

Small-scale fisheries through the wellbeing lens

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Abstract

Despite longstanding recognition that small-scale fisheries make multiple contributions to economies, societies and cultures, assessing these contributions and incorporating them into policy and decision-making has suffered from a lack of a comprehensive integrating 'lens'. This paper focuses on the concept of 'wellbeing' as a means to accomplish this integration, thereby unravelling and better assessing complex social and economic issues within the context of fisheries governance. We emphasize the relevance of the three key components of wellbeing – the material, relational and subjective dimensions, each of which is relevant to wellbeing at scales ranging from individual, household, community, fishery to human-ecological systems as a whole. We review nine major approaches influential in shaping current thinking and practice on wellbeing; the economics of happiness, poverty, capabilities, gender, human rights, sustainable livelihoods, vulnerability, social capital, and social wellbeing. The concept of identity is a thread that runs through the relational and subjective components of social wellbeing, as well as several other approaches and thus emerges as a critical element of small-scale fisheries that requires explicit recognition in governance analysis. A social wellbeing lens is applied to critically review a global body of literature discussing the social, economic and political dimensions of small-scale fishing communities, seeking to understand the relevance and value addition of applying wellbeing concepts in small-scale fisheries.

Keywords Capabilities, economics of happiness, identity, small-scale fisheries, social wellbeing, sustainable livelihoods

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Introduction

Improving the wellbeing of fishing-dependent people – both fish workers and fish consumers – has been proposed as a potential key objective of fisheries governance (Bavinck 2009; McGregor 2009; Coulthard *et al.* 2011). ‘Wellbeing’ constitutes a broad-based *outcome*, including material goals, such as economic yield, food supplies and employment, as well as non-material aspects – for example, safe, decent and non-discriminatory work conditions in fisheries (ICSF 2007; ILO 2007, 2011) or preservation of ecological values of marine and coastal ecosystems (FAO 2003; [Garcia and Cochrane 2005](#)). As an outcome, wellbeing provides a broader conception of social benefit than one that is typically captured in current fisheries frameworks. Wellbeing, however, provides not only a way to look at outcomes. Just as importantly, it is an *analytical lens* which can help draw policy attention to the non-material benefits of fisheries, in the course of also adding value to our understanding of social and economic dynamics in fishing communities (McGregor 2008, 2009; Coulthard *et al.* 2011).

In assessing the relevance of contemporary wellbeing perspectives, many authors highlight how wellbeing has been either perceived to be: (i) an important and all-encompassing term which bears the ability to convey a breadth and depth of meanings no other term can, or (ii) a contested concept – given that its meaning and content are influenced by particular social, political and cultural contexts, who is using it and why (see Camfield *et al.* 2009; following Seedhouse 1995). Whilst recent theoretical debates on wellbeing have been vast and rich, questions remain on how these concepts and their meanings can be ‘operationalized’

in ways that are seen to be applicable and meaningful to social policy work and development practice, especially in the fisheries sector.

We begin this paper with the ideas and frameworks currently informing fisheries policy and governance, and identify the potential benefit from adding a well-being perspective and/or a well-being analytical lens. To argue for that potential, we provide a review of the theoretical perspectives underlying the different strands of the well-being concept in its current manifestations and how these perspectives are addressed and applied within the small-scale fisheries literature. We identify how well-being approaches have influenced the work of scholars working on small-scale fisheries in the last decades, exploring points of intersection between well-being and existing frameworks informing research on and governance of small-scale fisheries. We trace the origins of wellbeing in social psychology and welfare economics (such as the ‘economics of happiness’ perspective), its entry into development discourses and applications [such as the ‘capabilities approach’ and the ‘sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA)’] and its evolution towards an emphasis on social wellbeing. Using specific examples, we also point to areas where substantial research implicitly related to wellbeing has been accomplished within small-scale fisheries, and how this work can be considered as ‘building blocks’ for a more systematic application of the well-being lens in the future.

Our ultimate objective was to investigate the relevance and usefulness of the concept of wellbeing as an analytical and normative concept and its potential as a comprehensive lens through which we could improve our understanding and governance of small-scale fisheries.

Motivating wellbeing: objectives of governing small-scale fisheries

The concept of wellbeing provides a comprehensive frame for understanding what is important to people, communities and society. Notably, the Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) definition of *social wellbeing* takes a three-dimensional view with a focus on material, relational and subjective components of wellbeing. This contrasts with the conceptual binary between subjective (experiential and perceptual) and objective (material welfare and psychosocial functioning) dimensions that constitute wellbeing in the more conventional economic approaches to wellbeing (Diener and Biswas-Diener's 2000; Kahneman and Krueger 2006). What is usually regarded as 'objective' in economic perspectives is further divided into 'material' and 'relational' in the social well-being approach, with a greater emphasis on the 'relational'. Moreover, the 'subjective' dimension is also expanded further than in economic approaches. In this three dimensional elaboration of social wellbeing, 'material' concerns encompass practical welfare and standards of living (for example, income, wealth, assets, environmental quality, physical health and livelihood concerns among others); 'relational' aspects include relations of love and care, networks of support and obligation, social, political and cultural identities, including relations with respect to organs of the state and formal structures, which determine the scope for personal action and influence in the community; and 'subjective' spans notions of self, individual and shared hopes, fears and aspirations, expressed levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, trust and confidence among other things (White 2008: 11).

We will use this three-dimensional 'lens' throughout the paper, but will examine first how this builds on previous approaches, in particular, the *economics of happiness/subjective well-being* perspective (Kahneman and Krueger 2006), looking at people's perceptions on their current state of being and how this is related to comparisons with peer and other groups as well as their own past; Sen's (1993, 1999) *capabilities approach* that includes 'functionings' such as being healthy, nourished, educated and having good relationships, in addition to economic dimensions of wellbeing and the related *SLA* (Chambers 1983) which emphasizes human, physical, natural, social and financial assets and capabilities (five capitals)

of households and the institutional structures and processes that sustain livelihood systems.

This multidimensional nature of wellbeing contrasts with the narrow single-objective view of fisheries that has come to dominate some fisheries thinking. Anderson (1986: 32) expresses this latter perspective as follows:

Put succinctly, proper use of a fish stock requires that resources be utilized to exploit it such that the present value of future net returns is maximized, that is, such that the stream of net incomes that it earns, properly discounted, is a maximum.

This narrow approach is not found only in fishery analysis. Individual, community and national wellbeing were often reduced to monetary measures within thinking about national-level economic development in the past. Yet, even when the focus was upon material deficits and deprivation, the narrow monetary measures that were used were in themselves often incomplete or misleading. For example, national poverty lines revealed nothing about issues of redistribution and the wider socio-political, cultural and economic landscapes in which people lived their lives. Equally, at a micro-level, aggregated household income said little about how assets were distributed among family members, across gender or age (Kabeer 1996; Naved 2000). More significantly, monetary measures of poverty revealed little about dynamics of change, especially the shifting aspirations of people in pursuing livelihood strategies in response to their changing conditions of life (Hulme 2003).

However, as the monetary approach to fisheries is perhaps a dominant paradigm in some quarters, and explicit approaches to wellbeing are very recent and relatively scarce within small-scale fisheries, there is, nevertheless, a long and significant history of broader thinking on fishery objectives (Lawson 1984; Charles 1988, 2001; McGoodwin 1990; FAO 1999, 2003; Cochrane 2000; Allison and Horemans 2006). For example, Lawson (1984: 60–61) contrasts with Anderson (1986) in assuming a potentially more comprehensive mix of social, economic and political goals and alluding to a range of specific fishery objectives:

It is essential that clear directives on government's social, economic and political objectives should be defined as far as they affect fisheries as there may be considerable poten-

tial for conflict. These include, for example, its objectives for income distribution, for regional development, for rural as opposed to urban growth, its employment objectives and its objectives on the desirable level of technology and scale of operation and ownership.

Contrasting the circumstances that favour a narrow vs. a broad set of objectives, Charles (1988: 277) points out that normative single-objective analyses find favour primarily in 'industrial' fisheries, where economic efficiency and export earnings receive high priority. Most work in the theory of fishery economics has tended to concentrate on industrial fisheries (Mahon 1997), where it is assumed that (i) rent maximization is the appropriate management objective, (ii) the basic theory of the firm is an appropriate description of the behaviour of fishery participants and (iii) the human factor enters principally as 'labour costs' to be minimized. On the other hand, multiple-objective socio-economic analysis has been preferred in developing 'inshore' fisheries, where social concerns (e.g. food, employment) and economic factors are intertwined (Bene *et al.* 2007), and where the survival, adaptation and flourishing of fishing communities and cultures transcends considerations of wealth and welfare (McGoodwin 1990; Jentoft and Chuenpagdee 2009; Pollnac *et al.* 2012).

Most small-scale fisheries are inshore or inland and in developing countries, suggesting that in practice, decision makers should go beyond a single-objective approach, to recognize a variety of goals. This in turn implies that '...in a multi-objective world, differences exist in the weights placed on fishery objectives by various groups' (Charles 1988: 291). As a result, a broad and systematic assessment of objectives is needed – and subsequently of the well-being outcomes that may result from pursuit of these objectives.

A related strand of research in small-scale fisheries focuses at the 'micro' scale to analyse at-sea behaviour and decision-making process of fishers, such as choices regarding where, when and what species to harvest (Eales and Wilen 1986; Béné and Tewfik 2001; Pet-Soede *et al.* 2001; Salas and Gaertner 2004; Dwyer and Minnegal 2006). This work typically indicates that fisher choices are complex, involving economic and social considerations – for example, the prevalence of factors, such as reputation, social status and peer-pressure

in influencing the behaviour of fishers (Béné and Tewfik 2001). With respect to illegal fishing, both the potential economic gain and the potential negative psychological, social and community effects on fishers if seen (or caught) engaging in such practices have to be taken into account (Van Sittert 1993; Hauck 2007, 2011).

A review of well-being frameworks and 'lenses'

Such economic and social considerations are based on the recognition that fisheries are multi-objective and multiscale in nature, in particular that all three dimensions of wellbeing – the material, relational and subjective – need to be taken into account, both in seeking a better understanding of small-scale fisheries and in developing appropriate policy. However, in the existing fisheries literature, these three components are not typically incorporated and analysed in a systematic manner. This provides a key motivation for a more detailed review of the well-being concept, its various manifestations and its potential role as a comprehensive lens through which to improve our understanding and assessment of small-scale fisheries. This section reviews the key lines of thought and research relating to wellbeing, arising within the following approaches: economics of happiness, poverty and development, capabilities, gender, human rights, sustainable livelihoods, vulnerability and social capital. It closes with what seems a very promising current conceptual approach, that of social wellbeing. The role of identities is discussed as a core element in the relational and subjective aspects of wellbeing, shared by other approaches such as economics of happiness, capabilities, gender, and more generally by ethnographic analysis.

Figure 1 illustrates the common ground among the social well-being approach and related analytical approaches upon which it has built. It also indicates key well-being concepts shared among the relevant approaches, which are discussed in detail below.

Economics of happiness

Historically, two main disciplines have been known to engage in well-being analyses – social psychology and welfare economics. Psychology drew on universal human needs based approaches and cognitive (experiential and perceptual) aspects of well-

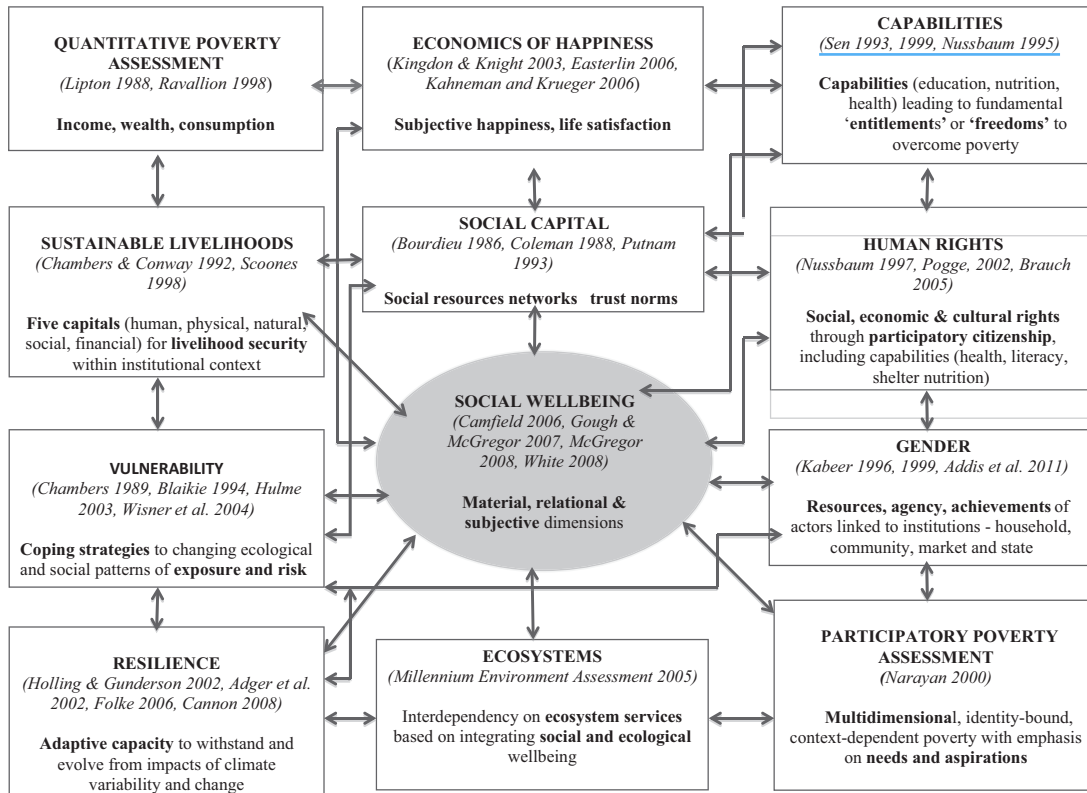


Figure 1 Mapping common ground: social wellbeing and related approaches.

being (Gasper 2004; Clarke 2006; McGillivray and Clarke 2006). Within applied economics, growing concerns with increasing post-war social welfare were further compounded by doubts relating to whether economists and policy planners really knew what was good for people's wellbeing. Questions were raised whether truly objective accounts of the 'good life' could be arrived at (Lelkes 2005). A primary concern was whether 'good' was to be defined by what generally made people happy, or, the extent to which their desires and aspirations were met over time. Moreover, there was sufficient evidence that economists were 'measuring the wrong things'. For example, traditional measures of peoples' stated preferences were seen to be misleading particularly when they were said to reveal little about their actual preferences and the choices and trade-offs that are made (Lelkes 2005: 2). Drawing on these findings, critics of the standard utilitarian model (e.g. Easterlin 2008) called for a more nuanced and inter-disciplinary understanding of human behaviour, and what was interpreted as being rational choice or action.

These critiques and the cross-fertilization between social psychology and applied economics

led to increased attention to concepts and terms such as 'happiness', 'life satisfaction' and 'quality of life' used interchangeably with what has been called 'subjective wellbeing'. The inter-disciplinary marriage between material and socio-psychological wellbeing converged in the sphere of 'economics of happiness'. This includes Easterlin's (2006) work explaining the paradox of increasing (absolute) income levels against 'stagnant' aspirations, Graham and Pettinato's (2000) study of the effect of peoples' relative income and changes in status with respect to levels of happiness in emerging market economies, and Diener and Biswas-Diener's (2000) famous analysis of Calcutta slum-dwellers' perceptions of their own wellbeing. More recently, the interdisciplinary work by psychologist Kahneman and economist Krueger further demonstrates the necessity to go beyond standard economic assumptions based on utility, by measuring individuals' perceptions of personal experiences (Kahneman and Krueger 2006; Kahneman et al. 2006).

Another line of multidisciplinary work has focused on understanding and quantifying 'subjective wellbeing' – in an effort to disengage from narrow, economic approaches to 'income poverty'

(Kingdon and Knight 2003). With an explicit focus on relating subjective perceptions with relative deprivation, their empirical studies reveal that absolute and relative income are not the only economic determinants of happiness, arguing instead that people's happiness may be strongly influenced by the life worlds they inhabit, the relationships that limit or delimit their 'capabilities' to function in society and how they make sense of issues related to distributional justice (Knight and Gunatilaka 2007; Knight *et al.* 2007).

The economics of happiness framework is exemplified in fisheries by the work of Pollnac and Poggie (2008), Pollnac *et al.* (2012) and Smith and Clay (2010), applied to several cases of large-scale commercial fisheries in North America as well as small-scale fisheries in developing countries. Pollnac and Poggie (2008) provide a heuristic human ecology model based on relationships among the physical, social and political environments in which fishers operate to explain why they are attached to their occupation. They argue that the relatively risky nature of the fishing occupation 'attracts and holds individuals manifesting an active, adventurous, aggressive and courageous personality' (Pollnac and Poggie 2008: 194). They point out that it is precisely the risky elements ('thrill of the hunt', 'pitting one's luck and skill against others...and elusive prey') that provide a higher level of job satisfaction and happiness among fishers than in most other occupations (Pollnac and Poggie 2008: 194).

Based on the theoretical underpinnings provided by the work of Dixon (1997) and Kahneman *et al.* (2006) among others, they argue that the positive influence on happiness of these risky elements cannot be understood based on the motivation for money and that the self-actualization component in fishers' work prevents fishers from leaving the occupation even when their incomes are declining and economic returns suggest that they should, with corresponding implications for fisheries governance. Thus, job satisfaction and happiness are significant to understanding the degree of fishers' resistance to changes in the fishery. Several researchers (Anderson 1980; Smith 1981) have suggested that non-monetary satisfactions or satisfaction bonus can push a fishery beyond maximum economic yield, increasing the chances for over-exploitation (Pollnac and Poggie 2008: 198).

These findings provide possible explanations for why fishers do not necessarily seize opportunities,

such as alternative livelihoods or training to move out of fisheries unless these give them non-monetary benefits, similar to those which they get from fishing. They claim that these risky elements are part of the reason why a large number of fishers 'would do anything to avoid the potentially painful withdrawal symptoms' (Pollnac and Poggie 2008: 199). If this were effectively the case, these hypotheses have important implications for management measures, such as the current reduction of fishing fleets imposed on many developed and developing countries.

While affirming Pollnac's and Poggie's argument on job satisfaction and self-actualization among fishers, the work of Smith and Clay (2010) on measuring subjective and objective wellbeing based on five studies on commercial fisheries in North America provides a slightly different interpretation on how fishers respond to far reaching changes in the fishing industry. Drawing upon a body of quantitative and qualitative approaches to measuring wellbeing, they use the well-defined indicator of household income as a proxy for objective wellbeing and the less well-defined indicator of job satisfaction for subjective wellbeing to assess a set of fishery studies. They argue that whereas fishers had higher than average levels of income and job satisfaction when compared with other occupations before the 1990s, both objective and subjective wellbeing declined in the 2000s, with marked changes in subjective well-being. They point out that less control over choices among fishing activities, increased management associated with resource decline, competition from farmed fish, powerlessness stemming from being managed or having less control over their own decisions and being blamed for the condition of the fishery are factors that emerge as driving this decline in subjective well-being.

Poverty and wellbeing

Development-centred approaches to wellbeing have at their core the goal of poverty reduction. Empirical studies on wellbeing revealed that people did not necessarily see their lives entirely in terms of deprivation or poverty – or more specifically, in terms of 'having' or 'not having'. Poverty is in itself a value-laden concept and a narrow deficit-centred focus often compels us to overlook other aspects of peoples' lives such as social relations, socio-cultural identities, everyday meanings and

individuals' long and short-term aspirations (McGregor 2008).

In the last 10–15 years, the earlier monetary approach (Lipton 1988; Ravallion 1998) to measuring poverty has been increasingly challenged by field-based, bottom-up methods such as Participatory Poverty Assessments which have aimed at articulating peoples' perspectives, worldviews, needs and aspirations about their own lives and what they understand as 'development'. The World Bank's multimethod *Voices of the Poor* (Narayan *et al.* 2000a) for instance brought together perceptions and experiences of over 60 000 women, men and children in 50 countries. Even though formally a 'poverty assessment', the study was conducted with explicit reference to wellbeing, in particular how people envisioned 'the good life' and their perceptions of the conditions that enabled them to live well and meaningfully. In moving beyond objective indicators of wellbeing (for example closely associated with material and livelihoods security), the study revealed a multiplicity of meanings with respect to how people defined their own wellbeing: peoples' perceptions were context-dependent, spatially contingent, identity-bound, gendered, age-specific and influenced by the social and cultural worlds which they inhabit (Narayan *et al.* 2000b). The study contributed to operationalizing the concept of wellbeing through several inter-related constituents, including material and bodily wellbeing, freedom of choice and action, human security, social and psychological wellbeing. These components were later adapted for use by the Millennium Environment Assessment (2005). The approach of linking poverty and capabilities with wellbeing in development was further elaborated conceptually by a number of scholars, such as Clark (2007), who explored the implications of the notion of people adapting to poverty.

In contrast, discussion of the causes and nature of poverty in small-scale fisheries has largely remained trapped in a Malthusian 'Tragedy of the Commons' narrative for many years, reducing poverty to a lack of income resulting from the over-exploitation of the resource (Béné and Friend 2011). This oversimplistic explanation was challenged only recently, through progress made in conceptualizing poverty in relation to natural resources, such as the environmental entitlement theory (Mearns 1996; Leach *et al.* 1999). In this approach, access to and command over natural resources rather than the level/availability of these

resources were recognized to be instrumental in determining poverty (or conversely prosperity) of the households and communities who depend on these resources. Drawing upon the environmental entitlement concept, Béné (2003) proposed a typology of four socio-institutional mechanisms governing people's access to resources: economic exclusion, social marginalization, class exploitation and political disempowerment, and shows how these mechanisms can help to re-interpret the phenomenon of poverty in small-scale fisheries.

Drawing on experience from the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Program, Allison and his colleagues proposed a new framework that attempts to address these limitations (FAO 2005; Allison and Horemans 2006). In this framework, poverty understood in a conventional material sense is combined with two other concepts, which are central to understanding the impoverishment process of fishing communities. One is marginalization, linking Béné's socio-institutional framework to the wider literature on social exclusion (Atkinson 1998; DFID 2005). The second is vulnerability, building upon the recent re-emphasis on this concept in the development literature (Smith *et al.* 2003; Walker *et al.* 2004; Adger *et al.* 2005). Béné and Friend (2011) illustrate the relevance of this new three-pronged framework (poverty-vulnerability-marginalization) to further our understanding of poverty in small-scale fisheries through empirical examples drawn from Asia and Africa.

As these conceptual developments broaden the definition of poverty beyond the initial narrow material interpretation given in the small-scale fisheries literature, there remains a need for greater attention to several aspects of the wellbeing of fishing communities, in particular the more 'aspirational' dimension of wellbeing. Furthermore, these underline the 'negative' mechanisms related to deprivation (exclusion, disempowerment, marginalization, lack of access to public services and infrastructures, exposure to risk, etc.) but do not provide good analytical 'handles' to identify and assess the more 'positive' and cognitive aspects of wellbeing, such as sense of (cultural) identity, social status or peer recognition, which are important in fishing communities.

Capabilities approach

The capabilities approach based on Amartya Sen's seminal work *Development as Freedom* proved to be

a critical conceptual turning point by going beyond material deprivation to reframe poverty in terms of 'capabilities deprivation' (Sen 1993, 1999). As he asserted, wellbeing was seen in terms of 'well-having' in the past; his capabilities philosophy expanded this notion to encompass more holistic dimensions of 'well-living'. Sen conceptualized capabilities as 'individual diversities and abilities' that enabled people to do/be particular things, 'the substantial freedoms [a person] enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value' (Sen 1999: 87) or the freedoms to enjoy various 'functionings'.

These 'functionings', defined as 'various things a person may value doing or being' (Sen 1999: 75) go beyond economic factors and include activities and states such as being healthy and well-nourished, being educated, being safe, having a good job and being able to visit loved ones. Moreover, Sen gave much weight to the social and political processes that shaped peoples' capabilities to function – the capabilities themselves were seen as fundamental entitlements. In Sen's framework, agency (or the ability to pursue goals that one values and has reason to value) plays a pivotal role – an agent is considered as 'someone who acts and brings about change' (Sen 1999: 19). As Sen was seen to focus more on objective capabilities, political freedom and participation, Nussbaum (1995) expanded those approaches by including cognitive and psychosocial aspects of wellbeing, based on universal human needs as well as the Aristotelian notion of a 'life well lived', to take into account peoples' social networks and 'capitals', relationships of love, mutual regard and obligation.

As the small-scale fisheries literature does not seem to provide examples that explicitly follow Sen's framework on capabilities, there are several studies that offer insights on 'functionings' such as education and literacy levels (SFLP 2006; Maddox and Overa 2009), health status (Appleton 2000; Allison and Seeley 2004; Westaway *et al.* 2007; Béné and Merten 2008) and food security levels (Kurien 2004; Aswani and Furusawa 2007; Kawarazuka and Béné 2010) in fishing communities, and therefore provide useful contributions to the potential application of the capabilities approach in fisheries. Maddox and Overa's (2009) work exemplifies an ethnographic approach to literacy and its social and economic implications in fishing communities. They challenge the notion that these communities have lower levels of literacy –

assumed to be a consequence of their marginalization from the mainstream of society and location in remote areas – revealing that fishing communities have at least equivalent literacy levels to that of neighbouring agricultural counterparts (Maddox and Overa 2009). If functional dimensions of literacy valued within fishing communities are included, such as the ability to maintain lists and records, practice informal book-keeping and use mobile phones, they argue that literacy might be higher in these communities relative to that of many farming communities (Maddox and Overa 2009). They also point to evidence that there is no necessary correlation between illiteracy and material poverty.

Gender approaches

Not surprisingly, the concept of 'capabilities' or freedom to achieve various 'functionings', inherent in the capabilities approach was useful for feminist scholars whose work in development was premised on a notion of empowerment of women. There are many approaches to gender but the work of scholars such as Kabeer (1994, 1996, 1999) and Addis *et al.* (2011) best encompasses the notion of wellbeing and its complex implications within the gender literature. As Kabeer was already using a concept of wellbeing in her earlier work (1991) on rethinking the household economy, which examined the gendered nature of production, Kabeer (1994, 1996, 1999) further elaborated the wellbeing concept in developing a framework for the analysis of gender in development, referred to commonly as the 'social relations approach'. Kabeer (1999: 435) argued that women's empowerment was about the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices by those who had been denied this ability. This ability to exercise choice was made up of three interlinked dimensions – resources, agency and achievements – which formed the structural parameters of individual choices. Resources were defined to include not only access but also future claim to material, human and social resources. Agency included decision-making but also less measurable manifestations, such as negotiation, deception and manipulation. Achievements were defined as 'well-being outcomes' (Kabeer 1999: 435–439), which were generally related to survival, security and autonomy. Kabeer, however, cautioned that what were often considered or measured as 'well-being outcomes', were not neces-

sarily indicators of women's empowerment, as these were based on the 'difference' in the choices made by people, rather than in the 'inequality' of their capacity to make choices.

Even though Kabeer's perspective on capabilities and wellbeing has not been explicitly used in empirical work on gender in small-scale fisheries with a few exceptions, the gender literature in fisheries is relatively rich (Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Lambeth *et al.* 2002; Bennett *et al.* 2004) on issues related to wellbeing. This work highlights two major roles for women (Davis and Nadel-Klein 1988) – the first tangible role is the economic contribution of women (e.g. Williams 2000); the second less tangible role is the 'emotional, ideological and rarefied contribution' (Davis 1988: 214) that women make as wives, mothers and sisters of fishermen and bearers of their family traditions. Women are often placed at the lower ends of fish value chains and their contributions often remain invisible, undervalued and unremunerated (Williams *et al.* 2005). Yet women's subsistence fishing activities provide essential food security and nutrition for fishing households (Bird 2007b; Béné *et al.* 2009).

Other authors have explored differences of resources, agency and outcomes in the lives of women and men in fishing communities. These span more sophisticated perspectives on the gender division of labour in fisheries (Pollnac 1984; Medard 2005; Neis *et al.* 2005; Overa 2005; Kusakabe *et al.* 2006; Bird 2007b; Porter *et al.* 2008; Kronen and Vunisea 2009), some of which are linked with the SLA (Bennett 2005; Okali and Holvoet 2007; Tindall and Holvoet 2008), women's livelihoods and life experience (Gulati 1984; Ram 1993; Rubinoff 1999; Binkley 2000; Hapke and Ayyankaril 2004; Samuel 2007); construction of gendered identities (masculinities and femininities; Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Menzies 1991; Neis 1993; Feltault 2005) as well as markets, sexuality and health issues (Allison and Seeley 2004; Béné and Merten 2008).

In Weeratunge *et al.* (2010), capabilities and wellbeing are explicitly indicated as one of four key analytical themes (along with markets and migration, networks and identities and governance and rights) necessary to understand gendered employment in fisheries and aquaculture. The importance of differentiating gendered perceptions of wellbeing in terms of women's and men's needs, motivations and aspirations in choosing particular employment

options is emphasized. Weeratunge *et al.* (2012) further uses a conceptual framework that combines Kabeer's (1994, 1996, 1999) social relations approach with McGregor's (2008, 2009) social well-being approach to analyse gender roles, relations, assets, capabilities and decision-making within households and communities, in the wider institutional context of the market and state, in the aquatic agricultural systems of five countries. There is an emerging body of empirical work using an explicit social well-being framework (Coulthard 2012; Britton 2012) or a capabilities approach (Onyango and Jentoft 2011) to focus on the relational and subjective dimensions of gender in fishing communities. With an emphasis on agency, they discuss the gendered differences in identities, life satisfaction, needs and aspirations and the ways in which women negotiate these differences or make trade-offs for the wellbeing of households or communities as a whole.

All these studies provide an implicit and nuanced analysis of differences in wellbeing between women and men in fishing communities. However, a more explicit well-being perspective would perhaps have added value by looking at the linkages between gendered strategies and other outcomes of wellbeing, such as being healthy and food secure as well as paying more attention to future aspirations in relation to the work life course, by elaborating the concept of agency. Kabeer (2001, 2004) and Sumner *et al.* (2008) have also addressed the life cycle and intergenerational trade-offs between parents and children as well as the dynamics of poverty and wellbeing, based on longitudinal panel data – dimensions that would add value not only to gender analysis of fishing communities but also to the analysis of social and economic dynamics overall in fisheries.

Human rights approach

Like the gender approach in development, human rights-based approaches grew from the capabilities approach, entering development discourse and practice in the 1990s. This occurred through several strands, such as the UN-promoted international legal human rights framework, social movements and struggles of groups marginalized by economic and social changes and the transition from political notions of clientelism to citizenship (Eyben 2005). Rights-based perspectives differ from previous development approaches in the impor-

tance given to citizenship, responsibilities and obligations towards providing entitlements and accountability and transparency in governance (Pogge 2002). Even though varied, rights-based development perspectives have converged with well-being thinking, especially, in terms of the concepts of 'social exclusion', 'freedoms' and 'entitlements'. Sen's (1993, 1999) and Nussbaum's (1997) work on capabilities as fundamental entitlements was influential in contributing to this convergence. Rights-based approaches took rights discourse beyond a narrow, legalistic framework by integrating community-based social, economic and cultural rights with local articulations of wellbeing.

What human-rights based approaches introduced more explicitly was the necessity to draw upon peoples' agency, knowledge(s) and identities to widen spaces for political participation, particularly among historically marginalized groups. The UNU-EHS (Environment and Human Security) cluster in Bonn, for instance, has clearly been influenced by three interlinked strands – vulnerability approaches, human security analyses and human rights based approaches. Whilst not engaging directly with the concept or measurement of wellbeing, the work of UNU-EHS nevertheless introduces an additional dimension that helps widen our understanding of wellbeing. In particular, the empirical work of Brauch (2005) and others took the concept of human security beyond a traditional perception of security threats to include challenges, vulnerabilities and risks – including environmental, social, political and economic shocks. In this case, human security was incorporated into a multidimensional paradigm, weaving in variables such as resilience, exposure and sensitivity to shocks as important determinants of wellbeing or conversely, illbeing. Arguably, one of the key strengths of the UNU-EHS approach was that it proposed a clearer framework for comparing multiple vulnerabilities – against space and time.

In the small-scale fisheries literature, the human rights perspective was represented in the past mostly in the work on fishing tenure rights, especially of aboriginal or indigenous groups in the context of fisheries exploitation and governance (Davis and Jentoft 2001; Aswani 2005; Davis and Wagner 2006; Sherman 2006; Capistrano 2010). However, a human rights approach, based on a collective notion of rights intersecting with several elements of wellbeing and challenging the rights notion that has been conventionally held in fisher-

ies as 'individual fishing rights' or 'quotas' has only recently emerged (Sharma 2009; Allison 2011; Allison *et al.* 2011, 2012; Charles 2011a). This integrated perspective has implications for choices among policy options in many fishery debates – such as that relating to the interaction of trade and subsidies (Charles 2011b).

Allison *et al.* (2012) argue for a rights-based approach that promotes development strategies in fisheries, based on people's claims to basic entitlements such as adequate food, decent work, freedom from oppression and a dignified life, as indicated in the capabilities approach. Failure to provide such basic entitlements can be considered a violation of international human rights law; if fishers' citizenship rights are unmet, 'duty bearers' such as fisheries authorities and other government agencies can be held accountable. They argue that a rights-based approach holds promise in creating greater equity in resource access (Allison *et al.* 2012: 7) by increasing the capabilities of fishers and contributing to improved governance of resources.

Sustainable livelihoods approach

Even though applications in small-scale fisheries of both the subjective wellbeing and capabilities approaches are relatively recent and scant, it would be a mistake to assume that wellbeing has been entirely overlooked in the past. As noted previously, there is a long history in the fisheries literature of studies arguing for the need to move beyond the rent maximization approach proposed by conventional fishery economics and to expand in directions fitting with a well-being framework. There is in particular a substantial body of literature that deals with the non-material aspects of small-scale fisheries and includes concepts and components of a well-being approach, such as the sustainable livelihood approach and the related concepts of social capital and vulnerability. These are themes or components encompassed within development-related well-being approaches, and which can potentially provide building blocks to elaborate and develop a social well-being lens relevant to fisheries governance in the future.

Combining natural resource management and rural development perspectives, the SLA as conceptualized by Chambers (1983) and further developed by Chambers and Conway (1992) and Scoones (1998) proved to be a powerful perspective on

studying the multidimensionality of poverty. The 'sustainable livelihoods' concept introduced an intrinsically asset- and capabilities-based framework (combining human, physical, natural, social and financial capitals) to understand how and why people chose or combined particular livelihood pathways and strategies. As the framework placed much emphasis on the institutional arrangements and the assets and capabilities that made livelihood strategies possible, wellbeing was seen more as an outcome, brought about by specific livelihood portfolios pursued by households.

The earliest and most comprehensive rationale for using the SLA in fisheries came from Allison and Ellis (2001) who challenged assumptions that small-scale fishers were engaged in full-time fishing or that increasing efficiency of fishing effort would increase their incomes and thus reduce pressure on resources. The SLA was widely used in socio-economic assessments and community-based or co-management governance initiatives in small-scale fisheries, as revealed by Macfadyen and Corcoran (2002) who reviewed 53 papers based on this approach in fisheries projects in Africa and Asia. They found certain conceptual consistencies in its application – a focus on diversity of livelihoods, micro-macro linkages (especially in terms of markets), differential impact of interventions on social and economic groups, extent of poverty and vulnerability and a commitment to monitoring, knowledge sharing and learning. Among the main weaknesses identified by these authors were an underestimation of the role of cultural, political and institutional history of communities and invisibility of intra-household dynamics-concerns that are addressed more clearly in a well-being approach.

Allison (2003) and Allison and Horemans (2006) in further assessing the SLA in fisheries, emphasize its utility in clarifying the cross-sectoral diversity of household livelihood strategies among fisherfolk, the pervasive influence of institutions on livelihoods and resource management, the heterogeneity of households engaged in fishing, the multidimensionality of poverty and the importance of processes. The approach enables prioritizing interventions and identifying livelihood strategies that are ineffective or harmful to resource sustainability. Moreover, the SLA is especially useful in combining research with planning and co-management of small-scale fisheries.

The extent to which the material, relational and subjective well-being dimensions have been incor-

porated in SLA-based projects in fisheries is dependent on how research teams elaborated the concept. The SLA remains one of the most holistic approaches to socio-economic assessments in fishing communities and therefore one that is mostly likely to incorporate explicitly or implicitly some dimensions of well-being concepts. Those would, however, be more likely linked to the material and/or relational dimensions of wellbeing, reflecting the emphasis put by the SLA on assets and institutions. The SLA framework does not seem to provide a similarly good analytical 'grip' to capture the subjective dimension of wellbeing.

Vulnerability approaches

What has been broadly defined as the 'Vulnerability Approach' (Chambers 1989; Blaikie 1994; Wisner *et al.* 2004) can be taken as a parallel lens complementing the SLA through its emphasis on threats that endanger livelihoods. Studies drawing upon the vulnerability approach show that vulnerability is different from poverty, in that it introduces additional dimensions of exposure to risk and insecurity related to multiple and diverse shocks and stressors *in the future* (Chambers 1998). Alongside introducing a temporal dimension to understanding why people slipped into poverty or remained poor, the vulnerability approach of the Chronic Poverty Research group, for example, draws our attention to the fact that the poor are an extremely complex and heterogeneous group, and that poverty itself is a dynamic phenomenon (Hulme 2003; Kothari and Hulme 2004). In moving beyond simply focusing on livelihood security, the vulnerability framework was able to better assess the extent to which different categories of poor (e.g. the chronic or transitory poor), depending on their portfolio of assets, were able to cope in the face of economic, socio-political or ecological changes (Hulme and Shepherd 2003; Sen and Hulme 2004; Green and Hulme 2005). Vulnerability is often considered a pre-condition of illbeing and one that limits goals and aspirations of individuals in the present as well as in the future (Bird 2007a).

With respect to fisheries, among the earliest work is that of Dyer and McGoodwin (1999), who highlighted the specific vulnerability of fisheries to a combination of natural and technological disasters as a result of fishing activities being conducted in a natural environment under little human

control. More recently, significant insights into vulnerability in small-scale fisheries or coastal communities has emerged from the research of Adger *et al.* (2005), Marschke and Berkes (2006), Jepson and Jacob (2007), Clay and Olsen (2008), Ahmed and Fajber (2009), Allison *et al.* (2009), Béné (2009), Mills *et al.* (2011), Schwarz *et al.* (2011), some of these linked to the increasing application of resilience concepts (Holling and Gunderson 2002; Folke 2006; Cannon 2008).

Vulnerability approaches in fisheries have been further enhanced by recent work exploring the complex interplay between wellbeing and resilience (Béné *et al.* 2011; Armitage *et al.* 2012; Coulthard 2012). Armitage *et al.* (2012) highlight the complementarities between well-being and resilience approaches, arguing that development of hybrid approaches and innovative combinations of social and ecological theory are now necessary to provide analytical tools to understand complexity and multilevel changes, such as those taking place in small-scale fisheries.

Of vulnerability approaches, the applied work of Ahmed and Fajber (2009) clearly illustrates the close link with the social well-being approach. In their study on gendered responses to climate change in coastal villages in Gujarat, India, they develop an indicative Vulnerability Capacity Index made up of three components – material, institutional and attitudinal vulnerability. Indicators for material vulnerability are income source, educational level, assets and exposure to risk. Those for institutional vulnerability are social networks, extra local kinship ties, access to infrastructure, dependency ratio, reliability of early warning systems and disadvantaged social status. Attitudinal indicators are sense of empowerment, relation to leadership and knowledge about potential hazards. The material and institutional components discussed here parallel to some extent the material and relational dimensions of the social well-being framework. In this context, the elaboration of vulnerability can be seen not simply as a result of, or response to, environmental extremes, but as rooted in the construction of everyday social space or social existence, as the inclusion of 'attitudinal' vulnerability also points to an implicit acknowledgement of the subjective dimensions of wellbeing.

At a macro level, the work of Allison *et al.* (2009) aims at assessing the vulnerability of fisheries to climate change in over 100 countries, based

on a set of key indicators. They emphasize that in evaluating adaptive capacity of countries, social indicators such as education play as important a role as economic indicators (GDP), along with the ecological conditions of the fishery.

In these studies, based on varied approaches to and scales of vulnerability, a rigorous integration of the well-being concept could have helped to analyse several missing dimensions of vulnerability to risk, and perhaps generate an improved set of indicators. These could especially address the subjective aspect of motivations and aspirations and how these are linked to the perception of risks, shocks and adaptive capacities (e.g. Schwarz *et al.* 2011). At a higher level, it is probable that the development of 'macro' vulnerability indices at the sectoral level could gain from combining those with overall well-being indices generated at the national level.

Social capital approaches

Social capital is an inherent component of the SLA (Chambers 1983) but has attracted attention as its own separate approach. The concept of social capital originates in the work of Bourdieu (1986), who, using a historical and context-specific approach, defined it in relation to economic and cultural capitals, as a social resource that enables individuals to navigate their position within a hierarchical social structure, including insertion into networks. Drawing on Bourdieu's work, Putnam (1993: 35), in a functionalist and normative vein, defined social capital in terms of 'features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit'. Many other definitions exist. Coleman (1988), for instance, proposes a 'narrower' utilitarian and normative definition, in which social capital refers more specifically to relations in the context of family, school and community. In that sense, social capital is more closely linked with education and skills, i.e. close to the concept of 'human capital'.

A relatively small number of studies have been published on social capital in fishing communities (Isham 2000; Adger *et al.* 2002; Fowler and Etchegary 2008; Amarasinghe 2009a) including work on the gendered nature of social relations in the organization of fisheries production and governance (Overa 1993; Meltzoff 1995; Walker 2001; Kim 2003; Marugan Pintos 2004; Williams *et al.*

2005; Vunisea 2008). The work of Fowler and Etchegary (2008) based primarily on Putnam's (1993) approach on the health and social wellness of communities in Newfoundland and Labrador severely affected by the groundfish moratorium and industry collapse is noteworthy. These authors applied the concept of social capital in terms of reliance, help and support, trust, leadership and civic engagement to understand differences among individuals and groups in the two communities. The study examined relational dimensions such as community history, culture, sense of belonging and way of life as well as subjective aspirational aspects such as the sense of optimism in the future. Their analysis points to particular social and political characteristics (e.g. social cohesion, trust and leadership) that seem to enhance the ability of some 'low crisis communities' to adapt to the fishery closure, in this case by mobilizing external support. In contrast, other 'high crisis communities' demonstrated negative changes in these characteristics (such as breach of trust), resulting in out-migration, compromising

their capacity to cope with the crisis, leading to detrimental impacts on residents' wellness.

Social well-being approach

One of the most elaborated approaches to wellbeing is the 'social well-being' perspective that emerged from the work conducted initially by the WeD Countries Group at the University of Bath, UK. Within this strand of research, social wellbeing is defined as:

A state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life.(McGregor 2008: 1)

This approach has often been referred to as three-dimensional (or 3D) wellbeing, which as noted earlier, systematically incorporates three aspects: material, relational and subjective wellbeing (Camfield 2006; Gough and McGregor 2007). This relationship is illustrated in the central com-

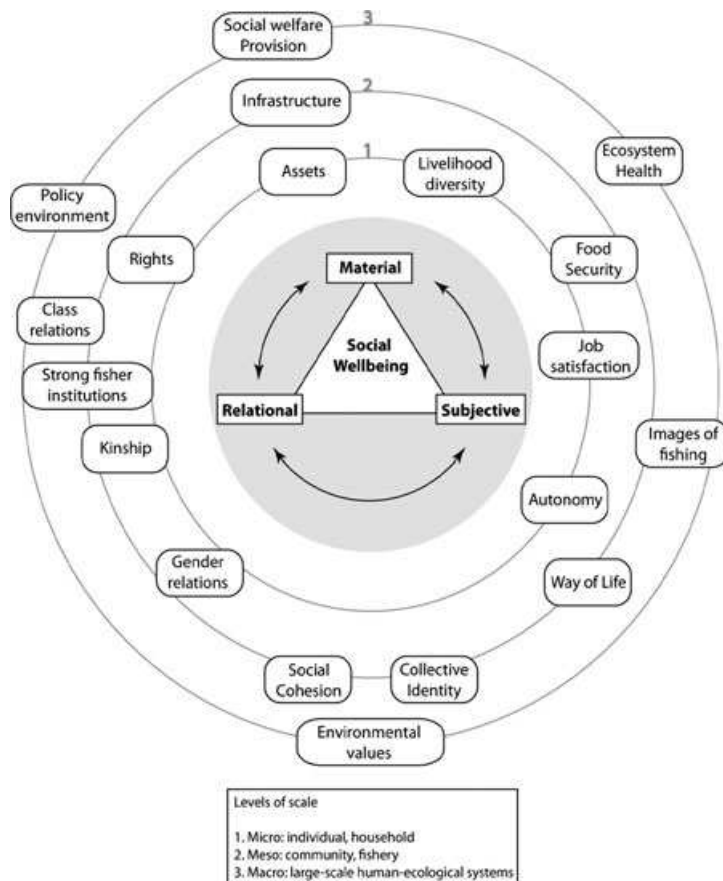


Figure 2 Facets of social wellbeing in small-scale fisheries.

ponent of Fig. 2. In elaborating wellbeing, White (2008) goes beyond the economics of happiness by making a distinction between *having* a good life (in terms of material welfare and a desired standard of living), *living* a good life (seen in terms of capabilities) and *locating* one's life (through experience, subjectivity, judgments and meanings about what constitutes happiness). Her breakdown of the three dimensions of social wellbeing, as discussed earlier proves particularly useful in understanding ways in which the different facets of a 'life well lived' come together.

The WeD Group has examined the interplay of wellbeing, poverty and inequality by developing conceptual and methodological tools for understanding how social, political and cultural constructions of wellbeing vary across different countries. Their empirical work sought to measure peoples' own perceptions of wellbeing, with values and aspirations ascertained via simple questions such as 'when were you happiest?' and 'what are the characteristics of a woman or man who lives well?' (Camfield 2006; Copestake 2008).

Initiatives in the small-scale fisheries literature to explicitly apply the social wellbeing framework are only recently emerging (Amarasinghe 2009b; Bavinck 2009; Coulthard 2009a,b; McGregor 2009; Coulthard *et al.* 2011; Britton and Coulthard 2013; Trimble and Johnson 2013). Most of these are exploratory in nature, trying to link in particular wellbeing and fisheries governance. Coulthard *et al.* (2011) argue that 'social' wellbeing is a potentially valuable tool to bridge the gap between natural resource sustainability and socio-economic development that is typical in fisheries policy. In the context of global fisheries resources that are generally deteriorating, the implementation of effective conservation measures is essential. The authors point out, however, that policies for ecological sustainability of fisheries will be much more likely to succeed when they draw on insights from a social well-being approach. The detailed contextual understanding generated by social well-being analysis helps explain the motivations that shape how fishers relate to fisheries resources. Moreover, social well-being directs attention to the social and value heterogeneity that characterizes populations dependent on fishing, and to the need for mediation among conflicting well-being aspirations and strategies. The symbolic power of commitment to a rich and nuanced understanding of a fishery that a social

well-being approach brings, in tandem with engaged, participatory and ongoing co-learning are an important vehicle for increasing the legitimacy of fisheries governance processes. That legitimacy, in turn, enhances the likelihood of outcomes that will be seen as successful by fishers and fishery governors.

Coulthard's (2009b) study on the *padu* marine tenure system of Pulicat lagoon, South India applies the well-being and interactive governance frameworks to an empirical case study. The *padu* system has survived regardless of increasing pressures to respond to rapid changes in fisheries brought about by a growing fishing population and reduced access to fishing grounds. Coulthard argues that this is due to individual commitments to uphold the *padu* system despite growing costs incurred by doing so. She poses important questions about legitimacy and loyalty in understanding how fishers negotiate difficult trade-offs which affect their own wellbeing and that of their communities and the sustainability of the resource on which they depend. Her analysis points out that the concept of wellbeing holds particular relevance in interpreting fishers' reactions by analysing behaviour as being motivated by the 'pursuit of wellbeing' not only at an individual level but also at a societal level, and the social relationships on which this is based. Finally, she argues that the freedom to pursue one's wellbeing within a system of governance is key to the legitimacy and survival of fisheries management, but that such systems must be adaptive to meet new challenges.

In Fig. 2 we step back from the application of social wellbeing to specific contexts to show the broad analytical potential of the 3D well-being approach for small-scale fisheries. The figure maps a set of commonly described facets of wellbeing in small-scale fisheries onto a circular grid that links the dimensions of social wellbeing to three expanding scales of analysis. The placement of the facets is indicative rather than precise, merely aiming to suggest plausible locations for the different facets in the course of recognizing that from different perspectives, and in different contexts their positions will vary. Even though the figure does show that facets may relate to two dimensions of wellbeing, it cannot show situations where all three dimensions are relevant. Thus gender relations in small-scale fisheries, for example, by definition are about relationships, but those relationships are influenced by personal and

cultural factors and have significance for the distribution of material resources among fishers.

A core concept in both the relational and subjective dimensions of the social wellbeing perspective is identity. Identity in its social, political and cultural sense, including scope for personal and collective action and influence is considered a determinant of relational wellbeing. At the same time, identity, in terms of the concept of self and personality, hopes, fears and aspirations as well as meaning attributed to experiences falls within the dimension of subjective wellbeing. These relational and subjective dimensions of identity are, of course, necessarily interlinked. The issue of identity is also salient in the economics of happiness, capabilities and gender approaches.

In the fisheries literature, there is a considerable body of work dealing with the significance of the identity of fishers and fishing as a 'way of life' (Hviding 1996; McGoodwin 2001; Pollnac *et al.* 2001; Eder 2005; Blount and Kitner 2007; Gupta 2007) as well as the importance of self-actualization as an explanatory factor for fisher's resistance to move out of fisheries (Pollnac *et al.* 2012). An important strand is the analysis of gendered meanings and identities in fishing communities (Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Davis 1993; Hapke and Ayyankeri 2004; Neis *et al.* 2005; Power 2005), with the work on small-scale fisheries in developing countries including a more comprehensive emphasis on the pursuit of livelihoods.

In his paper on understanding the cultures of fishing communities as a key to effective fisheries management and food security, McGoodwin (2001) asserted the profound pride of fishers in their occupational identity and a correspondingly high devotion to the fishing way of life. He argued that high degrees of independence, self-reliance, autonomy, risk taking and outdoor work challenging nature required from fishing activities at sea were not only important cultural characteristics of the fishing occupation but were also necessarily important characteristics of individual fishers, conferring a heroic aura or mystique on fishers who work under particularly dangerous conditions, or harvest particularly large or valuable marine species. He observed that the fishing occupation often conferred not only important markers of self-identity and individual pride among fishers, but a 'satisfaction bonus', which could not be measured on economic grounds alone. Fishing was thus

regarded not merely as a means of ensuring livelihoods, but as an 'intrinsically rewarding activity in its own right – as a desirable and meaningful way of spending one's life' (McGoodwin 2001: 7). He argued that although 'economic rationality' might not explain why fishers tenaciously adhere to an occupation with diminishing returns, 'existential rationality' perhaps does. He pointed out that in small-scale communities where fishing supports a significant portion of the population, fishing was interwoven into the fabric of the society, pervading and shaping the entire cultural system, including its social, economic, political and religious components, even where fishers constituted a minority – a fact that needs to be recognized in fisheries governance.

Other work underlines the central place of identity in the overall functioning of fishing communities. Blount and Kitner's (2007) study of coastal shrimp fishery in Georgia, USA uses an ethnographic and linguistic approach to identify three cultural models used by African American fishers to understand fishing as 'life on the water'. One model is 'life on the water' as a 'way of making a living', which is condensed to a notion of 'paying bills' and associated with 'hard work'. The second is also one of 'life on the water', focusing on the risks involved or 'taking a chance at making a living'. Here the ability to live on the water is critically dependent on the rationale, if there are 'not enough fish', then there is 'no money left' in the fishery and thus there is 'no future'. The third model is connected to young people in relation to 'life on the water', where they need to have sufficient financial means for 'getting started', which is a major obstacle to enter the shrimp fishery. For most young people this is prohibitively expensive, since they have to invest in a boat and gear; this is also expressed in terms of there is 'no money left' in the fishery and thus, 'no future'. As the option of getting started is not promising, the choices are either to move to the city, 'live in town' or 'sell drugs'. 'Living in town' denotes that the possibility of work is greater in urban areas, enabling one to make a living. If young people choose to stay in the rural areas where shrimp (Penaeidae) and blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*, Portunidae) fisheries are the main activities, there are few options open to them to make a living, and some of them invariably turn to selling drugs. Blount and Kitner's (2007) work reveals the intersection of the material, relational and subjective

dimensions in understanding how livelihood strategies are perceived and expressed within fishing communities, although they do not frame their analysis in terms of wellbeing.

Finally, we will conclude this discussion on identities as a theme cutting across approaches by revisiting the central debate about gender in fisheries. It is often argued that men who fish have high levels of job satisfaction, even though fishing is considered a risky and dangerous occupation (Pollnac *et al.* 2001; Allison and Horemans 2006), and thus the identity of fisher is desirable. Similarly, women might have strong identities as fisherwomen, fish traders or processors (Overa 1993; Appleton 2000). The link between identities, networks (social capital) and economic status is made by Overa (1993) who points out that access to and membership in networks in many ways determines one's success in the fishing industry and leads to considerable differentiation both among fishers and fish traders, in this case to the benefit of women (Overa 1993). This work provides a necessary corrective to the implicit assumption in non-gendered analysis focused on male fishers that presumes that being a fisher is the preferred identity, failing to acknowledge that in some areas, being a fish trader might carry more prestige and greater economic status. Thus, questions emerge in relation to the desire of women to become fishers and what kind of identity is prevalent among women who are not traders in fishing communities. Concerns relating to identity and women's freedom to choose not to be fishers have been discussed (Mwaipopo-Ako 2001; Porter 2006). Similarly, Davis' (1988) work on three roles available to women in a Newfoundland fishery as fish plant labourer, 'shore skipper' and 'grass widow' provides a discursive approach to women's identities in fishing communities. She differentiates between instrumental and expressive functions, and acceptable and unacceptable roles for women and how these give meaning, purpose and legitimacy to women's activities within fishing communities. These female local identities are placed within a 'collective ethos of the fishery' characteristic of the peripheral nature of outport communities, impinged upon by Newfoundland and Canadian society in general. The term 'shore skipper' implies a negative tease or outright insult, referring to an active woman who is considered bossy and interfering excessively in the

husband's fishing activities. 'Grass widow' in contrast connotes female dignity, referring to a woman whose husband is not dead but gone away to sea and thus a passive but idealized, female expressive role. She argues that these roles and meanings are characteristic of the more symbolic contribution by women to fishing, and serve an emotional and expressive function that has become intensified in the face of social change and modernization.

Conclusion

Small-scale fisheries seem well-suited to benefit from the systematic application of a wellbeing lens to both the research and governance arenas. In assessing the inter-related theoretical approaches to understanding wellbeing described above, particularly but not exclusively in the context of international development discussions, several conclusions can be drawn of relevance to their use in small-scale fishery systems:

1. There is no single monolithic well-being theory but rather several approaches or 'lenses' that draw upon various theoretical threads and related analytical frameworks from cognate disciplines (Camfield *et al.* 2009). Owing to some overlap among the different approaches, each clearly has specific strengths that are useful in applying to different purposes within a fisheries context.
2. As most of the analytical frameworks on poverty, vulnerability and human security still mainly reflect a deficit-centred perspective more suited to understanding the limits to peoples' capacities, capabilities and choices, a well-being lens recognizes peoples' expressed aspirations and goals, focusing on what people have and treasure, and what they feel they can do, rather than what they cannot. This reflects a well-articulated argument to go beyond a traditional poverty or deprivation-centred lens in looking at how people envision living their lives, choose to live these lives and what they value in their lives.
3. There has been interest in conceptualizing wellbeing at different levels – notably as a locally embedded, socio-politically determined and culturally relative concept, and as a comparative phenomenon at national and global levels. Thus, on one hand, efforts at understanding how people make sense of their own wellbeing, in reference to their local contexts, have been developed for application at a *community level*,

as in the empirical work undertaken by both the Oxford economics cluster working on measuring 'subjective happiness' or the WeD Group's research on 3-D social wellbeing. These two perspectives arise in fisheries research through, for example, the work of Pollnac and Poggie (2008) and Smith and Clay (2010) and of Coulthard (2009b) and Coulthard *et al.* (2011). On the other hand, at national and global levels, the capabilities approach has contributed to generating and developing *national level* indices, based on evolving well-being concepts that go beyond the material, as the economics of happiness approach has been successful with comparative *global* surveys of life satisfaction.

4. As Camfield *et al.* (2009) reminds us, a well-being lens not only acknowledges the existence of diversities in ways people choose to live one life over another, but it also brings in a dynamic approach by addressing how people change over time – by studying people's responses to and interpretations of particular events and actions – and the trade-offs that they tend to favour in pursuing livelihoods. We recognize, however, that these dynamics of wellbeing are not as well understood as the dynamics of poverty and should therefore be seen as a new research frontier.
5. The social well-being lens, in particular, holds promise as a bridging approach – as a systematic means of combining material, relational and subjective aspects of peoples' varied lives. This provides a counterbalance to the conventional ways of conceptualizing and measuring wellbeing that focus around material consumption. Thus, material aspects can be combined with emotional needs, cultural dimensions, formal and informal social relations, self-defined rights and freedoms and how people come to understand wider political, social and economic structures which govern them.

With respect to small-scale fisheries, even though wellbeing is not yet a universally accepted concept, the sheer depth and breadth of its meaning can be used to open up debates (such as about what constitutes a good/desirable life in fishing, or issues concerning cross-cultural validity) and engagement with wellbeing can support more holistic, methodologically rigorous and multidisciplinary approaches. Yet, it must be recognized that whereas theory on wellbeing is rapidly grow-

ing, there is much to be carried out on how well-being lenses, grounded on more economic or social approaches, or a combination of both, can be integrated into fishery practice/policy.

In particular, we have seen that although the well-being literature in social science and development has become considerable, its application within small-scale fisheries is still limited. Nevertheless, in addition to a relatively recent body of research that explicitly uses well-being frameworks, a large number of published works encompassing concepts related to wellbeing such as poverty, gender, human rights, sustainable livelihoods, social capital, vulnerability and identities is being published, especially, in relation to the analysis of fishing communities at the microlevel. This literature adopts frameworks that are most often not strongly grounded in the theoretical strands of wellbeing, and the interaction of the three dimensions of wellbeing (material, relational and subjective) is rarely holistically conceptualized. However, these provide a useful foundation upon which future applications of the well-being concept can build.

Many of the fishery themes receiving widespread attention at present are compatible with and could benefit from the application of a well-being lens. Three major ones, all sharing a focus on holistic and integrated thinking are (i) the development and implementation of *integrated assessment frameworks* (Garcia *et al.* 2008), which address fishery issues comprehensively, combining tools ranging from fish stock assessment to fishery policy analysis and strongly interdisciplinary perspectives (e.g. for coastal fisheries in Latin America and the Caribbean, see Salas *et al.* 2010), (ii) *fishery systems approaches* that seek to understand and manage the fishery by linking together human dimensions and ecological/biophysical ones within fishery social-ecological systems (e.g. with the ecosystem approach to fisheries – see De Young *et al.* 2008; FAO 2009) and (iii) elaboration of *fishery governance* approaches and 'good governance' principles appropriate for small-scale fisheries (e.g. Kooiman *et al.* 2005; Charles 2011c, 2012). Each of these frameworks and approaches seeks a more comprehensive analysis of fisheries than has been present in the past, and thus seem highly suited to the use of a 3D well-being lens that incorporates not only the usual material aspects but also the relational and subjective dimensions of wellbeing.

Practical approaches are being developed in a small-scale fisheries context to connect wellbeing

with current conceptual approaches and frameworks, such as those noted above, and to apply a well-being lens to assess existing and proposed fisheries policies and instruments. This could be particularly useful, for instance, when faced with the challenge of choosing fishery management and governance instruments to use in a given fishery, from among the diverse options in the available 'toolkit'. This challenge arises at multiple levels of governance – from short-term operational tools (e.g. fishing areas and seasons) to medium-term tactical instruments (e.g. TACs and catch quotas) and long-term strategic and governance tools (e.g. choices among approaches to co-management). How should one assess and decide among the various instruments in a systematic manner that considers ecological and economic factors in a more comprehensive system-oriented way than in the past, and fully includes the often neglected social and cultural considerations?

Current research is applying a 3D well-being lens to address the challenge of better assessing fishery instruments, with emphasis on small-scale fisheries (e.g. Charles *et al.* 2012). This work indicates that the well-being lens is effective in helping to provide an improved understanding of such phenomena as fisher response to government policy initiatives. For example, in the lobster fishery of Nova Scotia, Canada, a focus on wellbeing explains why stresses and conflicts are arising from current governmental policy directions – as changes to the management system would negatively impact on relational benefits (e.g. between government and fishers) and subjective values (e.g. a sense of equity) that are inherent in the system. This improved understanding can be crucial to avoid ineffective policy. More broadly, at a national level, a well-being lens may be useful in assessing the potential success or failure of policies aiming to move fishing households out of fisheries, whether as a response to depletion of stocks or as a policy preference for industrial over small-scale fisheries by highlighting facets such as job satisfaction, identity and fishing as a way of life. Thus, application of the well-being approach has potentially many uses, both in local-level governance of small-scale fisheries and extending to the national level, where fisheries sectoral policies are generated.

However, application of well-being perspectives in fisheries is limited at the present time by the absence of large-scale systematic surveys or global comparisons of 'subjective wellbeing' across fisher-

ies sectors or between fisheries and other sectors as well as gaps in the use of well-being indices. Even though there may be national-level data on subjective wellbeing, this kind of survey approach has not been duplicated in fisheries studies at the macro, sectoral levels – apart from the incipient attempts by Pollnac and Poggie (2008) and Smith and Clay (2010). In moving toward more systematic use of a well-being lens, it may be effective to work with a number of the approaches discussed in this paper. For example, the 'economics of happiness' perspective would be useful to gain insights into satisfaction or happiness of members of fishing households relative to agricultural, industrial or service sector households at the national level or to compare across countries and regions; the capabilities approach would be helpful in generating macrolevel indices of wellbeing within the fisheries sector; and the social well-being approach provides tools for household and community-level analysis and indices of wellbeing. Indeed, drawing on a range of well-being approaches, as relevant to the given fishery and society, seems an appropriate route to move forward in both assessing and improving wellbeing of small-scale fisheries globally.

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