressing greater trust in ‘people in general’, it claims much higher trust in institutions. Looking at some of the individual trust indicators (Figure 8.8) we can see that there is a bit more trust in government than in the other three countries but that the level of trust in the courts and the legal system is phenomenally high – so much so that we wonder if what is being expressed is an ideological rather than an experiential position. Rwandans also trust banks more than the citizens of the other three countries, and they are more likely than citizens of Tanzania or Uganda to have bank accounts (c. 33 per cent, compared with 17 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, but the Kenyan figure is 42 per cent). By comparison, Congo scores lower than any of the EAC countries on Social Cohesion and a lot lower than Rwanda, although it scores higher than Rwanda and Kenya on economic equality and as high as the others on the acceptance of immigration. The domains which bring it down are

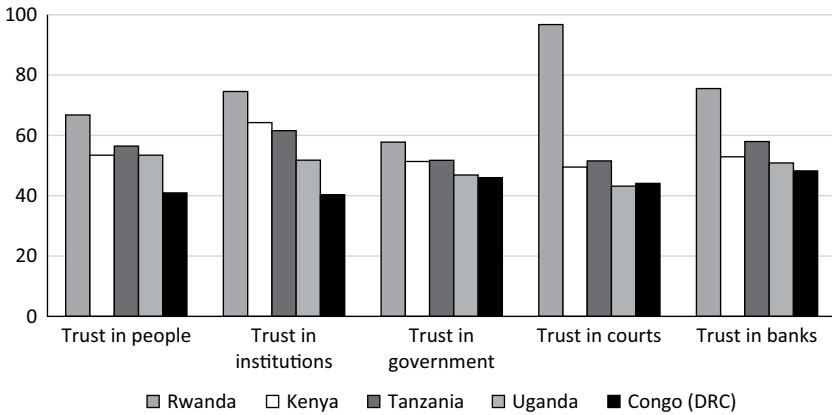


Figure 8.8 Selected indicator scores within Trust in People and Institutions for EAC countries and the DRC

the trust variables – where it scores lowest of the five countries in each of the two domains, though its trust specifically in government, courts and banks is not much lower than some of the EAC countries – in group harmony and, above all, in good governance; it is widely known as a corrupt and inefficient regime. By contrast, Rwanda scores high on trust across the board of indicators and has the highest rating for good governance of the five.

On Social Inclusion Rwanda's provision is very strong – substantially higher than that of the other three countries and higher than the world average; its score for this quadrant ranks with that of Spain, France or Portugal. Looking at the Domains (Figure 8.9), Rwanda falls behind in the Poverty domain, which is a composite of percentage of population surviving on no more than \$1.25 per day (ppp) and the percentage of income or consumption accounted for by the bottom fifth of the distribution; at the time when the figures we have used were collected, 63 per cent of the Rwandan population were surviving on \$1.25 per day or less and the share of consumption by the bottom quintile was not much more than 2 per cent. However, it leads the EAC in gender inclusion (proportion of women in Parliament and ratio of female employment to male) – indeed, on our figures it leads the world in this respect, scoring higher even than the four Scandinavian countries that take ranks 2 to 5 on it – and it also leads the EAC in feeling of safety (Rwanda has a low crime rate on the whole). It also shares the lead with Tanzania on Social Inclusion through work (but 'employment' is a debatable concept in any economy which is heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture). It also holds its own with the other EAC countries in terms of financial inclusion, support from friends and family (Tanzania is surprisingly weak here for an African country), active involvement in public works and local government (with Kenya as the field leader here within the EAC) and human rights. Congo, by contrast, scores poorly in almost every domain. Its score for poverty is worse even than Rwanda's, it

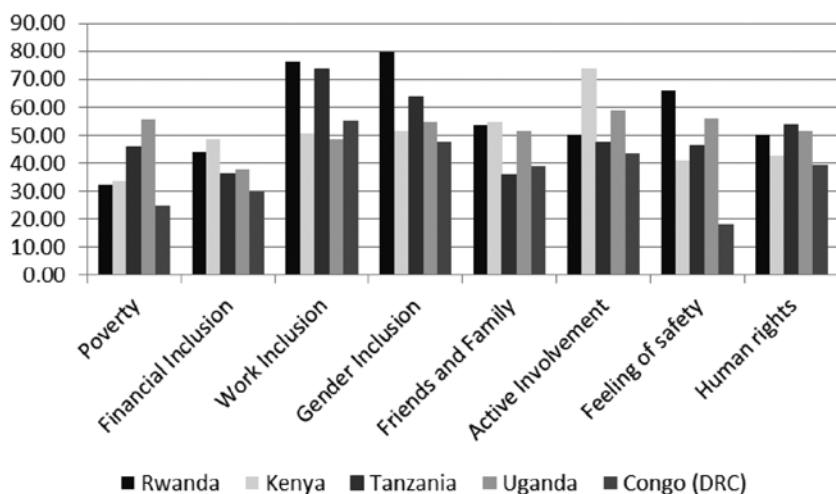


Figure 8.9 Domain scores within Social Inclusion for EAC countries and the DRC

scores worse than most or all of the other countries in the other domains, and it has a particularly low score for ‘feeling of safety’ and is perceived as a dangerous place by its inhabitants.

Despite a promising performance in other quadrants, what depresses Rwanda’s overall score on the Decent Society Index most is its performance in the Empowerment quadrant, where it scores below any other EAC country and below the mean for Sub-Saharan Africa; it ranks 104th in the world (or rather, the 121 countries for which we have data), fifteen places above the bottom and adjacent in rank to Yemen, Pakistan, Burkina Faso and the Republic of Congo. (The DRC does even worse, however.)

Rwanda is ahead in terms of the conditions for health (Figure 8.10), and it holds its own in terms of the availability of work and entrepreneurship opportunities and in terms of the two psychological variables, Freedom of Choice and Belief in Efficacy. Despite investment it only holds its own (and, indeed, is behind Kenya) on the infrastructure of communication – electricity, telephones and the use of the Internet – and it is the lowest scorer in the education domain (which may partially explain relatively low Internet use). Where it really falls behind, however, is in political empowerment; there are 9 countries out of the 121 that score lower – some of them *much* lower – but it ranks only 112th in the world, worse than the DRC, which ranks 101st. Congo is a chaotic country whose government is not quite in control; Rwanda is a controlled country with a clear vision for the future, and in the course of imposing it the liberal political freedoms have not been respected uniformly.

There are four indicators that go to make up the Political Empowerment domain score – Freedom of Expression and Association, Pluralistic Politics (that is, the

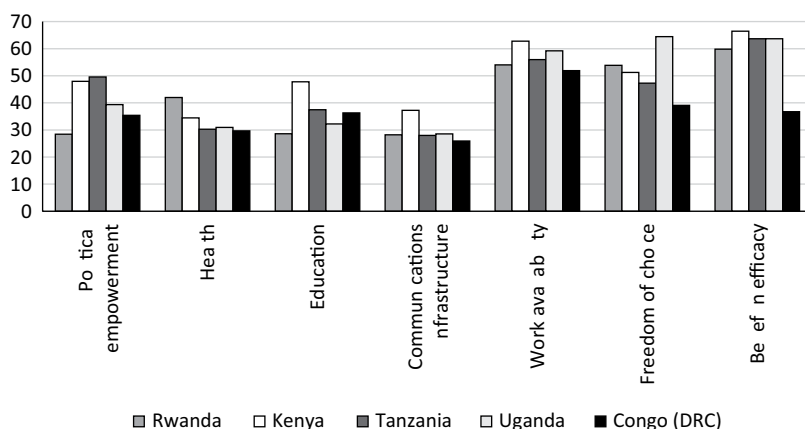


Figure 8.10 Domain scores within Empowerment for EAC countries and the DRC

freedom to oppose government and campaign against its policies and practice as an organized group) and the extent to which government is accountable and citizens have a voice in it individually and in combination. Kenya and Uganda have scores above the world mean here, and while Tanzania's scores are more depressed, Rwanda lags behind it across the board. (Congo, by comparison, is in the middle on freedom of expression and towards the top for freedom of association but scores low on pluralistic politics and the lowest of the five on voice and accountability – government is not transparent, and organized dissent is not tolerated.) To a large extent this 'failure' is a deliberate strategy, as we said in Chapter 6: Rwanda has deliberately adopted dialogue and consensus rather than debate and even verbal conflict as its strategy for social and political recovery after the Genocide. Even its extensive devolution of power and accountability works in practice to involve districts, villages and households in the implementation of government policies rather than to make space for criticism, and the state organisation of women and youth through councils has worked to stifle the development of the crucial civil society organisations which are an essential feature of Empowerment. Rwanda may be right – this may have been the right strategy for bringing the society together again after its collapse in 1994 – but the price has been an intelligentsia that cannot oppose the views and wishes of government to the same extent as is possible in many other countries even in Africa.

The world's poorest countries

Of the 121 countries for which we have data, 16 stand out as being markedly poorer than the rest in the simple-minded sense of having a lower GDP/GNI (see Table 8.1). They are all in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Sub-Saharan average GNI per capita is \$2,980 ppp, about \$8.2 per day, compared with a world average

Table 8.1 Data for the sixteen poorest countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>GNI PPP Per Capita</i>	<i>DSI Score</i>	<i>DSI Rank</i>	<i>Rank: Econ</i>	<i>Rank: SC</i>	<i>Rank: SI</i>	<i>Rank: Empower</i>
<i>C. African Rep.</i>	600.00	21.28	115	117	78	112	116
<i>Congo (DRC)</i>	740.00	14.70	118	114	110	120	119
<i>Malawi</i>	750.00	38.32	94	100	54	100	81
<i>Liberia</i>	790.00	25.73	114	105	102	102	110
<i>Niger</i>	890.00	39.44	92	87	27	94	113
<i>Mozambique</i>	1,100.00	36.06	101	106	41	82	109
<i>Guinea</i>	1,160.00	30.19	109	110	75	89	112
<i>Togo</i>	1,180.00	34.28	104	85	50	113	111
<i>Ethiopia</i>	1,380.00	41.09	86	104	36	26	118
<i>Rwanda</i>	1,450.00	46.46	67	94	43	21	104
<i>Comoros</i>	1,490.00	19.36	116	119	111	101	107
<i>Mali</i>	1,540.00	47.86	59	66	22	86	98
<i>Uganda</i>	1,630.00	43.79	79	95	60	43	89
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	1,680.00	43.13	81	93	33	62	102
<i>Zimbabwe</i>	1,690.00	30.16	110	120	87	72	76
<i>Sierra Leone</i>	1,690.00	36.79	98	109	55	50	108
<i>World Average</i>	10,884.95	50	61	61	61	61	61

Note: Countries are in reverse order of GNI per capita.

of \$17,874 (nearly \$50 per day). The richest country in Sub-Saharan Africa, Botswana, has a GNI of \$15,640 (\$42.8 per day), and South Africa is the next richest with \$12,530 (\$32.3 per day). The richest country in the world, Qatar, has a GNI of \$128,530 per capita, more than \$350 per day. The poorest country of the sixteen selected here has a GNI of \$600 per capita, less than \$2 per day, and the richest has one of \$1,690, about \$4.6 per day.

We have already seen, however, that achieving some status as a decent country is not totally dependent on economic standing. Five of these countries – Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mali, Uganda and Burkina Faso – are in fact not far below the world mean value of 50 for the Decent Society Index score. One, Mali, has a rank for Economic Security which is not far below the world mean, despite being nearly as aid dependent as Rwanda. Five of the countries which score relatively well on the index as a whole manage to offer a considerable ‘social wage’; Rwanda and Uganda make a particularly generous contribution to healthcare, Ethiopia, Mali and Rwanda do so for education, and all of them have a functioning national social support/insurance system. Over half of the sixteen countries rank in the top half of the world distribution for Social Cohesion; high points are Niger in twenty-seventh place and Mali in twenty-second. Two rank in the top half for Social Inclusion, despite their overall poverty – Ethiopia is twenty-sixth in the world and Rwanda is twenty-first. None ranks in the top half for Empowerment,

however; the best ranks are Malawi (eighty-first), Mali (ninety-eighth), Uganda (eighty-ninth) and, surprisingly, Zimbabwe (seventy-sixth).

Looking at prime indicators within the Empowerment quadrant, all these countries score poorly on political empowerment; Malawi, the highest ranking, is roughly on the mean, and eight others are not far behind, but three score less than 30 and are more than two standard deviations from the mean. All are below the world average in terms of the conditions for health; Rwanda is the best, with a score of 42. Zimbabwe lies roughly on the world mean for education, and the other fifteen countries are below it. All are below the world mean for electricity and communications infrastructure. Most, however, are above the world mean for the availability of jobs; high points are Zimbabwe (scoring 70), Mali (scoring 69) and Malawi (scoring 66). The prime 'work availability' indicator is a composite of the Gallup question on whether jobs are available and three measures (combined) of ease of setting up businesses, and it is on the latter that these three score well, only Mali showing a good score for the actual availability of jobs; the highest scorer on business opportunities, Uganda, has a very low rating for ease of getting a job. In terms of psychological variables, only four countries score above the world mean – Malawi, Rwanda, Mali (though only just) and Uganda – but on belief that hard work brings success eleven of the countries are on or above the world mean, with the highest scorers being Rwanda (59), the Central African Federation (62), Uganda (63), Ethiopia (64) and Malawi (68).

Using the Decent Society Index

Thus the Decent Society Index, constructed from internationally available indicators, can be used not just to evaluate overall performance but to point the way towards what needs to be done next. The quadrant scores locate the broad area of social structures/relations within which strengths are achieved or shortfalls found. The domain scores permit more accurate focusing, establishing where performance falls short despite sometimes excellent achievement in other domains, and it is not difficult to explore the individual indicators within a domain to provide more precise targeting of recommendations. The same methods and theoretical base can be applied over a smaller geographical area to provide more precise and realistic advice. Statistics are collected for Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, that are not available worldwide, so it should be possible to define domains more precisely and include some areas as domains which the world statistics do not cover. In a recent paper on sustainable development in Africa (Abbott et al. 2016), for example, we have been able to use additional indicators from the IIAG (Ibrahim Index of African Governance) which are not available in the same form for the rest of the world. Indeed, within a single country use could be made of censuses and regular and ad hoc surveys to extend coverage of domains considerably and reflect the underlying model of society more precisely, with consequent benefit to the direction of future social policy and intervention.

9 Conclusions and future directions

The Decent Society Model

In the first five chapters of this book we outlined and developed a model of social intervention and the management of societies. It is grounded in the theoretical framework of the Social Quality Model, promulgated in a series of books, articles, research reports and working papers (e.g. Beck et al. 2001, van der Maesen and Walker 2012) and designed originally to describe and evaluate social processes within the European Union. We have used this framework for ‘social indicators’ research on the EU, and we have demonstrated that it is equally useful outside the confines of the developed world by applying it in Rwanda, a postconflict country, and in countries in transition after economic and social collapse in the former Soviet Union (Chapter 6); in these diverse societies, some of them with very different histories from the core countries of Europe, the elements of the Social Quality Model continue to make independent contributions to predicting e.g. satisfaction or happiness among those living there. It has also shown its worth as an explanatory framework in Far Eastern countries and in Australia and Canada.

Working as we were with countries in transition which were trying to solve various problems of human misery, we became very aware of how hard many governments were working to make a decent life for their residents. It was clear that what they needed was not academic evaluation of progress, or not that alone, but a method for the regular monitoring of their policies and practices, to see what was not making a strong enough or quick enough contribution to achieving their long-term goals and what short-term processes needed to be inserted or modified to get them back on track. We also became aware that decent societies can be built in different ways, tackling problems in different orders, and still produce a tolerable result for the inhabitants. We began to move away from the notion of *the good* society, therefore, towards the idea of *a decent* society – one where residents could trust government, each other and the rule of law, where corruption was controlled, where resources were sufficient for something more than survival and where people had the possibility of expressing their capabilities in actions and taking some control of their lives. The provision of welfare is one element of this concept. The decent society takes responsibility for all its members, both formally through the action of governments and because each citizen regards the

welfare of others as to some extent his or her responsibility. If all citizens are fully included in a society they have a *right* to welfare; if welfare is conceived as a gift, something charitable, then its provision is divisive and the cohesion of the society suffers.

We have left ‘decent’ relatively undefined; precise operationalized lists of what a government should have achieved are useful for ‘end of project’ evaluations but often a hindrance for monitoring and shaping practice. We have found that a flexible understanding of what the government is trying to do, one which can accommodate fortuitous or opportunistic changes of direction within an overall vision, is more useful for monitoring and offering advice. We concede that our vision of societies as ‘decent’ is a culturally loaded one, most natural to and taken for granted by people in developed countries brought up in a Western, humanistic tradition. We would claim some generality for it, however; from our reading and our research in several quarters of the globe we are aware that it embodies a target lifestyle to which people of widely different cultural backgrounds aspire. The extent to which migrants from North Africa and the Middle East are pressing northward and westward into Europe is another indication that the European lifestyle may be acceptable to and desired by people with a different cultural background. Decent lives for their citizens is not the only goal of governments, but it is a common goal. Where governments have goals that do not include the wellbeing of their citizens they may well be able to argue why their form of government is valid on their own premises and within their own context, but it will not be considered ‘decent’ by the world at large.

The model we have adopted identifies four broad targets for social processes:

- *Economic Security* and the ability to secure sufficient resources to survive and to fund the other quadrants in a sustainable fashion. An important element in security is that the resources are not just available at the present moment; there must be provision for resilience – the ability to survive sudden emergencies – and also the confidence that they will be sufficient to deal with future life-stage problems such as childbirth, the children’s education and old age.
- *Social Cohesion* – the ability of groups with different interests, possibly from different origins and cultural traditions, to tolerate each other and work together for the common good, which means trust in each other to obey the rule of law and ‘play the game by the same rules’ in matters of governance, in industry, finance and commerce and in everyday life.
- *Social Inclusion*, which is an inalienable aspect of what makes a society decent. Justice and opportunity must be for all, not just for a privileged group, even if that group forms the majority of the population, so all must be included with equal rights; to the extent that this is not so, a society cannot be considered decent overall, even if it provides a very decent life for part of its citizenry.
- *Empowerment* of all residents to exercise agency, within the requirement that others shall be able to do so as well. This involves developing capabilities,

making sure that people know what their capabilities are and providing the common physical, social-structural and ideological infrastructure for them to exercise them.

The elements are related in complex ways, forming neither a set of independent requirements nor a straightforward causal chain from foundational conditions to ultimate effect. Economic Security is essential for full Empowerment, but the effect of Empowerment is to increase productivity and so improve a nation's economy. Social Cohesion is necessary for Social Inclusion – there must be a fair, transparent and agreed set of social rules if the outright conflict is to be avoided which would otherwise tear a society apart – but inclusion is essential for cohesion because people have to be *in* the society, as full members, for the social rules to work. Cohesion is the intangible infrastructure for Empowerment, but people must be included within its ambit in order to be empowered, and only those who are empowered can make a full and sustainable contribution to the society's governance. The inclusion of all is required if there is to be Economic Security for all and is also needed for sustainable Social Cohesion. In other words, no single quadrant is sufficient to make a society decent for all; adequate performance is required on all of them, though achievement may vary across the quadrants (see what follows).

Assessing the Model

Ultimately a society succeeds to the extent that its members – *all* its members, with due allowance for children and others who may not (yet) be in a position to exercise full membership – are secure, included in a cohesive society and empowered to exercise their agency. The Social Quality Model, in which our work is grounded, embodies sociological theory, but it is very properly tested by whether its members are happy or live satisfied lives or exhibit some more theorized and perhaps objectively or intersubjectively defined state of wellbeing. This is what we explored in the studies described in Chapter 6 and elsewhere, in the former Soviet Union and Rwanda, and we tested whether the model was appropriate by regressions against satisfaction and/or happiness, to demonstrate which of the four quadrants made the most substantial contribution – explained the largest parts of the variance – in the countries' particular circumstances. In extending our theorisation beyond the social quality experienced by individuals and concentrating on how societies are structured and governed in the Decent Society model, however, we have moved away from such straightforward tests of achievement against desired end state, because we have moved away in principle from measuring achievement. Our major concern, instead, is what conditions a state provides in order that its members may live fulfilled lives. (We should note, however, that sometimes achievement has to be taken as a surrogate indicator for provision, given the paucity of world statistics, and that sometimes an achievement in one sphere forms the condition for achievement in another; the availability of universal schooling is an indicator within Empowerment in our model,

but government spending on it is part of the Social Wage, and in fact an educated populace is a precondition for Economic Security in the twenty-first century in that the successful economies are the ones where the workforce is educated and trained.)

- Several of the key measures are fully objective – GNI as a measure of crude national income, the GINI coefficient as a measure of inequality, assessments of health provision (water, sanitation, the availability of doctors) as prerequisite for the achievement of health (measured by indicators of mortality and morbidity). Some are assessments based ultimately on simple counts of what is provided – the indicator of social welfare provision, for example.
- In some cases we have accepted counts of achievement because the international statistics do not assess conditions, or not in enough countries to permit a realistically worldwide evaluation. There are good statistics on what countries do to ensure that food is reliably available for their populations, for example, but they are not available for enough countries, so we have used percentage of population undernourished as an indicator of food security. Within limited geographical areas there are statistics of the level to which people are educated – how much they have learned, rather than how long they have spent sitting in front of a teacher – but for worldwide comparisons we have had to use statistics of government achievement of targets, such as the average years of schooling in the population, the number who have been certified as having passed the primary stage of education and crude indicators of the literacy of the population.
- Some of the indicators are fairly straightforward measures of government practice, as an indicator of policies – money spent on health and education as a part of the ‘social wage’, for example.
- Several other indicators that we have used describe policies rather even than practices – the acceptance of internationally agreed human rights into national law (in Social Inclusion), for example, or the extent to which legislation is in place that gives rights to participate in political debate without fear of danger (in Empowerment). These policies have to be implemented to be more than a political and rhetorical device, of course, so we also have a measure of the extent to which states breach human rights and several measures of what states do about elements that may be expected to undermine trust, such as corruption.
- ‘Subjective’ issues such as trust, in governments or banks or people in general, are not thought of as attitudes or experiences in the model but rather as ‘social facts’ about the extent to which individuals and groups are able to rely on others to ‘play the game according to the rules’.
- Often it has been necessary to mix these different kinds of measures within a domain in order to obtain a useful indication of what conditions prevail. For example, part of our assessment of group harmony and the effects of immigration, in Social Cohesion, is the proportion of people who say their locale is a good one for immigrants in Gallup Poll responses. The material on ethnic

difference, however, is backed up by an indicator of the extent to which real grievances are expressed, often through aggressive behaviour, in the Group Grievances rating published as part of the Fragile States Index, and the opinions on immigrants are tempered by a measure of how much immigration the country in question does actually experience and therefore how large a problem it is likely to be.

- On the whole even the more subjective measures, asking for attitudes, opinions or beliefs, are used not to assess the state of people but to assess the state of the nation; the country's level on these indicators is a 'social fact' to be taken into account. The exception is our measures of psychological empowerment, which again are taken as an indicator of social facts about the country – namely, the extent to which belief in freedom of choice and faith in the efficacy of personal endeavour are common or less common – but they do characterize the experience of individuals as expressed in their questionnaire answers.

The Decent Society Model is not therefore validated, in the strict and technical sense, by its power to predict satisfaction or happiness, because what is at stake is not how people feel or what their judgment is of their life. The question is whether the society provides the structures and facilities and the properly regulated environment within which people can feel safe working together, trusting unknown others to act in role (politicians, civil servants, the police and the army, bank staff, commercial organisations) and feeling sufficiently secure to make plans to use and develop their capabilities. The validation is provided by whether the theoretical structure is right – whether the key Social Quality diagram does in fact provide a fair and useful characterisation of social processes and whether the arguments of Chapters 2 through 5 are properly conceived and logically developed. Nonetheless, it would be surprising if people were not happier and more satisfied in a more decent society than in a less decent one, so there is a certain degree of construct validation to be had from looking at the correlation. Similarly, it would be surprising if other measures of what governments deliver – the Human Development Index, for example, or the Happy Planet Index – did not show some correlation with the Decent Society Index. Table 9.1 shows the correlations with other indices and with measures of satisfaction and happiness; the table also includes correlations with generalized trust, not a variable often spoken of as a target for development but the key variable for Social Cohesion. It also considers the relationship of the index with GNI as a straightforward indicator of whether the variance is explainable by economics alone.

What we find is that the Decent Society Index score shows a substantial and significant but not overwhelming correlation with the Human Development Index (they share about 60 per cent of their variance), which adds to the DSI's credibility but indicates that it covers a somewhat different terrain and is not just replicating the HDI value. The correlation with the Happy Planet Index is also significant but much lower, explaining only 4 per cent of their joint variance, which would be expected given that the latter does not cover all of the DSI quadrants but does

Table 9.1 Correlation of the Decent Society Index with other key variables

	<i>DSI</i>	<i>HDI</i>	<i>HPI</i>	<i>Satisfaction</i>	<i>Trust</i>	<i>GNI</i>
<i>Decent Society Index Score</i>	1	.78**	.20*	.77**	.61**	.74**
<i>Human Development Index</i>		1	.36**	.78**	.26**	.74**
<i>Happy Planet Index</i>			1	.50**	-.02	0
<i>Satisfaction with Life in General</i>				1	.26**	.70**
<i>Trust in Other People</i>					1	.40**
<i>GNI (\$ ppp) Per Capita</i>						1

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

cover international issues such as damage to the environment which are not covered by the DSI. All three are substantially correlated with general satisfaction, which also adds to the credibility of the index; the Happy Planet Index is the least correlated here, explaining less than half as much variance as the other two (probably, again, because it reaches outside the boundaries of the nation state, and people’s satisfaction is not currently much affected by international environmental issues). The DSI and the HDI are strongly affected by national income though not totally determined by it, which we would expect; the economic quadrant is foundational for all other fields of action, but at the same time success in other quadrants (Social Cohesion, Empowerment) will often feed back into enhanced economic performance. The figures for trust are interesting, however; the correlation with the DSI is substantial (37 per cent of variance explained), but the HDI correlates significantly but at a much lower level (again this is predictable, given that the HDI does not contain an explicit indicator of trust), and the Happy Planet Index shows no correlation with trust at all, suggesting that it is not tapping at all into the area of the Social Cohesion quadrant. Trust correlates with both satisfaction and national income, but not at a high level. In other words, the table offers construct validation for the index but also indicates that the index is not just duplicating the other measures.

Quadrants are made up of ‘domains’ which represent conceptually independent components of them – areas which it is fruitful to consider separately, because they can reasonably be tackled independently by governments. This does not mean, however, that they will necessarily be *statistically* independent, as we argued in Chapter 7: we would expect good governance and the rule of law to be related to respect for human rights, for example, although they are by no means identical concepts. Similarly, the domains are mostly made up of several indicators – components of the concept which the domain expresses – and in some cases we

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would expect a statistical relationship between them which indicated high correlation within a domain and low correlation between domains. In other cases, however, we would not expect correlation, because the components are additive and do not predict each other's score. A country which shows substantial respect for the rule of law, for example, probably also runs free and fair elections and is transparent in its decision making; on the other hand, whether formal acceptance of human rights as defined by United Nations Conventions predicts the extent to which human rights are actually breached in a country is an empirical question to be determined by looking at the figures. The factor structure of domains and quadrants is examined in Chapter 7.

Capability, functioning and the provision of prerequisite conditions

Amartya Sen points out that agency depends on having capabilities, knowing the capabilities that one has, and engaging in action in the light of known capabilities; for this realisation of known capabilities he uses the term 'functionings'. When evaluating countries' performance – for example, against the Millennium Development Goals or the more recent Sustainable Development Goals – we need scales or dashboards to measure:

- what people have achieved in terms of capability – for example education, level of training undertaken, transferable skills such as literacy;
- the achievement of prerequisite conditions for exercising capabilities – for example health, food security, resources above the poverty level, perhaps access to finance and to vertical social networks;
- awareness of what one has learned or acquired as a capability and, more broadly, the belief that one has some control over what happens and that it is worth putting effort into new developments – what might be called 'the psychological climate' for a person or, more broadly, across a country (the United States in the early twentieth century being a good example of a place where the popular belief has been that lowly circumstances were not a bar to rising through hard work and the exploitation of a good idea);
- the outcome of people functioning to exercise their capabilities, generally conceived of as an increase in personal and/or national wealth, or a state of wellbeing or satisfaction with life.

There is no shortage of good measuring instruments to use for this purpose, and many of them have been discussed in this book. Some, such as the measurement of satisfaction, are intrinsically pointed at individual achievement. Others are pointed at some salient aspect of social functioning – generally economic performance, growth and 'competitive edge'. Some are quite complex and include both individual and social measures, including notions of social justice; the Human Development Indicators, for example, are concerned with education and even gender equity alongside economic performance. Many other measuring instruments,

both general and specific, have been discussed in this book and used as valuable data sources.

The difference between the Decent Society Index, as conceived, and the other excellent measures of progress is that our focus has been not on what is achieved by citizens nor fundamentally on how nations are doing in the competition between nations for control of the world's wealth and resources. We have focussed on the social relations and structures which *underlie* Empowerment, at the level of the nation state because this is the smallest unit that aims for self-sufficiency in terms of control of resources (budgets) and provision of 'social goods'. The focus has been on what nation states do for their members rather than on how they fare in relation to each other – hence the emphasis on what a state needs to provide in order for it to be regarded as 'decent'. Ultimately countries succeed and grow or fail and fall apart because of the ability of their citizens to live together productively, but what citizens are able to do and what resources they have with which to do it depends on how they are governed. Negatively, a country's residents cannot flourish unless

- 1 they have sufficient resources that life is not dominated by the search for food, clothing and shelter – which generally entails productive employment and/or access to agricultural/pastoral land;
- 2 they feel safe in their homes and their communities;
- 3 they do not suffer discrimination in terms of opportunities and scope to exercise their capabilities;
- 4 they do not have to defend themselves against the arbitrary and/or self-serving actions of others but can trust others (in government and in commerce, for example) to fulfil the roles they have undertaken and 'play by the rules' – which entails governments acting to ensure fair access and fair play by controlling corruption, for example.

On the positive side,

- 5 they are accorded equal rights and recognized as full members of their society;
- 6 respect for the rule of law ensures that others, including governments and government officials, do not infringe their rights more than is necessary in order to ensure that others can also receive their rights;
- 7 they can rely on others (as individuals, as post holders and also as groups with sometimes differing needs, customs and interests) to fulfil their obligations and are prepared to fulfil their own – everyone is both a rights bearer and a duty bearer, with government as the ultimate duty bearer regulating adherence to the norms of conduct;
- 8 they can rely on having sufficient resources to cope both with emergencies and with the difficulties of some life stages (e.g. childbearing, old age) – in other words, their economic status is secure;
- 9 they have access to the possibility of building capabilities and access for their children;

- 10 they have the means to turn their capabilities into functionings – to do what they are aware they are capable of doing, to do what they want to do, to do things that are valued and respected in their society.

All of these requirements need to be sustainable; countries as well as citizens need to be able to weather bad seasons and changing circumstances, and the effective government monitors its performance and overcomes or assimilates into its policies the changed wishes, requirements and circumstances of its citizens. ‘The Decent Society’ is not something which exists anywhere at this time, nor something which can be expected to come into being at any time, but an ideal which the decent government has in its view, and even if it could be achieved it would still require government action to maintain it and reproduce it.

Our concern has been not so much with what people or groups achieve as with the extent to which governments provide the structures and the access to resources that are needed for such achievement. Where possible we have used measures of what is provided rather than indicators of achievement in order to characterize the performance of governments as beginning to approach the ideal of providing decent conditions for all. This is not always possible, given that the statistics that are collected and published worldwide are more concerned with achievement than provision – or, more accurately, that statistics on provision tend to be published by and for far fewer countries than statistics on achievement. We should have liked to examine in more detail the provision of ‘decent’ work – work which is adequately remunerated, is reliable rather than precarious and commands social respect – and the extent to which women, minority/out-groups and people with disabilities are able to take their place in the system of decision making, and there are some excellent statistical series that cover these aspects of life, but they are not yet available for a majority of countries, so we have often had to take the outcome as an indicator of the existence of decent policies and the extent of their implementation. However, even with imperfect indicators the fact that our model is underpinned by a reasoned account of the nature of social processes enables us not just to point to a shortcoming but to drill down and suggest what needs to be considered if changes are to be made.

The uses of the Index

One thing that emerges readily from the use of the index is that there are different routes to the achievement of ‘decent society’ status. Among the top 16 countries on the index, Switzerland is the only one that has a sustained high score in all four quadrants, and it ranks third in the world. The strongest in terms of the economic quadrant are Norway, which ranks first, and Switzerland; the difference is that Norway is very strong in terms of Social Cohesion, which is why it ranks higher. The Netherlands, ranking second in the world, is weaker in the economic quadrant, and indeed in terms of Empowerment, but ranks high on Social Cohesion and even higher on Social Inclusion. The United States and the UK, ranking respectively fourteenth and fifteenth, differ in terms of the economic

quadrant – the United States is substantially richer – and both are strong in terms of Empowerment, but the UK is much more inclusive. Belgium, which ranks sixteenth, is nearly as strong on both cohesion and inclusion, but it scores lower on both Economic Security and Empowerment. At the other end of the spectrum, the sixteen countries which have the lowest GNI per capita are all in Sub-Saharan Africa, and some of the lowest of them, for example Liberia, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, have more or less equal scores in all four quadrants and rank near the bottom of the index as a whole. However, Malawi, which ranks ninety-fourth on the index, has much the same GNI per capita as the DRC (118th); its rank is brought up by a higher score for Empowerment and a Social Cohesion score that is above the world mean. Rwanda, as we have seen, lies among these thirteen poorest countries and ranks 104th in the world on Empowerment (at least in part because of a perceived lack of political freedom), but it ranks ninety-fourth on the Economic Security quadrant as a whole because it makes a substantial investment in health and education provision and has at least the bones of a working social security system; it also scores forty-third in the world on Social Cohesion and twenty-first (in the top fifth) on Social Inclusion. As we saw in Chapter 8, Rwanda is an interesting case because of its stance on governance; while we cannot know the thoughts of those who brought the country back after the 1994 Genocide and framed the 2003 Constitution, Rwanda's social and political policy mirrors quite neatly the quadrants of the model, and all four are receiving attention.

The Decent Society Index helps frame the debate about development and transformation in a different way. Many potential goals are given in terms of numerical targets – percentage GDP growth if the evaluation is economic and perhaps preset targets for the reduction of poverty, maternal mortality, the incidence of AIDS and so forth if they are more social (the Millennium Development Goals being an example). Numerical targets can be a distraction. However; a country can proudly hit some target, having invested time and resources in order to do so, without making much difference to what it is like to be a citizen. The Decent Society Index does not have numerical targets to hit; rather, it acts as a signpost to what is being done well, compared with the rest of the world or a group of similar countries, and what would merit more attention if life is to be improved. Much more than in the kind of analysis we described in Chapter 6, use of the index allows us to point more exactly at what is depressing the overall score. In our study of former Soviet territories, for example, importing the basic descriptive framework of the Social Quality Model greatly clarified our understanding of how societies recover from collapse. The economic sphere is important here – economic security has to be restored to some extent – but it was clearly not sufficient to establish a market economy in place of a collective one and let the remainder of the society metamorphose to suit the change (see e.g. Amsden et al. 1994, Peng and Heath 1996). Facing the change unaided meant a substantial growth in malaise and uncertainty in life – in anomie – and was one of the factors which underlay the substantial growth in male mid-life mortality in some countries; death followed from drinking, but it was not brought about by alcohol alone, but by a loss

of identity and purpose, always worse for men than women in times of transition because women's domestic responsibilities continue to provide an anchor (see Jahoda et al. 1933 and a great deal of subsequent work). What was needed in addition to economic empowerment was to rebuild a normative framework – a sense of trust and expectations of fair dealing – and so to reconstitute the broader society of the nation state as a viable entity in which its people could have faith.

Taking Rwanda as another example, we have noted that their Social Inclusion score is remarkably high for Sub-Saharan Africa, its highest contributions being from work inclusion (not difficult in a country where many are in subsistence agriculture – though many farmers are seriously unemployed in terms of the work available each week) and gender inclusion, where gender equality was a principle of the Constitution which is being actively pursued. Social Cohesion is another target that stands high in the country's rhetoric and is an important part of its policy, and the results are fairly good, but scores are depressed by relatively high economic inequality compared with its East African neighbours and they are much the same as those of its neighbours on most other domains (trust in people, good governance, group harmony (given the need to recover from the Genocide against the Tutsi) and human rights). Even in the area of trust in institutions, where Rwanda scores higher than its neighbours, the major contributor is the high level of trust in the courts and the legal system; government, banks and 'people in general' are trusted little better than in the rest of the East African Community. In the Economic Security quadrant its GNI per capita is improving (though high aid dependency makes the national income precarious), but it scores better in terms of decency than might have been expected because of the substantial investment it is making in the social wage. The Empowerment scores are creditable but nonetheless disappointing; the score is depressed by perceived lack of political freedoms, and the educational level of the population is relatively low despite considerable investment in it, which reflects the lower education of the older generation, brought up in a colonial regime which made little investment in local education.

The Rwandan example makes the point that becoming a decent society – one where anyone would be glad to live – does depend on resources. It would be absurd to expect a struggling African nation to provide, by magic perhaps, the level of sanitation and clean water that is available in the developed world, or the quality of transport. Many countries try to transform themselves through economic development by developing industrial and service sectors and reducing their reliance on the primary sector, with the first stage often being adding value to primary products. Transformation of the economy means moving from an economy based on subsistence production to becoming a middle-class, middle-income country whose basis of existence is industry, commerce and the provision of expert services. Fundamentally decent governments may succeed in raising the quality of life for their citizens, to the point even where they stand out from surrounding nations as relatively decent places. However, despite some very good work by governments of developing countries who are working with very little, a country where a substantial proportion are malnourished or education is not

available or health services are ineffective or the water is not fit to drink cannot be counted as decent in the same sense that we count most developed countries as decent, and it would be unwise to set up dual standards, one as ‘decent for affluent nations’ and the other as ‘decent enough for the rest’. What is required here is that the tasks which are beyond the reach of any given government should be undertaken by a decent world as a whole, and this is what was intended by the Millennium Development Goals and is to be continued in the next round of international target setting for goals to reach and development assistance to be provided. The world has expressed the intention of eradicating poverty by 2030, for example, so that *all* countries can be decent in that respect, and is prepared to put money, effort and skills into the process.

Next steps in using the Model and the Index

We would hesitate to advocate the use of this index in the form in which we have constructed it, because its computation is too complex for many countries to wish to undertake, while at the same time some of the indicators are insufficiently comprehensive and focused on the core of the relevant concept for precise conclusions to be drawn about what should be done – particularly as world statistical series are often a couple of years out of date by the time they have been compiled. The latter problem can be solved by constructing regional indices. World-wide there is a dearth of precise statistics outside the area of economics, and we have several times had to take insufficiently comprehensive indicators because the more comprehensive ones are not available for sufficient countries to permit us to retain a substantial number and range in the analysis. We have characterized financial inclusion only through whether people have a bank account, for example – information on credit and savings is available, but for fewer countries – and using just the proportion who are undernourished as our measure of food security does not come very close to examining what provision the country is making to deal with the problem. However, there are good supplementary sources which could be pressed into service in particular regions; the European Social Survey would permit much better measurement of psychological empowerment, for example, allowing several core psychological concepts to be operationalized as facts about countries, and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance contains a wealth of information for Africa on more detailed aspects of inclusion and cohesion.

The other problem is that the index is complex to compute, but simplification of its complexity may be our next task. We deliberately did not use factor analysis in the construction of this version of the index, preferring to cover as much of the theoretical base as possible even if this meant a proliferation of correlated measures, but it would now be possible to continue the exploration of factor space which we started in Chapter 7 and see what indicators add little or nothing to our discrimination between countries. Another tactic for individual countries to adopt would apply the same general method using more locally available data to permit flexible monitoring of progress, updating as information became

available. A country could set up a model with indicators of the four quadrants and the more important domains within them, tailored to the data that it could obtain most easily. Administrative and other routine government statistics could be fed in – on births and deaths, GNI and government expenditure, education statistics, health and medical statistics, infrastructure statistics, the coverage of various areas through the implementation of government policies and so on. Where these are not reliable (and this is quite often the case at present – see Sandefur and Glassman 2015), the figures can be realigned using survey or census data; many countries carry out periodic household surveys covering poverty and income, employment, housing, consumption, education, health and the like, and most carry out a census every ten years or so. If the data-handling system were set up in a user-friendly manner its use would require only (a) the judgment that a new source provided more valid figures than were there at present for a given indicator and (b) its insertion in the database. The precise indicators would vary from country to country, making international comparisons difficult, but provided the same system was used consistently within a country it would be perfectly adequate for monitoring trends, successes and shortcomings within country over time and so could feed directly into policy making.

What is essential for the model is that it retain its values rather than becoming a mere technical tool. Central to this work has been the assumption that government is about making people's lives better and that to achieve this it is essential that social justice prevails. Beyond dispute the pretty decent society is one

- where everyone has enough to eat,
- where there are sufficient resources well enough deployed to cushion people both against sudden emergencies and against the normal 'difficult periods' of the life course,
- where people are able to trust each other, trust institutions and trust government to act fairly and in accordance with shared rules and expectations,
- where all residents are treated more or less as citizens and there is no second-class group of slaves, serfs or mere workers contrasting with the 'citizens' who enjoy the privileges, and
- where people are able to acquire and use capabilities freely provided their doing so does not constrain the freedom of others.

The core of the model in practice is the idea that no single element of governance can be trusted to bring about these aims in isolation; attention has to be paid to the interrelationships between and within the quadrants and the way that a change in one set of conditions damages or facilitates the development of others. We have shown that the model is particularly useful for developing countries and countries in transformation. We have also shown, however, that even the most Decent countries in the world can still be improved by attention to their own shortcomings and studying the strengths of others. The decent society is not something that has been achieved; it is and will continue to be a work in progress.

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Appendix

Scores and ranks on the Decent Society Index and its components

Table A.1 Decent Society Index and quadrant ranks, in alphabetical order

Country	DSI Score	DSI Rank	Rank Econ	Rank SC	Rank SI	Rank EMP
<i>Algeria</i>	44.2	73	48.5	67	103	72
<i>Angola</i>	27.0	111	102	103.5	85	115
<i>Argentina</i>	58.3	30.5	4	73	77	20
<i>Armenia</i>	36.6	100	80	94	80.5	100
<i>Australia</i>	80.7	12	10	9	12	17
<i>Austria</i>	84.3	8	21	11	3	8
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	47.7	60.5	67	46	56.5	92.5
<i>Bangladesh</i>	44.0	74	101	42	67.5	77
<i>Belarus</i>	46.3	68	44	80	49	92.5
<i>Belgium</i>	75.4	16	27.5	14	10	21
<i>Benin</i>	47.3	64	60	28	96	88
<i>Bolivia</i>	48.2	58	70.5	109	34.5	32
<i>Botswana</i>	49.7	53	86	29	80.5	58
<i>Brazil</i>	45.7	70.5	76.5	95	79	33
<i>Bulgaria</i>	43.9	77	56.5	91.5	64	78
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	43.1	40.5	93	33	62	102
<i>C. African Rep.</i>	21.3	115	117	78	112	116
<i>Cameroon</i>	40.3	90	91	57	78	96
<i>Canada</i>	82.8	10	11	5	16	9
<i>Chad</i>	18.2	117	112	103.5	114	120
<i>China</i>	49.4	54	43	72	67.5	67
<i>Colombia</i>	48.7	57	45	97	63	40.5
<i>Comoros</i>	19.4	116	119	111	101	107
<i>Congo (DRC)</i>	14.7	118	114	110	120	119
<i>Congo, Rep.</i>	30.9	107	81	113	99	103
<i>Costa Rica</i>	64.8	24	14	59.5	29	19
<i>Côte D'Ivoire</i>	36.0	102	89	74	106.5	90
<i>Croatia</i>	49.2	55	48.5	62	50.5	82
<i>Cyprus</i>	55.7	37.5	65	56	31	40.5
<i>Czech Republic</i>	66.5	23	24	23	20	35
<i>Denmark</i>	86.7	4	18	6	4	12
<i>Dominican Rep.</i>	44.0	75	83	96	82.5	36.5

<i>Country</i>	<i>DSI Score</i>	<i>DSI Rank</i>	<i>Rank Econ</i>	<i>Rank SC</i>	<i>Rank SI</i>	<i>Rank EMP</i>
<i>Ecuador</i>	53.5	42	70.5	63	55	27
<i>Egypt</i>	32.1	106	88	86	121	68.5
<i>El Salvador</i>	41.4	85	97	91.5	88	38
<i>Estonia</i>	58.8	29	63	44	24.5	43
<i>Ethiopia</i>	41.1	86	104	36	26	118
<i>Finland</i>	85.8	6	42	2	2	16
<i>France</i>	67.6	20	36.5	21	23	22
<i>Georgia</i>	40.7	88.5	90	58	92.5	85
<i>Germany</i>	84.7	7	7	12	5	11
<i>Ghana</i>	50.2	49.5	54	64	59	68.5
<i>Greece</i>	52.1	44	34.5	47	76	64.5
<i>Guatemala</i>	44.4	72	82	107	48	48.5
<i>Guinea</i>	30.2	108.5	110	75	89	112
<i>Haiti</i>	3.0	121	121	121	117	117
<i>Honduras</i>	37.4	97	59	119	84	73
<i>Hungary</i>	50.7	48	58	39	65.5	74
<i>India</i>	36.7	99	98	50.5	110	87
<i>Indonesia</i>	53.8	41	84	61	37.5	31
<i>Iran</i>	42.7	82	16	76	106.5	94
<i>Iraq</i>	33.8	105	99	69	105	99
<i>Ireland</i>	82.2	11	12	8	11	13.5
<i>Israel</i>	56.2	36	29	88	33	30
<i>Italy</i>	57.5	33	39	38	34.5	56.5
<i>Jamaica</i>	47.6	62.5	74	98	42	46
<i>Japan</i>	67.2	21	20	19	24.5	42
<i>Jordan</i>	43.9	77	38	101	98	52
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	49.8	51.5	64	84	40	59.5
<i>Kenya</i>	41.0	87	111	71	61	70
<i>Korea</i>	56.6	35	15	53.5	47	61.5
<i>(South)</i>						
<i>Kuwait</i>	57.7	32	3	100	47.5	23
<i>Kyrgyz Rep.</i>	45.7	70.5	40	105	70.5	59.5
<i>Latvia</i>	51.6	46.5	62	81	39	44
<i>Lebanon</i>	34.4	103	79	108	116	64.5
<i>Liberia</i>	25.7	114	105	102	102	110
<i>Lithuania</i>	47.6	62.5	36.5	66	86.5	75.5
<i>Luxembourg</i>	83.1	9	5	3	15	13.5
<i>Malawi</i>	38.3	94	100	53.5	100	81
<i>Malaysia</i>	54.2	39	70.5	68	44	26
<i>Mali</i>	47.9	59	66	22	86.5	98
<i>Mauritania</i>	26.4	112	73	99	118	114
<i>Mexico</i>	52.6	43	22	93	69	28
<i>Moldova</i>	39.0	93	26	112	91	90
<i>Morocco</i>	39.9	91	68	82.5	97	83
<i>Mozambique</i>	36.1	101	106	41	82.5	109
<i>Namibia</i>	49.8	51.5	103	48	32	46
<i>Nepal</i>	47.7	60.5	76.5	35	70.5	86
<i>Netherlands</i>	88.5	2	8	7	1	18
<i>New Zealand</i>	80.5	13	13	13	13	10

(Continued)

Table A.1 (Continued)

<i>Country</i>	<i>DSI Score</i>	<i>DSI Rank</i>	<i>Rank Econ</i>	<i>Rank SC</i>	<i>Rank SI</i>	<i>Rank EMP</i>
<i>Nicaragua</i>	49.1	56	52	82.5	58	63
<i>Niger</i>	39.4	92	87	27	94	113
<i>Nigeria</i>	41.6	84	6	116	73	97
<i>Norway</i>	94.3	1	2	1	7	1
<i>Pakistan</i>	26.2	113	107	85	115	105
<i>Panama</i>	55.7	37.5	70.5	77	60	7
<i>Paraguay</i>	37.6	96	92	118	92.5	34
<i>Peru</i>	42.4	83	78	115	74	36.5
<i>Philippines</i>	59.2	27.5	75	45	28	25
<i>Poland</i>	58.3	30.5	55	40	27	53
<i>Portugal</i>	64.4	25	47	18	19	48.5
<i>Qatar</i>	67.7	19	23	24	36	15
<i>Romania</i>	51.8	45	56.5	70	46	54
<i>Russian Fed.</i>	43.1	80.5	34.5	106	65.5	84
<i>Rwanda</i>	46.5	67	94.5	43	21	104
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	54.0	40	30	30	95	51
<i>Senegal</i>	51.6	46.5	96	15	52	80
<i>Serbia</i>	46.2	69	61	50.5	53	101
<i>Sierra Leone</i>	36.8	98	108.5	55	50.5	108
<i>Slovak Republic</i>	59.2	27.5	27.5	34	30	66
<i>Slovenia</i>	70.6	18	46	26	6	29
<i>South Africa</i>	46.9	66	53	90	75	46
<i>Spain</i>	67.0	22	33	32	18	24
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	50.2	49.5	198.5	31	45	39
<i>Sudan</i>	13.0	119	115	114	111	121
<i>Sweden</i>	86.1	5	17	4	8	5
<i>Switzerland</i>	87.6	3	1	10	9	3.5
<i>Tanzania</i>	40.7	88.5	113	37	54	95
<i>Thailand</i>	60.2	26	19	50.5	22	61.5
<i>Togo</i>	34.3	104	85	50.5	113	111
<i>Tunisia</i>	43.9	77	41	89	109	50
<i>Turkey</i>	47.3	65	31	65	90	79
<i>Uganda</i>	43.8	79	94.5	59.5	43	90
<i>United Kingdom</i>	77.3	15	32	20	14	2
<i>United States</i>	78.5	14	9	17	17	3.5
<i>Uruguay</i>	70.9	17	25	16	41	6
<i>Venezuela</i>	37.9	95	50.5	117	108	56.5
<i>Vietnam</i>	57.0	34	50.5	25	56.5	55
<i>Yemen</i>	11.3	120	116	120	119	106
<i>Zambia</i>	30.2	108.5	118	79	104	71
<i>Zimbabwe</i>	30.2	110	120	87	72	75.5

Table A.2 Decent Society Index and quadrant ranks, in order of overall rank

Country	DSI Score	DSI Rank	Rank Econ	Rank SC	Rank SI	Rank EMP
<i>Norway</i>	94.3	1	2	1	7	1
<i>Netherlands</i>	88.5	2	8	7	1	18
<i>Switzerland</i>	87.6	3	1	10	9	3.5
<i>Denmark</i>	86.7	4	18	6	4	12
<i>Sweden</i>	86.1	5	17	4	8	5
<i>Finland</i>	85.8	6	42	2	2	16
<i>Germany</i>	84.7	7	7	12	5	11
<i>Austria</i>	84.3	8	21	11	3	8
<i>Luxembourg</i>	83.1	9	5	3	15	13.5
<i>Canada</i>	82.8	10	11	5	16	9
<i>Ireland</i>	82.2	11	12	8	11	13.5
<i>Australia</i>	80.7	12	10	9	12	17
<i>New Zealand</i>	80.5	13	13	13	13	10
<i>United States</i>	78.5	14	9	17	17	3.5
<i>United Kingdom</i>	77.3	15	32	20	14	2
<i>Belgium</i>	75.4	16	27.5	14	10	21
<i>Uruguay</i>	70.9	17	25	16	41	6
<i>Slovenia</i>	70.6	18	46	26	6	29
<i>Qatar</i>	67.7	19	23	24	36	15
<i>France</i>	67.6	20	36.5	21	23	22
<i>Japan</i>	67.2	21	20	19	24.5	42
<i>Spain</i>	67.0	22	33	32	18	24
<i>Czech Republic</i>	66.5	23	24	23	20	35
<i>Costa Rica</i>	64.8	24	14	59.5	29	19
<i>Portugal</i>	64.4	25	47	18	19	48.5
<i>Thailand</i>	60.2	26	19	50.5	22	61.5
<i>Philippines</i>	59.2	27.5	75	45	28	25
<i>Slovak Rep.</i>	59.2	27.5	27.5	34	30	66
<i>Estonia</i>	58.8	29	63	44	24.5	43
<i>Argentina</i>	58.3	30.5	4	73	77	20
<i>Poland</i>	58.3	30.5	55	40	27	53
<i>Kuwait</i>	57.7	32	3	100	47.5	23
<i>Italy</i>	57.5	33	39	38	34.5	56.5
<i>Vietnam</i>	57.0	34	50.5	25	56.5	55
<i>Korea (South)</i>	56.6	35	15	53.5	47	61.5
<i>Israel</i>	56.2	36	29	88	33	30
<i>Panama</i>	55.7	37.5	70.5	77	60	7
<i>Cyprus</i>	55.7	37.5	65	56	31	40.5
<i>Malaysia</i>	54.2	39	70.5	68	44	26
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	54.0	40	30	30	95	51
<i>Indonesia</i>	53.8	41	84	61	37.5	31
<i>Ecuador</i>	53.5	42	70.5	63	55	27
<i>Mexico</i>	52.6	43	22	93	69	28
<i>Greece</i>	52.1	44	34.5	47	76	64.5
<i>Romania</i>	51.8	45	56.5	70	46	54
<i>Latvia</i>	51.6	46.5	62	81	39	44
<i>Senegal</i>	51.6	46.5	96	15	52	80
<i>Hungary</i>	50.7	48	58	39	65.5	74

(Continued)

Table A.2 (Continued)

<i>Country</i>	<i>DSI Score</i>	<i>DSI Rank</i>	<i>Rank Econ</i>	<i>Rank SC</i>	<i>Rank SI</i>	<i>Rank EMP</i>
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	50.2	49.5	198.5	31	45	39
<i>Ghana</i>	50.2	49.5	54	64	59	68.5
<i>Namibia</i>	49.8	51.5	103	48	32	46
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	49.8	51.5	64	84	40	59.5
<i>Botswana</i>	49.7	53	86	29	80.5	58
<i>China</i>	49.4	54	43	72	67.5	67
<i>Croatia</i>	49.2	55	48.5	62	50.5	82
<i>Nicaragua</i>	49.1	56	52	82.5	58	63
<i>Colombia</i>	48.7	57	45	97	63	40.5
<i>Bolivia</i>	48.2	58	70.5	109	34.5	32
<i>Mali</i>	47.9	59	66	22	86.5	98
<i>Nepal</i>	47.7	60.5	76.5	35	70.5	86
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	47.7	60.5	67	46	56.5	92.5
<i>Lithuania</i>	47.6	62.5	36.5	66	86.5	75.5
<i>Jamaica</i>	47.6	62.5	74	98	42	46
<i>Benin</i>	47.3	64	60	28	96	88
<i>Turkey</i>	47.3	65	31	65	90	79
<i>South Africa</i>	46.9	66	53	90	75	46
<i>Rwanda</i>	46.5	67	94.5	43	21	104
<i>Belarus</i>	46.3	68	44	80	49	92.5
<i>Serbia</i>	46.2	69	61	50.5	53	101
<i>Brazil</i>	45.7	70.5	76.5	95	79	33
<i>Kyrgyz</i>	45.7	70.5	40	105	70.5	59.5
<i>Republic</i>						
<i>Guatemala</i>	44.4	72	82	107	48	48.5
<i>Algeria</i>	44.2	73	48.5	67	103	72
<i>Bangladesh</i>	44.0	74	101	42	67.5	77
<i>Dominican</i>	44.0	75	83	96	82.5	36.5
<i>Rep.</i>						
<i>Tunisia</i>	43.9	77	41	89	109	50
<i>Jordan</i>	43.9	77	38	101	98	52
<i>Bulgaria</i>	43.9	77	56.5	91.5	64	78
<i>Uganda</i>	43.8	79	94.5	59.5	43	90
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	43.1	40.5	93	33	62	102
<i>Russian Fed.</i>	43.1	80.5	34.5	106	65.5	84
<i>Iran</i>	42.7	82	16	76	106.5	94
<i>Peru</i>	42.4	83	78	115	74	36.5
<i>Nigeria</i>	41.6	84	6	116	73	97
<i>El Salvador</i>	41.4	85	97	91.5	88	38
<i>Ethiopia</i>	41.1	86	104	36	26	118
<i>Kenya</i>	41.0	87	111	71	61	70
<i>Tanzania</i>	40.7	88.5	113	37	54	95
<i>Georgia</i>	40.7	88.5	90	58	92.5	85
<i>Cameroon</i>	40.3	90	91	57	78	96
<i>Morocco</i>	39.9	91	68	82.5	97	83
<i>Niger</i>	39.4	92	87	27	94	113
<i>Moldova</i>	39.0	93	26	112	91	90
<i>Malawi</i>	38.3	94	100	53.5	100	81

Table A.2 (Continued)

<i>Country</i>	<i>DSI Score</i>	<i>DSI Rank</i>	<i>Rank Econ</i>	<i>Rank SC</i>	<i>Rank SI</i>	<i>Rank EMP</i>
<i>Venezuela</i>	37.9	95	50.5	117	108	56.5
<i>Paraguay</i>	37.6	96	92	118	92.5	34
<i>Honduras</i>	37.4	97	59	119	84	73
<i>Sierra Leone</i>	36.8	98	108.5	55	50.5	108
<i>India</i>	36.7	99	98	50.5	110	87
<i>Armenia</i>	36.6	100	80	94	80.5	100
<i>Mozambique</i>	36.1	101	106	41	82.5	109
<i>Côte D'Ivoire</i>	36.0	102	89	74	106.5	90
<i>Lebanon</i>	34.4	103	79	108	116	64.5
<i>Togo</i>	34.3	104	85	50.5	113	111
<i>Iraq</i>	33.8	105	99	69	105	99
<i>Egypt</i>	32.1	106	88	86	121	68.5
<i>Congo, Rep.</i>	30.9	107	81	113	99	103
<i>Guinea</i>	30.2	108.5	110	75	89	112
<i>Zambia</i>	30.2	108.5	118	79	104	71
<i>Zimbabwe</i>	30.2	110	120	87	72	75.5
<i>Angola</i>	27.0	111	102	103.5	85	115
<i>Mauritania</i>	26.4	112	73	99	118	114
<i>Pakistan</i>	26.2	113	107	85	115	105
<i>Liberia</i>	25.7	114	105	102	102	110
<i>C. African Rep.</i>	21.3	115	117	78	112	116
<i>Comoros</i>	19.4	116	119	111	101	107
<i>Chad</i>	18.2	117	112	103.5	114	120
<i>Congo (DRC)</i>	14.7	118	114	110	120	119
<i>Sudan</i>	13.0	119	115	114	111	121
<i>Yemen</i>	11.3	120	116	120	119	106
<i>Haiti</i>	3.0	121	121	121	117	117

Table A.3 Indicators used in the Index

<i>Quadrant and Domain</i>	<i>Prime Indicator</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>ECONOMIC SECURITY</i>			
<i>National economy</i>	GNI per capita (\$ ppp)		Weighted $\times 2$
	Balance of payments (% GDP)		Negative scores on the raw indicator indicate an outflow from the economy
	Gross domestic savings (% GDP)		
	Foreign direct investment (% GDP)		
	Development aid (% GDP)		Weighted $\times 0.5$. Polarity reversed when computing domain
	Remittances from abroad (% GDP)		Weighted $\times 0.5$. Polarity reversed when computing domain
<i>Food security</i>	Food security – average of FAO and GFSI % undernourished	% undernourished FAO % undernourished GFSI	
<i>Social wage</i>	Government spending on health (% of govt. expenditure)		
	Government spending on education (% GDP)		
	Social Support – index calculated from SSA data		Rating: Covers 5 areas: old age/disability, sickness and maternity (cash alone or cash plus medical treatment), work injury, unemployment, and family allowances. For each, 0 if not present, 1 if present or covered by another provision; +1 if not means-tested and +1 if any element is universal and dependent only on citizenship/ residence. Then overall, +1 if the claimant's contribution to old age benefit is less than half that of the employer, +2 if it is less than 25% and +3 if it is free or less than 10%.

<i>Quadrant and Domain</i>	<i>Prime Indicator</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>SOCIAL COHESION</i>			
<i>Governance</i>	Rule of law	Rule of law WB Rule of law FH	
	Government effectiveness	Government effectiveness WB Government effectiveness FH Government effectiveness GWP	
	Regulatory quality – WB		
	Political stability, control of violence – WB		
	Legitimacy	Legitimacy – FSI Fairness of elections – GWP	
	Control of corruption	Control of corruption WB Control of corruption TI	
	<i>Trust in people</i>	Trust in people	Trust GWP Trust WVS Trust HDI
<i>Trust in institutions</i>	Trust in the courts	Trust in legal institutions GWP Trust in legal institutions WVS	
	Trust in the police GWP		
	Trust in the national government	Trust in national government GWP Trust in national government WVS Trust in national government HDI	
	Trust in the military	Trust in the military GWP Trust in the military WVS	
	Trust in banks etc.	Confidence in banks/financial institutions GWP Confidence in banks/financial institutions WVS	

(Continued)

Table A.3 (Continued)

<i>Quadrant and Domain</i>	<i>Prime Indicator</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Economic equality</i>	GINI coefficient		Polarity reversed as a domain score
<i>Group harmony</i>	Group Grievance index FSI This country is a good place for racial/ethnic minorities GWP		Polarity reversed when added to domain
<i>Acceptance of immigrants</i>	Immigrants as % of population Good place for immigrants GWP		Polarity reversed when added to domain
<i>SOCIAL INCLUSION</i>			
<i>Poverty</i>	Income share held by lowest quintile % at or below \$1.25 ppp per day		Polarity reversed when added to domain
<i>Financial inclusion</i>	Has a bank account (%)		
<i>Work inclusion</i>	Employment – % aged 15+ in labour force Unemployment – % of labour force unemployed		Polarity reversed when added to domain
<i>Gender inclusion</i>	Women in Parliament (%) Women in employment (% of women, as ratio to % of employed men)		
<i>Active involvement</i>	Volunteer activity (%) Voiced an opinion to politicians/officials GWP		
<i>Family and friends</i>	Rely on family/friends GWP Easy to make and meet friends GWP		

<i>Quadrant and Domain</i>	<i>Prime Indicator</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Security</i>	Feeling of safety	Feel safe on the streets at night in my location GWP Feel secure in neighbourhood WVS	
<i>Human rights</i>	Support for human rights	Acceptance of UN Conventions on Human Rights (rating scale) Breach of human rights (Fragile States Index)	For each of 17 Conventions: 4 = complete acceptance, 3 = minor reservations, 2 = serious reservations, 1 = acceptance but reservations subvert the Convention Polarity reversed when added to domain
<i>EMPOWERMENT</i>			
<i>Political empowerment</i>	Freedom to dispute government position	Freedom of expression FH Freedom of association FH Political pluralism FH Voice and accountability WGI	
<i>Health</i>	Public health	Access to improved water (% of pop) Access to improved sanitation (% of pop)	
	Medical health	Medical provision – drs. per 1,000 population	
	Achieved health	Life expectancy from birth (years) Presence of handicap/disease/condition which hampers normal work GWP – ‘no’	

(Continued)

Table A.3 (Continued)

<i>Quadrant and Domain</i>	<i>Prime Indicator</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Education</i>	Mean years of schooling in the population (aged 25+) Primary school completion (% of age group) Adult literacy rate (15+)		
<i>Infrastructure of communication</i>	Electricity (% of population with access) Internet users (% of population) Mobile cellular subscriptions (per hundred in population)		
<i>Availability of work</i>	Entrepreneurship opportunities Good time to find a job (GWP)	Good place to set up a business GWP Ease of Doing Business Index WB	
<i>Freedom of choice</i>	Freedom of choice	Personal autonomy FH Freedom to live how like GWP Freedom of choice WVS Freedom of choice HDI	
<i>Belief in effectiveness of action</i>	Belief in effectiveness of action	Working hard leads to success GWP People who work hard get ahead WVS	

Index

- agency 72–8, 91–2
aid *see* development assistance
anomie 86; *see also* Durkheim, Emile
Armenia, research on 92
authoritarianism *see* dictatorships
- balance of payments 35
Beck, Wolfgang xix, 17, 134
Belarus, research on 87–8, 89–92
- capabilities 73–4, 76–8
citizenship 2, 3, 56–7, 72
collective capabilities 76–7
collective understanding 37, 42–6, 54,
73–4, 102, 107
confidence *see* trust
corruption 37, 45–6, 79
cultural trauma 86
- decent society: definition/description
1, 53, 105–7, 135–6, 146, 134–5;
perceptions of 103; preconditions for
13, 18–19, 102
Decent Society Index 103–4, 105–118,
141; poorest countries 131–3;
Rwanda 125–131; top countries 121–5
Decent Society Model xx, 19, 76, 103,
141–2, 146
decent world 5
Democratic Republic of Congo
(DRC) 126–31
de-modernisation 86
demographic bonus 32–3
developmental neo-patrimonialism 96
development assistance 35, 95
dialogue and consensus 94–100
dictatorships 4
- ‘drilling down’ 20, 104, 119–21, 141–2
Durkheim, Emile xix, 16, 19, 39, 40,
42, 54
- East African Community 125–31
Easterlin Paradox 9
economic Security 15–16, 21–36, 106,
125, 135
economy and resources 113–14
education 26, 55, 78–9, 81
employment 24–5, 64–7, 79, 81–2
empowerment 15, 18, 72–82, 95, 107,
130–1, 135–6
ethnic divisions 41
expatriates *see* migrants
- fairness *see* justice in society
family 58–61
food security 36
Foucault, Michel 72–3, 75
former Soviet Union 85–92
Fraser, Nancy 1, 17, 72, 75
freedom of speech 2, 4, 79–80, 96, 100
functionings 73
fuzzy concepts 37
- GDP 6, 8–9, 35
Georgia, research on 92
glass ceiling 39–40
GNI *see* GDP
goals of government 4, 102
governance 45–6, 50–1, 79–80
Gross Domestic Savings *see* saving
group harmony 40–1, 50, 5, 69–70
- happiness 6
Happy Planet Index 138–9

- health 26, 55, 78, 79, 80–1
 Human Development Index 5, 6, 7, 12, 13–14, 138–9
 human rights 2–4, 46, 56–8, 72–4, 77, 96
- Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) 104
 ideology *see* collective understanding
 immigration 40–1, 47–8, 52
 individualisation 7–8, 13, 66
 infants and infantilisation 74–5
 information technology and its
 infrastructure 50, 63–4, 78, 79, 81
 integration (social vs. system) 37–8, 91–2
 involution 86
- justice in society 1, 33, 37, 44, 69, 72
- Kazakhstan, research on 92
 Kyrgyzstan, research on 92
- law 38
 Lockwood, David 38
- Marx, Karl xix, 19
 migrants, social exclusion of 2–3
 Moldova, research on 87–8
- national income 22–3
 neoliberalism 8, 9–10, 12, 33–4
 networks *see* social capital
- Official Development Assistance (ODA)
see Development Assistance
 old age 27
- perceived socioeconomic conditions,
 importance of 87–8, 90–1, 103
 political empowerment 79–80, 98
 poverty line 23, 36, 95
 power 72–3, 75–6
 precariat 25
 privatisation of welfare *see*
 individualisation
 psychological empowerment 80, 82
- quadrants as interactive, not additive 18,
 19, 111–13, 114, 136
 quality of life 5–6, 11–13
- Rawls, John 1
 regulation 30, 45–6, 56
 remittances 35
 representation 57–8, 78–9
 risk coverage *see* social protection
 Rose, Nikolas 8
 Russia, research on 88–92
 Rwanda 84–5, 92–101, 102, 125–31
- satisfaction with life 6, 10–11, 78, 83, 102,
 105–6, 138–9
 saving 35
 Sen, Amartya xix, 13–15, 17, 18, 26–7, 67,
 72–4, 76–8, 140
 social capital 49–50, 62–64
 social cohesion 15, 16–17, 37–52, 106–7,
 125, 135
 social inclusion 15, 17–18, 53–71, 107,
 135; economic benefits of 68–9; and
 gender 67–8
 social indicators research 6, 12, 83–92
 social positions/roles 38, 39
 social process and structure 114
 Social Progress Index 104
 social protection *see* welfare
 Social Quality Model xix, xx, 13–19,
 76, 84, 134; research using 14, 20,
 89–92, 94–101, 101–2, 134
 social security *see* welfare
 social wage 23–9, 36, 46, 123
 society: definition/description 1–2
 state socialism 33
 Soviet Union *see* former Soviet Union
 Sztompka, Piotr 48
- theoretical model of society, need for 12,
 88–9
 Titmuss, Richard 46
 trust 41–4, 51, 114, 138–9; in institutions
 45–6, 90, 98–9
- Ukraine, research on 88–92
- van der Maesen, Laurent xix, 14, 20, 134
- Walker, Alan xix, 14, 20, 134
 welfare 21–2, 25, 28–9, 32–4, 36, 46, 66, 135
 welfare state 33–4, 46–7, 123–4
 wellbeing *see* quality of life
 work and agency 114