

[Forthcoming in *Oxford Development Studies*, 2003]

**Concepts and Perceptions of Human Well-Being**  
**Some Evidence from South Africa**

**October 2002**

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**Acknowledgement:** I would like to thank Dudley Horner, Peter Nolan, Mozaffar Qizilbash and two anonymous referees for helpful comments. I have also benefited from discussions with Faldie Esau, Ben Fine, Ian Gough, Gay Meeks, Valerie Moller and John Sender. I would like to thank Jaqui Goldin and the Southern Africa Labour Development and Research Unit for supporting fieldwork activities. Funding from The Cambridge Political Economy Society, The Smuts Memorial Foundation, Girton College and The Thomas Carpenter Trust is gratefully acknowledged. This paper is a revised and shortened version of *SALDRU Working Paper* No.88, University of Cape Town. The issues raised in this paper are discussed at greater length in Clark (2002).

## **Concepts and Perceptions of Human Well-Being: Some Evidence from South Africa**

*This paper presents the results of two surveys, which explored how ordinary people in a rural village and urban township view human development. These findings are used to evaluate some abstract concepts of human well-being and development, and constitute the foundation for constructing a more realistic development ethic to guide public policy. Perhaps the most significant finding is that most people appear to share a common vision of development, which is not fundamentally at odds with most of the capabilities advocated by scholars like Nussbaum and Sen. Most development ethics however, need to say more about: (1) the practical side of survival and development in poor countries; (2) the psychology of human well-being, i.e. mental functioning; and (3) some of the 'better things' in life such as recreation.*

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years there has been a sudden flurry of interest in concepts of human well-being and development. Such interest has been generated and sustained within social science as well as ethics and philosophy. In addition to usual concerns with measurement and inter-personal comparisons of well-being, economists and social scientists have started to reflect more fully on the concept and meaning of 'development' itself (see Clark, forthcoming). A notable example is the Nobel Prize winner, Amartya K. Sen. In a series of publications spanning more than two decades Professor Sen has made a case for viewing development as the expansion of human capabilities. One argument in favour of the capability approach is the need to (re)focus on people, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of real development. Following the eighteenth century philosopher Immanuel Kant, Sen points to the necessity of viewing human beings as ends in themselves and never as only means to other ends (Sen, 1990, p.41). The capability approach also provides a broader informational base for conceptualising development than more traditional approaches, which typically focus on resources or utility. Such approaches ignore many of the substantive freedoms people have reason to value and can provide fairly misleading indicators of the overall quality of life (see Sen, 1984, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Clark, 2002).

While Sen provides some examples of valuable capabilities, he has been criticised for leaving his list largely unspecified (see Nussbaum, 1988, p.152; Doyal and Gough, 1991, p.156; Qizilbash, 1998, p.54). At least one attempt has now been made to develop a ‘thick’ (or fuller) account of the good using the capability framework. Drawing on the work of Aristotle, Martha Nussbaum (1990; 1995; 2000) has developed a list of ‘functional capabilities’ that is deliberately ‘vague’ (extremely general) in order to leave space for pluralism. Her list is meant to be broadly universal and is intended to reflect common human values and experiences. Indeed, Nussbaum claims that later versions of the list represent a kind of ‘overlapping consensus’ derived from ‘years of cross cultural discussion’ (Nussbaum, 2000, p.76). On closer inspection, however, Nussbaum’s *Thick Vague Theory of Good* (TVTG) turns out to be derived largely from Ancient Greek Philosophy instead of concrete studies of human values.<sup>1</sup> Yet Nussbaum’s approach does provide a natural starting point for thinking about human well-being. Moreover, as Nussbaum has argued, the TVTG is not set in stone. It can and should be subjected to public scrutiny and revised in line with people’s considered value judgements. Such an ethic, as Nussbaum demonstrates, can help guide development policy and thinking.

Many other theories of human well-being and need have emerged. The first three columns of Table 1 presents Nussbaum’s TVTG and Sen’s examples of valuable capabilities and compares them with an *Augmented Theory of the Good* (ATG). The ATG is derived primarily from the work of Alkire and Black (1997), Braybrooke (1987), Carr-Hill (1986), Dasgupta (1993), Doyal and Gough (1991), Griffin (1986), Rawls (1971), Streeten (1981) and various papers in the volumes edited by Ekins and Max-Neef (1992), Nussbaum and Sen (1993), and Nussbaum and Glover (1995). These ethics share much common ground (see Clark, 2002). However, Table 1 shows that there is considerable scope for extending the TVTG. In particular, Nussbaum and Sen’s list of capabilities neglects physical security,

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<sup>1</sup> See the references Nussbaum (1990) cites in footnotes 52-64.

economic resources and employment, which feature prominently in some other ethics. There is also room for clarifying the categories of 'Recreation' and 'Separateness', and adding lists of essential inputs for functioning (the starred items in Table 1). For clarity the categories in Table 1 are grouped under four distinct headings: (A) physical capabilities; (B) mental well-being and intellectual development; (C) relating and interacting; and (D) personal autonomy and freedom.

This paper has two objectives. The first is to present the results of surveys that investigated how ordinary people in South Africa view 'human development' or a good form of life. Most participatory poverty studies do not provide detailed accounts of such perceptions (e.g. SA-PPA, 1998; Narayan et al. 2000). Such studies are usually concerned with other issues such as identifying the causes of poverty or exploring possible strategies for sustainable development. So the survey results presented here ought to be of some interest on their own.<sup>2</sup>

The second objective of this paper is to use our survey finding to evaluate some abstract concepts of development. This involves confronting theoretical accounts of human well-being and development with the values and experiences of poor people themselves.<sup>3</sup> How realistic and relevant are these concept? We shall focus on Sen's examples of valuable capabilities and Nussbaum's TVTG.<sup>4</sup> An effort is also made to assess the ATG.

## **2. The Fieldwork**

In March 1998 interviews were conducted in a rural village called Murraysburg and urban township known as Wallacedene (both located in the Province of the Western Cape, South Africa), using

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<sup>2</sup> While these survey results are based on a relatively small (but statistically significant) sample, the data collected is broadly consistent with the findings of other studies.

<sup>3</sup> A thorough literature search revealed no record of any previous study that confronts abstract concepts of development with the views of ordinary people.

<sup>4</sup> Since this study was completed Nussbaum has produced a slightly revised version of her 1995 list of capabilities

random sampling techniques to select households and respondents. A total of 157 people over 12 years of age were interviewed. The sample was divided between the two fieldwork sites and included roughly equal numbers of men and women. In both locations the sample consisted of relatively more young people than old people. The racial breakdown was 42% African, 53% Coloured and 5% White.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts, which dealt with open and closed responses respectively. We began by asking respondents to tell us the five most important aspects of a good life. A series of questions were then asked about the reasons for valuing some of the most popular items (e.g. jobs, education and housing). In the second part of the interview, respondents were asked to evaluate some pre-defined ends. The survey results were broken down by location, gender and age to explore how perceptions of development differ among specific groups of people.

The majority of survey respondents were extremely poor. Forty per cent of individuals reported that they received less than R250 per month from all income sources. Almost half of respondents received no more than R300 each month.<sup>5</sup> Only a quarter of the sample received more than R800 per month.<sup>6</sup> This compares with an average monthly per capita income of R820 in the Western Cape and R468 in South Africa as whole in 1993 (PSLSD, 1994, p.316). In contrast the top 10% of the survey sample earned between R1,800 and R7,000 per month.

### **3. Background and Methodology**

Investigating perceptions of development among the poor presents some difficulties. An impoverished person may lack the necessary knowledge or experience to imagine many aspects of a good life.

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(see Nussbaum, 2000). Her new list, however, does not invalidate the arguments advanced in this paper.

<sup>5</sup> Roughly equivalent to US\$55 at the time of our survey. These figures are based on average currency exchange rates for the whole of 1998. See [www.oanda.com/convert/fxhistory](http://www.oanda.com/convert/fxhistory)

<sup>6</sup> These figures exclude those in full time education who were mostly children.

Moreover, the wants, hopes and expectations of the disadvantaged may be crushed by the harsh realities of life. A poor person may learn to take pleasure in small mercies and to desire nothing more in order to avoid bitter disappointment. Such phenomena threaten to undermine our survey results. In consequence, the following precautions were taken:

*(1) The Careful Selection of Survey Sites and the Country in which they are Located.* South Africa has one of the most unequal distributions of income of any nation in the world. In this country, perhaps more than any other, aspects of the first world and the third world are visible in close proximity. Thus, even the poorest and most deprived of South Africa's citizens are explicitly faced with at least one possible vision of a good life. This is especially true of our fieldwork sites, which are poor by national standards but happen to be situated in one of the richest provinces. In addition, neither survey site is cut off from the rest of the world. Television in particular has played an important role in shaping local attitudes by projecting potential images of development from different cultures and societies into the shacks of our informants.

*(2) Devising A Questionnaire Consisting of Open and Closed Questions.* Individuals were encouraged to advance their own conception of a good life in the first half of the interview (by responding to open questions), before passing judgement on some pre-defined conceptions of well-being in the second half of the interview (by responding to closed questions). Comparing the two sets of responses provides useful insights into the nature and extent of social consciousness in the fieldwork areas. The fact that most people did not repeatedly raise their expectations of a good life after alternatives were suggested implies that preferences were not seriously distorted.

Asking about preferences can be problematic for other reasons. There is no guarantee that respondents will reveal their true preferences. Instead, informants may try to impress the interviewer or provide the expected response to a given question. Respondents may also attempt to conceal preferences of a humiliating or embarrassing nature. Some insights can be gleaned by looking directly at human behaviour and consumption patterns. But in some cases values do not match preferences or actual choices. Desiring an object and valuing an object are two entirely different things. Budget data and behavioural information is therefore used sparingly, and only as a supplement to survey findings or where it is likely that respondent may not have been entirely open and frank. In most cases there is no evidence to suggest that respondents were dishonest.

#### **4. Analysis of the Fieldwork Findings**

##### *4.1 The Priorities of Life*

Table 2 presents an ordinal ranking of the top thirty aspects of a good life in Murraysburg and Wallacedene. According to people in both these locations the three most important aspects of a good life are: jobs, housing and education. These items were spontaneously mentioned by over two-fifths of respondents. Moreover, the majority of people that mentioned these items ranked them highly, i.e. as either their first or second priority (Figure 1). A particularly high premium was placed on jobs and housing in Wallacedene. More emphasis was placed on education in Murraysburg. The emphasis on housing in Wallacedene reflects the relatively poor quality of dwellings in the township. More women (57.5%) than men (48.6%) spontaneously mentioned the value of a good job. This probably reflects the narrow range of economic opportunities facing women in poor areas, their demand for autonomy

and the relatively precarious situation faced by female-headed households. Education was the most important concern among the youth (12-19 age bracket) but was displaced by jobs and housing among young adults (20-34 age bracket) and the middle aged (35-59 age bracket). The value of education fades into relative insignificance for those in the oldest age group (60 plus age bracket). Those of working age rated jobs relatively highly. The emphasis on housing does not appear to vary much with age. **[Insert Table 2/Figure 1]**

Access to income also featured prominently in many people's perceptions of a good life. In fact, this item received almost as many mentions as 'education', although it was not rated as highly (Figure 1). Yet in contrast to jobs, housing and education, access to income commands a steady level of support from all groups of people. The remaining items in Table 2 lag a long way behind the top four priorities. However, the value of a good family, Christian<sup>7</sup> life style, health, food and happiness were all frequently mentioned. Several respondents also mentioned the value of good friends and the importance of owning a car or business. These items were followed by the desire for 'understanding' and harmony between people, the support of family and relaxation. A handful of respondents mentioned a range of other items such as living in a good area, personal safety and having children (see Table 2).

#### 4.2.1 Jobs

The most important reason for valuing jobs was to 'earn money'. Over two-thirds of survey participants mentioned this objective. This reflects the fact that the able-bodied among the poor can often escape extreme poverty by becoming wage labourers (Breman, 1996; Iliffe, 1987). Acquiring reasonable housing, adequate food and clothing, supporting family and friends, and achieving happiness were also important reasons for valuing a job. Several people also nominated confidence, self-respect,

peace of mind, pursuing a challenge, learning new things and being able to plan for the future as valuable objectives. The demand for ‘independence’, ‘self sufficiency’ and capacity to ‘earn [one’s] own money’ were also powerful reasons for valuing jobs – particularly among young adults. Several respondents also mentioned status, respect and pride.

Good working conditions, job security and social mobility also make an important contribution to the quality of life. For the poor, employment opportunities are typically restricted to casual work in the informal economy. Such occupations are insecure and typically involve long hours, exhausting work and appalling working conditions (see Breman, 1996; Wilson et al.1989). Often workers are forced to migrate long distances to find work. This kind of existence undermines personal relationships and can break families. The only real alternative to informal work for the majority of the poor is no better. Unemployment can only offer the prospect of extreme poverty, and often generates loneliness, frustration, despair and feelings of worthlessness (Wilson et al. 1989, ch.4).

When specifically asked almost all respondents indicated that regular employment and good safe working conditions are valuable features of a good job. Reasonable working hours, amicable relationships with employers, the opportunity to live at home (with family), self-respect, opportunities for advancement, and job satisfaction were also rated highly. Most people agreed that jobs help give life meaning and substance, though this capability was not ranked as highly as the ends described above. Acquiring status, influence and power from a good job were also regarded as valuable ends by a clear majority (although around a third of respondents considered these objectives to be unimportant).

#### 4.2.2 Housing and Living Conditions

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<sup>7</sup> In other parts of South Africa people would mention the value of Muslim, Hindu and Jewish life-styles.

Respondents indicated that the most important function of housing is to provide shelter. Many cases of leaking roofs, rising damp, flooding and fragile housing have been documented. Poor housing can also make life exceptionally hot in summer and very cold in winter (see Wilson et al. 1989). Many people also valued housing that provides physical security or protection from crime. Other common threats to security (especially in shantytowns) include the danger of fire and eviction (SA-PPA, 1998; Wilson et al. 1989).

Most respondents placed a high premium on *quality* housing and good living conditions. The value of adequate living space, privacy, water and sanitation and living in a neat, clean, hygienic and healthy environment were frequently mentioned. Several people noted that housing provides a place to sleep and rest, entertain family and friends, and keep possessions. Lots of people also pointed out that good housing facilitates happiness and 'joy'. Some even mentioned that decent housing would facilitate 'peace of mind', relaxation and self-respect. Respondents also thought that good housing would improve family relations ('togetherness', 'oneness') and facilitate independence. Many people (especially women and young adults) wanted their own house. Some respondents wanted a good house for status or to 'feel proud'.

#### 4.2.3 Education

By far the most important reasons for valuing education (particularly among women) were to acquire jobs and money. An education was also regarded as a valuable source of 'security' and 'survival', which ensures access to basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing. Several people insisted that education, skills and qualifications improve future prospects. Some valued education to 'be

somebody', 'get somewhere' or achieve 'success'. Even more people claimed that an education leads to a good life or promotes happiness and joy.

Acquiring knowledge and understanding were also important reasons for valuing an education. These objectives were supported by all groups of people and were rated almost as highly as earning money. Learning to read, write and count also received a lot of emphasis, particularly from the rural poor, women and the elderly, i.e. those groups of people most likely to be illiterate. A small minority of people even hinted that they valued education to improve the power of practical reason although few managed to articulate the idea clearly.

Respondents also observed that an education promotes other valuable ends, such as communication between people, independence and self-respect. Some respondents thought an education would make them a better person, improve their social life or provide skills to help or teach others. The responses to pre-defined questions confirm that an education is valued for raising income, providing skills for jobs and promoting knowledge, understanding and literacy. However, significant numbers of people (16.5%) questioned the value of literary and scientific pursuits. Many also refused to endorse status, influence and power.

#### 4.2.4 Economic Resources

Respondents valued money in order to 'buy things' and purchase basic necessities such as food and clothing. Money and material things were generally regarded as the route to a better life as well as necessary means of security and survival.<sup>8</sup> The most important reason for valuing income however was

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<sup>8</sup> Other priorities included spending on housing and home improvement, paying off debt, investment in education and businesses, saving money and taking out insurance. Most respondents also expressed a desire to spend money on luxuries such as cars, quality furniture, fashionable clothing, holidays and travel, television, music centres, computers, general entertainment, gambling, motorcycles, watches and jewellery.

to support family and friends. While this sentiment is consistent with African Humanism (Ubuntu),<sup>9</sup> most people reserved the emphasis on assisting others for their own family rather than people more generally. Moreover, the majority of people that ranked supporting family and friends in first place changed their mind when we asked them to rank this objective in relation to using money to improve their own living standards, purchase food and promote happiness.

Many people also recognised the importance of money for personal autonomy (capacity to ‘do the things you want’, ‘self-sufficiency’) and happiness. The desire to achieve status and prestige, gain respect and ‘get somewhere in life’ were also mentioned. However, a small minority of respondents did question the value of income and wealth. Some stated that money could not buy happiness or love while others insisted money causes problems.

#### 4.2.5 Food and Clothing

Both these items play a broader and much more diverse role in terms of promoting human functioning than the standard basic needs literature suggests.

##### 4.2.5.1 Food

Respondents were asked about the motives behind their choice of foods. The most important concern was to promote health and nutrition. Some urban women mentioned the value of maintaining a healthy diet while urban adults of working age emphasised the importance of physical fitness. Many people also mentioned the importance of ‘avoiding hunger’ or choosing foods that fill the stomach. Selecting cheap food, consuming quality foods or fresh vegetables, and achieving a varied diet were also important

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<sup>9</sup> A commitment to a humanistic way of life that involves sharing, trust and treating all people with respect in an effort to promote the common good.

objectives.

A substantial number of respondents (49.7%) also mentioned the value of choosing foods they enjoyed consuming. This objective was ranked almost as highly as the desire to promote health. Specific groups of people also mentioned the value of selecting popular foods with good trademarks, convenience foods and foods that facilitate social or religious activities.

Virtually everyone agreed that avoiding hunger, good health and enjoyment are valuable achievements facilitated by food. Not all respondents, however, placed a premium on convenience food or foods that facilitate social events. Interestingly, all groups of people ranked avoiding hunger above being adequately nourished.

#### 4.2.5.2 Clothing

Clothing is essential for human functioning. Respondents insisted that the 'body must be covered' to preserve dignity and self-respect. Substantial numbers of people also mentioned the value of protecting their bodies from the elements. In particular respondents cited the importance of keeping warm or cool (depending on the weather) and possessing hats to prevent sunburn. Some people also mentioned the value of having durable or clean clothes. Respondents also insisted that being able to look smart and presentable or neat and tidy are important objectives, while others mentioned the need to *dress properly for church* or comply with social protocol. Large number of women and teenagers wanted clothes to look good or beautiful. Several people also mentioned the value of achieving a fashionable image, being attractive or impressing other people with their clothes.

#### 4.2.6 Family and Friends

Respondents placed the most emphasis on access to the care and support of family and friends. Most respondents emphasised the economic benefits of good personal relationships. This reflects the fact that family and friends often constitute the main source of economic support (Iliffe, 1987; Wilson et al. 1989). Many urban and young people also mentioned the importance of relying on family and friends for advice or assistance with solving problems. While some people mentioned the value of *loving each other*, most chose to emphasise the value of *being loved*. A good family and reliable friends were considered to be valuable sources of emotional security, moral support and comfort. Some people simply wanted companionship or to avoid loneliness. Respondents also mentioned the importance of 'helping others', sharing items such as food or providing for family and friends. These aspirations reflect the African tradition of Ubuntu.

Several people indicated that good inter-personal relationships facilitate happiness. Yet poverty has a nasty habit of generating stress and frustrations, which undermines these relationships. Often the poor seek refuge in alcohol abuse, which exacerbates such problems. In Murraysburg, in particular, many respondents expressed the need for better 'communication' and 'understanding' between people or wanted to strengthen inter-personal relationships. Fewer respondents than expected mentioned the value of falling in love. In particular, sexual fulfilment was not spontaneously mentioned in either survey. Questions about the value of this activity caused some embarrassment. A large proportion of people either refused to answer or claimed they did not value sexual satisfaction. The fact that a social stigma is attached to sexual activity and community life is dominated by the heavy hand of the church may well have encouraged respondents to conceal their true preferences. In support of this supposition it is worth noting that the demographic information we collected shows that many people were cohabiting. Yet nearly all unmarried respondents who turned out to be living with a partner gave their marital status

as 'single' at the beginning of the interview. Only three people openly admitted to 'cohabiting'.

#### 4.2.7 Religion and the Church

No questions about religion were included in the survey. However, the value of Christian life and church activities was evident. According to one local contact the church performs several useful functions in Murraysburg. In addition to providing spiritual salvation, it offers economic and emotional support, acts as a sign of hope for the future and organises social activities (Dokter, 1996).

#### 4.2.8 Free Time and Recreation

The most important reason for valuing free time and recreation was to facilitate relaxation. Several people also emphasised the importance of sleep and rest or relieving stress and frustration. More surprisingly, nearly half of all respondents (44.6%) mentioned the value of using recreation to improve health and physical fitness. This reflects the fact the survey sample is skewed towards young people with a keen interest in sport. Just over a third of respondents (35.7%) mentioned the value of achieving happiness or enjoyment. Several others insisted that recreation provides the opportunity to 'do what you want' or 'like best'.

Few people deliberately mentioned the value of free time, which is sometimes associated with laziness in African culture. Yet more free time is an essential part of a better life for many poor people. Migrant labourers, for example, are often forced to rise in the early hours of the morning and seldom return home before nightfall. For countless numbers of people around the world, 'life is an endless cycle of sleeping and working' (Wilson et al. 1989, p.152). Several of our respondents expressed desires to

spend more time with their family, children or friends. Some wanted time to do the ‘important things’ in life or be by themselves.

In many other cases, however, the problem is one of having too much time and very little to do. The majority of the poor are either unemployed or lack basic recreational facilities. Attempts to escape the boredom and despair of extreme poverty often result in alcohol or drug abuse, sexual experimentation and crime. Several respondents valued recreation to ‘avoid boredom’, ‘keep occupied’, ‘provide a change of scene’ and escape ‘mischief’, ‘trouble’ and ‘crime’. Sport, music and dance, reading, church meetings and activities, socialising, watching television and going to the cinema were nominated as the most important recreational activities.<sup>10</sup> When asked respondents also agreed that ‘thinking, daydreaming and remembering’, ‘appreciating nature and forms of beauty’, ‘visiting libraries, museums and art galleries’ and ‘appreciating classical music’ are valuable activities. These pursuits were not spontaneously mentioned. In consequence, it is difficult to repose confidence in these responses.

#### *4.3 Factors Influencing the Responses to Open-Ended Question*

Responses to open questions were influenced by social and political factors. However, people’s wants, hopes and expectations were *not* crushed by the harsh realities of life. Respondents were aware of many of the better things in life, but chose to emphasise their most *urgent* needs. This is why so many people were able to speak with passion and zeal about the value of jobs, housing, education and money. Some respondents used the interview to promote their socio-economic interests by emphasising the things the government might provide in the foreseeable future. (Many of the items in Table 2 resemble the goals of South Africa’s Reconstruction and Development Programme).

The survey results indicate that different groups of people frequently chose to emphasise different capabilities. This does not represent the absence of a broad commitment to a common set of ends. Instead, it reflects the fact that different groups of people have different problems and interests. Some notable examples from the preceding discussion include the relatively high premium placed on: (1) housing in the slums of Wallacedene; (2) access to employment by women; and (3) education and training among the youth.

Another potential source of bias is the inherent tendency to focus on means rather than ultimate objectives, because these things facilitate the simultaneous realisation of multiple ends. As we have seen, much of the significance attached to jobs, housing, education and income, etc., derives from the fact that these resources promote a wide range of human capabilities. It follows that a more direct approach is also required if we are to achieve a balanced overview of people's impressions of a good life.

#### *4.4 The Ends of Life*

In the second half of the interview respondents were asked to evaluate a pre-defined list of capabilities. The results of this exercise confirm the importance of jobs, housing and shelter, education, good health, happiness, family and friends, sleep and rest, basic clothing, income and wealth, self-respect, free time and recreation (among other things). Nearly all respondents thought these capabilities were valuable or essential components of a good life (see Table 3). The apparent scale of the consensus is remarkable. **[Insert Table 3]**

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<sup>10</sup> Most respondents confined their examples of valuable recreational pursuits to activities that take place in their community. Hardly anybody spontaneously mentioned the value of drinking alcohol or smoking, despite the fact that these activities are popular among the poor.

Table 3 indicates that this consensus can be extended to include items such as access to clean water and sanitation, personal safety, freedom and political rights, electricity and transportation, *inter alia*. These are important aspects of development. The reasons most respondents failed to mention these capabilities when we asked them to describe a good life are implicit in the preceding discussion. Most respondents had recently acquired access to piped water, electricity and political rights while transport and physical security were not pressing concerns.

Respondents also confirmed the value of several functionings in the personal sphere of life. Most people agreed that the concept of a good life could be extended to include the power of practical reason (defined as the capacity to think, reason and make choices), ‘natural assets’ (such as determination, motivation and self reliance) and physical exercise.

However, respondents indicated that there are limits to the scope for consensus. In particular, significant numbers of people refused to endorse the value of fashionable clothing, Coca-Cola, television, cinema and sport. None of these things are valuable components of all good life-styles. More than a fifth of survey participants also questioned the value of being able to ‘live long’. This probably reflects the harsh living conditions and poor quality of life most respondents must endure. It is not uncommon to hear broken victims of extreme poverty exclaim: ‘All I am waiting for is my dying day’ (Morifi, 1984, p.8). However, there is some evidence to suggest that ageing may concentrate the mind. Everybody we interviewed over the age of 59 appreciated the value of being able to live a long life.<sup>11</sup>

## **5. Implications for Development Ethics**

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<sup>11</sup> Some respondents also refused to endorse the value of land and cattle or having children. This is probably because the poor in South Africa have increasingly relied upon wage labour and the old age pension to survive.

It is time to use the survey findings to evaluate some theoretical accounts of human well-being and development. How far do the items featured in the TVTG and ATG reflect the values and attitudes of ordinary poor people?

### *5.1 The Specifics*

For clarity an effort has been made to summarise the main implications of the survey findings for the TVTG and ATG in Table 1. In some ways Nussbaum and Sen's account of development performs well. Most of the items included on their list of capabilities were spontaneously mentioned by a significant number of people. Further probing revealed that the vast majority of respondents agreed that most of these capabilities are important aspects of a good life. More than 98% of informants endorsed the value of good health, avoiding hunger, shelter, happiness, knowledge and friendship, *inter alia*. Hardly any of the capabilities advanced by Nussbaum and Sen were not ratified by at least 94% of survey participants. Notable exceptions include the capability to live long, opportunities for sexual satisfaction and literary and scientific pursuits, which were rejected by a significant proportion of people. (In fairness to Nussbaum and Sen, there are grounds for questioning the reluctance to endorse the value of sexual fulfilment and living long).

However, Table 1 reveals that the TVTG tends to overlook the value of income, basic necessities (such as clean water and food), adequate housing, education, training and skills, and reasonable job opportunities. The survey findings also confirm that Nussbaum and Sen's list pays insufficient attention to the importance of free time, sleep and rest, relaxation and opportunities for recreation. Yet these

items performed just as well as the capabilities featured in the TVTG. A little prompting revealed that respondents also appreciated the value of civil and political rights and personal safety.<sup>12</sup>

These findings imply that Nussbaum and Sen's list of capabilities should be augmented to include these items. But the ATG does start to take liberties by overstating the potential for achieving a genuine consensus. Some of the people we spoke to objected to the idea of adding the 'capability for exercise' and 'being able to avoid noise pollution' to a broadly universal account of the good. Several respondents also expressed doubts about the value of 'being able to travel' and the 'capability for adventure'. Some reservations were also expressed about the value of watching television and visiting the cinema. These things do not appear to be universal components of a good life (see Table 1).<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide a complete assessment of the TVTG or the ATG. There are some gaps in column 5 of Table 1. This is because it was not practical to inquire about the importance of every single capability described in the TVTG and the ATG. A decision was therefore taken to omit questions about some of the items that are least likely to be contentious such as the ability to move around, being able to use the five senses and the capability to avoid non-beneficial pain. We can infer that some of these capabilities were valued from the responses survey participants provided to related questions. (For example, see the notes in Table 1 for items 2i, 2\*c and 3b). There is also strong anecdotal evidence (from the responses to open questions and secondary sources) to suggest that opportunities for 'Affiliation' and 'Participation in Society' are likely to be broadly universal components of a good life (Table 1, items 5, 5\* and 7b-7c).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Nussbaum has now added some of these things to her original list of capabilities (see Nussbaum, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> It is worth bearing in mind that the majority of respondents value these items (see Table 3).

<sup>14</sup> In retrospect it would probably have been worth asking about 'opportunities for control, skill use and variety in the work place' and the value of natural talents such as 'creativity' and 'intuition'.

There also appears to be a case for revising the specification of some of the capabilities recorded in Table 1. For example, the survey results imply that Sen's capability to 'keep warm' should be supplemented with the 'ability to keep cool'. There also seems to be grounds for supplementing the 'ability to love' with ample opportunities for being loved. The notes in Table 1 indicate how we might go about adjusting some of the other capabilities described in the TVTG and ATG (e.g. items 4e, 7a and 10a). Few revisions of consequence seem to be required.

The survey results also indicate that a wide range of potentially valuable capabilities is not included in Table 1. Some notable examples are summarised in Table 4. In particular the TVTG and ATG do not explicitly include important functionings such as being clean and hygienic, saving money, having confidence, achieving status, enjoying sport(s) and living a good Christian life. Many of the items in Table 4 (such as confidence, peace of mind and helping others) fit naturally into the Aristotelian framework. However, Table 4 also includes ends like being respected, feeling proud and achieving status. These capabilities (vices?) go against the spirit if not the letter of the Aristotelian project, which is committed to the idea of 'virtuous' functioning.

In most cases a precise estimate of how much support each of the items in Table 4 commands is not available. In order to gather this information it would have been necessary to process and analyse the responses to open-ended questions before designing and implementing the final part of the survey. This was not a viable option. Returning to the fieldwork sites would have doubled the cost of the surveys and created logistical problems in terms of re-locating our original informants. However, an attempt was made to assess the value of some capabilities not included in the TVTG or ATG.<sup>15</sup> From this exercise it is possible to conclude that certain items in Table 4 were not regarded as valuable capabilities by the bulk of respondents. More than a third of respondents refused to endorse the value

of status and prestige. A substantial proportion of respondents also failed to endorse the value of children, fashionable clothing and sport (Table 3). While it is incorrect to assume that these ends are without value, there are clear grounds for striking them from a development ethic that aims to be as universal as possible. On the other hand, most survey participants (96.2%) confirmed that ‘adequate living space’ should be included in a practical ethic. **[Insert Table 4]**

## *5.2 General Observations*

We can also draw some more general conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the TVTG and ATG from the findings reviewed above.

### *5.2.1 Relevance for the Poor*

One difficulty is that the TVTG appears to overlook many of the harsh realities facing ordinary poor people. This tends to direct attention away from the capabilities that matter most. For example, consider the function of education. If the items included in Nussbaum and Sen’s development ethic are interpreted literally, then the only obvious role for education is to promote the cognitive functions and the power of practical reason.<sup>16</sup> No explicit provisions are made for acquiring practical skills, improving job prospects or raising earnings. But as we have seen, achieving these objectives are the primary reasons for valuing education and have the potential to make a big difference to the quality of life.

This defect is inherited from the Aristotelian tradition. In ancient times the Greeks looked down on farm hands and manual labourers whose life styles were thought to lack virtue. Aristotle notices

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<sup>15</sup> These items were derived from a series of informed guesses inspired by the results of previous poverty studies.

<sup>16</sup> Nussbaum (1990, p.233) contends that ‘Education is required for each of the major functionings...’

. . . that some forms of labour are incompatible with good human functioning. Because they are monotonous and mindless, and demanding in their time requirements, they leave the worker less than fully human, able to perform other functionings only at a less than fully human level (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 230).

Some passages in Aristotle's writings use this kind of reasoning as a justification for excluding manual labourers and farm workers from civilised society. According to Nussbaum, Aristotle's basic argument runs along the following lines:

We want a good city. A city is good if and only if (all) its parts are good. Manual labourers and farm workers cannot achieve goodness, because their lives lack leisure, and leisure is necessary for virtue. So: don't let these people be parts (citizens) of the city... In other words, don't let them pollute the nice structure [virtuous society] we are creating. They may be necessary props or supports but don't let them be *parts* (Nussbaum, 1988, p.156).

Of course Nussbaum and Sen (like most contemporary thinkers) do not subscribe to such an extreme position. In fact, Nussbaum (1995) not only argues against the prejudicial application of development ethics, but also takes the trouble to demonstrate that Aristotle's basic argument here is inconsistent with other elements in his writings. (For example, his criticism of regimes that fail to set aside some of the city's wealth to subsidise common meals for the poor). In the end Nussbaum effectively concludes that we should design a system that permits 'each and every' manual labourer, farm worker and poor person to 'live well' (Nussbaum, 1988, pp.156-7).

However Nussbaum, like Aristotle before her, does not make any new or discernible provisions in the TVTG for the likes of manual labourers and poor people who have to work for a living. Yet the harsh reality is that a sizeable proportion of the world's population must work and work hard (often in appalling conditions) to survive and make a living. If Nussbaum really wants to make 'each and every' manual labourer and poor person capable of 'living well' her account of the good ought to cater for the prevalence of such life-styles.<sup>17</sup> Not everyone can enjoy a life of leisure and virtue.

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<sup>17</sup> For Nussbaum the role of the state is to ensure that citizens are capable of functioning in the ways specified by the TVTG.

In particular, Nussbaum's TVTG needs to say something solid about the nature and character of working life. In most poor countries employment in the informal sector of the economy accounts for a substantial part of many people's lives. Workers frequently have to put up with poor and hazardous working conditions and perform physically exhausting and monotonous tasks. Many labourers spend more than half the day at work, which leaves insufficient time for sleep and rest, recreation and being with family and friends. For Nussbaum such life styles do not qualify as fully human.<sup>18</sup>

Many kinds of employment however, are compatible not only with human forms of life but also with achieving good forms of life. Some theories of the good have pointed towards the importance of 'job satisfaction' and creating valuable opportunities for 'control, skill use and variety in the work place' (e.g. Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp.199-200). Nussbaum and Sen's own list of capabilities tends to favour certain occupations. For example, teachers and scientists (in marked contrast to manual labourers and farm workers) are particularly well disposed to take part in the pursuit of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and cultivate the power of practical reason (Table 1, items 4 and 6).

Of course the worthy forms of employment implicit in these theories are fundamentally different from the informal mode of employment encountered by the poor. For the vast majority of poor people employment is nothing more than a necessary evil. Wanting a job has very little to do with striving to achieve some 'higher' form of functioning. Earning a living is the central overriding concern. If Nussbaum is serious about improving the quality of life for manual labourers and poor people her development ethic must say something of substance about the importance of working in a good safe environment, reasonable working hours, job security and effective legal protection, *inter alia*. Most survey participants agreed that achieving these ends has the potential to make a big difference to the

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<sup>18</sup> These life-styles violate some of the conditions for crossing Nussbaum's level 1 threshold for 'human' functioning. On this see Nussbaum (1995, pp.76-83).

overall quality of life<sup>19</sup> (see section 4.2.1). While these aspects of life feature prominently in the applied development literature, they are frequently neglected in theoretical accounts of human functioning and philosophical discussions of well-being.

Other examples of the ways in which theories of the good can direct attention away from some of the most pressing aspects of development are not difficult to find. In section 4.2.6 we saw that the most important role for family and kin in poor societies is to provide economic and emotional support. However, the specification of Nussbaum's 'Virtues of Affiliation' suggests a different role for family and friends, which appears to be restricted to providing companionship and opportunities to love others (see Table 1, items 5 and 7). Some theories of the good do acknowledge the importance of receiving care and support from family and friends, but these accounts rarely emphasise these aspects of development.

As far as opportunities for 'affiliation' is concerned, most conceptions of the good focus on the importance of being able to behave and act in certain ways towards other individuals. Consider the emphasis placed upon the value of being friendly, loving others and the virtues of toleration, passion, generosity and sharing in Table 1. Most development ethics say relatively little about the other side of the equation. The emphasis is on *giving* rather than *receiving* of love, friendship and charity. Of course, the evidence presented above implies that this sentiment should be reversed: For those living on the edge what really matters is receiving aid and comfort. The crux of the problem is that some concepts of well-being are more concerned with recommending ways of interacting with other people that are consistent with 'virtuous' functioning, than with promoting the subject's *own* personal well-being.

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<sup>19</sup> Most respondents also agreed that 'job satisfaction' is important.

These difficulties reflect the fact that most theories of the human good abstract from the practical side of survival and development in poor countries. The TVTG, in particular, is not sensitive to some important forms of poverty. No special provisions are made to improve working conditions or guarantee access to certain basic needs. Theoretical accounts of the good also tend to neglect the social consequences of extreme poverty. Yet we have seen that a high premium is often placed on achievements like escaping from stress and frustration and avoiding mischief and crime in poor societies. Most concepts of development also tend to neglect the fact that the family is not always a virtuous institution. For a stark contrast between theoretical and practical conceptions of development compare Table 1 with Table 4.

Nussbaum and Sen both intend the capability approach to be useful for understanding and evaluating different forms of poverty. In fact, Sen started to develop the 'Basic Capability' approach for this very purpose (Sen, 1984; 1999). In particular, Sen focuses on hunger and health in his extensive writings on famine. He has also made much of the importance of literacy, shelter and avoiding shame. The fact that these items appear in the TVTG means that Nussbaum and Sen's development ethic is not completely divorced from some of the most crucial aspects of poverty and deprivation.

Some accounts of development however, do seem to be a little more receptive to the dilemmas and concerns of poor people. Some social scientists have included items like income, basic goods, job opportunities and physical security in their account of the good (e.g. Carr-Hill, 1986; Doyal and Gough, 1991; Dasgupta, 1993). If the capability approach to poverty is to be used to its full potential it must not neglect these (and other) basic achievements. So far Sen has explored the moral and political implications of conceptualising poverty in terms of capability failure. He has not yet developed a

comprehensive list of basic capabilities on which to base his concept of poverty.<sup>20</sup> The survey results summarised above may be able to assist with this task.

### 5.2.2 Physical and Mental Functioning

The evidence considered above confirms that the capability approach should concern itself with the *physical condition* of the person. Many important functions connected with adequate housing and good living conditions are endorsed in Nussbaum and Sen's list of 'bodily capabilities', e.g. health, shelter and keeping warm. The TVTG can also be extended to include physical capabilities such as access to adequate living space or hygienic living conditions (see Table 4).

However, respondents also valued the resources and activities we asked about in order to enhance their *state of mind*. In particular, informants felt that things like money, good jobs, adequate housing, food and clothing, a solid family and recreation help to facilitate 'happiness', 'pleasure' and 'joy'. In fact, no other 'functioning' was associated with so many different activities. This is where the TVTG (like most development ethics) is relatively weak. Respondents also mentioned the importance of relaxation, avoiding stress and frustration, self-confidence and status (see Table 4). It follows that an adequate account of the psychology of well-being should go beyond some basic notion of utility.

The basic need approach commits the same error by focusing on the person's physical condition at the expense of his or her state of mind. In contrast to Welfarism (which merely conflates different psychological functionings), the basic need literature tends to overlook these aspects of well-being altogether. On the other hand, some proponents of the capability approach (including Nussbaum and Sen) do point to the value of happiness, self-respect and relaxation. The capability approach can also

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<sup>20</sup> In the main, Nussbaum and Sen are concerned with the full range of human capabilities that make up a *good* life-style.

be extended to incorporate a diverse range of psychological functionings without conflating or obscuring the different categories.

### 5.2.3 Recreation and 'Good Living'

For most people recreation makes the difference between achieving a minimally decent form of life and a good life. Indeed, for Aristotle and the ancient Greeks a life of leisure is a prerequisite for human flourishing. Yet this is an area in which most contemporary development ethics have little to say. Some of these theories pay lip service to the importance of free time and recreation, but none of these schemes emphasise the contribution that recreation makes to personal well-being. Martha Nussbaum, for example, explicitly sets out to describe the central features of a good human life, and to argue that the state should ensure that each and every individual is able to function accordingly. The problem is that her development ethic says little of substance about the role of leisure. Our findings, however, indicate that development ethics should say something solid about the value of a wide range of recreational activities such as sport, watching television, visiting the cinema, listening to music, singing and dancing and reading books. One of the reasons Nussbaum does not elaborate on the requirement for leisure is to avoid compromising the reach of the TVTG. Relativists would not have to go to much trouble to show that activities such as sport, watching television and reading books are not valued by all people. One possibility is to develop a separate list of capabilities that include some of the more popular recreational pursuits (and 'higher' human functions) that are not generally valued by all individuals and societies. This list could be used to supplement the TVTG and should be determined by local values.

## 6. A Final Word

The fieldwork results presented in this paper offer some interesting and potentially unique insights into human development, and constitute the foundation for constructing a more realistic and relevant development ethic to guide public policy. However, further study is required to test the strength of our findings. In particular, it would be useful to investigate values and attitudes in communities that are not Christian or Westernised. **[Insert Table 1]**

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Table 1 Normative Evaluation of Nussbaum and Sen's list of 'functional capabilities' and the ATG

(A) Physical Capabilities	TVT G	AT G	(4) Item Nominated ?	(5) Level of Consensus	Notes
1. <i>Capability to Live a Long Life</i>	N&S	Yes	?	X	Like 'survival' in section 4 above
2. <i>Bodily Capabilities</i>					
(a) Being able to have good health	N&S	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(b) Being able to be adequately nourished	N&S	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(c) Capability to be free from hunger	S	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(d) Being able to have adequate shelter	N&S	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(e) The power to fulfil one's requirements for clothing	S	Yes	✓	✓	
(f) Being able to keep warm	S	Yes	✓	na	Also 'Keep Cool'
(g) Having opportunities for sexual satisfaction	N	Yes		X	
(h) Having opportunities for choice in matters of reproduction	N	Yes		X	'Family planning' in Table 3
(i) Being able to move from place to place	N&S	Yes		na	But see item 2*(d) below
(j) Being able to sleep and rest	-	Yes	✓	✓	
(k) Being able to exercise	-	Yes	?	X	Like 'Physical fitness'
2* <i>Essential Inputs</i>					
(a) Access to basic necessities, including	-	Yes	✓	na	
(i) Nutritional food	-	Yes	✓	✓✓	'Enough Food'.
(ii) clean water	-	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(iii) clothing	-	Yes	✓	✓	See item 2(e) above
(iv) sanitation and	-	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(v) fuel for cooking and heating	-	Yes	✓	✓	
(b) Access to adequate housing	-	Yes	✓	✓✓	
(c) Access to medical and health care	-	Yes		na	But see item 2(a) above
(d) Access to appropriate means of transportation	-	Yes		✓	

Notes

N = Nussbaum  
S = Sen

Key for Column 4

✓ = Item spontaneously mentioned in interviews  
# = Item spontaneously mentioned in interviews #  
? = Similar to item(s) spontaneously mentioned in interviews #

# and featured in Clark (2002), tables I.1-I.11.

Key for Column 5

✓✓ = Endorsed by at least 98% of all respondents  
✓ = Endorsed by at least 94% of respondents  
X = Not endorsed by at least 94% of respondents  
na = Question not asked.

The category numbers (1, 2, 3, etc) correspond with Nussbaum's (1995) list of capabilities but are grouped under four new headings

Continued/...

Table 1 (cont)

<b>(B) Mental Well-being and Intellectual Development</b>	TVT G	AT G	(4) Item Nominated ?	(5) Level of Consensus	Notes
<i>3. Capacity for Pleasure and Pain</i>					
(a) Being able to have pleasurable experiences	N&S	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	'Joy', 'Happiness'
(b) Being able to avoid unnecessary and non beneficial pain, so far as is possible	N	Yes		na	But see item 3(a) above
<i>4. Cognitive Capabilities (Understanding, Knowledge and Skills)</i>					
(a) Being able to use the five senses	N	Yes		na	
(b) Being able to imagine, think, and to reason	N	Yes	?	✓	Think, learn and gain experience
(c) Being acceptably well informed	S	Yes	?	✓ ✓	'Knowledge'
(d) Being able to read, write, count and communicate	S	Yes	✓	✓	
(e) Being able to use (other) basic skills and abilities	-	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	'Skills', 'qualifications'
(f) Being able to take part in literary and scientific pursuits	S	Yes		X	
<i>4a Other Natural Capabilities (or 'Natural assets')</i>					
(a) Capability to be creative	-	Yes		na	
(b) Capacity for receptiveness, curiosity and intuition	-	Yes		na	
(c) Capacity for discipline, determination and motivation	-	Yes		✓	
<i>4* Essential Inputs</i>					
(a) Access to education	-	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	

Continued/...

Table 1 (cont)

(C) Relating and Interacting	TVTg	ATG	(4) Item Nominated ?	(5) Level of Consensus	Notes
<i>5. Opportunities for Affiliation I (Compassion)</i>					
(a) Being able to have attachments to things and persons outside ourselves	N	Yes	?	✓ ✓	Good family/ personal relationships
(b) Being able to love, to grieve, to experience longing and gratitude; and Capacity for toleration, passion, generosity, appreciation and sharing	N	Yes	?	na	'Love each other', 'being loved'
		Yes	?	na	Support family, help others
<i>5* Essential Inputs</i>					
(a) Access to the care and support of family and friends	-	Yes	✓	na	Also 'good family'
<i>7. Opportunities for Affiliation II (Friendship and Participation in Society)</i>					
(a) Being capable of friendship; and	N	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	'Good friends', 'new friends'
Being able to visit and entertain friends	S	No	✓	✓	
(b) Being able to participate in the life of the community; and	S	No	?	na	Overlaps with items 7(a), 9, and 9*
(c) Being able to participate in certain meaningful social activities	-	Yes	?	na	
<i>7* Essential Inputs</i>					
(a) Being able to obtain and participate in employment	-	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	
(b) Access to good working conditions	-	Yes		✓ ✓	See section 4.2.1
(c) Opportunities for control, skill use and variety in the work place	-	Yes		na	
<i>8. Interaction with the Environment</i>					
(a) Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature	N	Yes		✓ ✓	
(b) Being able to live in a clean environment; and	-	Yes	✓	✓	Being 'clean and hygienic'
Being able to breathe unpolluted air	S	Yes		✓ ✓	
(c) Capability to avoid noise pollution	-	Yes		X	
<i>9. Opportunities for Recreational Activities</i>					
(a) Having opportunities for free time	-	Yes	?	✓	'time to do important things'
(b) Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities	N	Yes	✓	✓	Also 'social activities'
(c) Being able to relax, daydream and remember	-	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	'Relaxation'
(d) Being able to absorb, appreciate and enjoy nature	-	Yes	?	na	'taking walks', 'gardening', 'nature reserves'
(e) Being able to respond to forms of beauty	-	Yes		na	
(f) Capability for adventure	-	Yes	✓	X	
<i>9* Activities Worthy of Investigation</i>					
(a) Being able to travel and go on vacation	S	Yes	✓	X	
(b) Being able to play games	-	Yes	✓	na	
(c) Being able to watch television and go to the cinema	-	Yes	✓	X	

(d) Being able to go to pubs, clubs and parties	-	Yes	na
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Continued/...

Table 1 (cont)

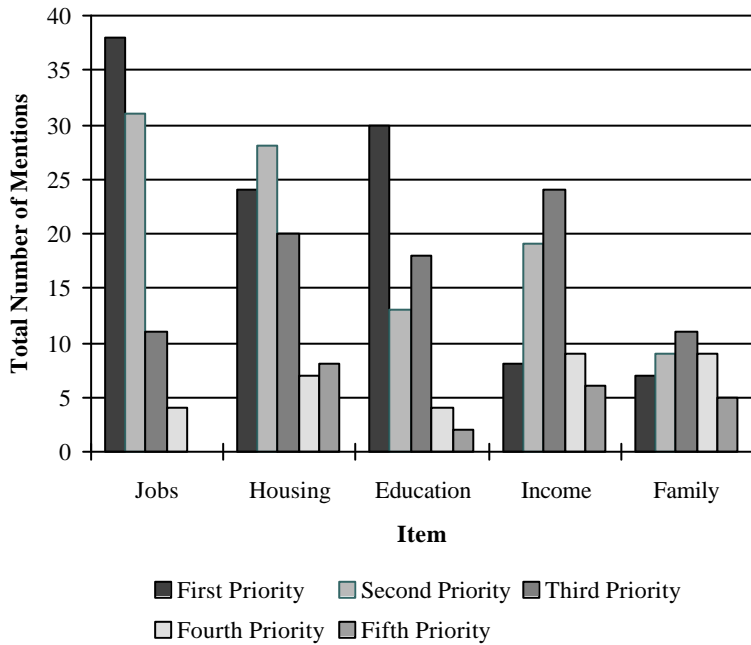
<b>(D) Personal Autonomy and Freedom</b>	TVTG	ATG	(4) Item Nominated ?	(5) Level of Consensus	Notes
<i>6. Capacity for Practical Reason</i>					
(a) Being able to form a conception of the good	N&S	Yes		na	But see items 6(b) and 6(c)
(b) Capability to choose; ability to form goals, commitments, values	S	Yes		✓	
(c) Being able to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's own life	N&S	Yes		✓ ✓	
<i>10. Separateness (Negative Freedom and Civil and Political Rights)</i>					
(a) Being able to live one's own life and nobody else's; freedom to 'rule one's own life'	N	Yes	?	✓ ✓	'Independence'
(b) Being able to live in one's very own surroundings and context; freedom from external interference with one's own affairs, including	N	Yes	?	✓ ✓	As above
(i) Physical security (personal safety): being able to avoid violence, physical harm and injury	-	Yes	✓	✓ ✓	
(ii) Political rights (right to vote, hold public office, freedom of speech and assembly)	-	Yes		✓ ✓	
(iii) Equality of opportunity and social mobility	-	Yes	✓	✓	'Opportunities for advancement'
(iv) Right to hold private property	-	Yes		✓ ✓	
<i>11. Self-respect</i>					
(a) Capability to have self-respect	S	Yes	✓	✓	
(b) Capability 'to appear in public without shame'	S	Yes		na	But see Section 4.2.5.2
<i>12. Capability to Function (Positive Freedom)</i>					
(a) Ability to achieve valuable functionings	S	Yes	✓	na	Ability to 'do the things you want'
<i>12* Essential Inputs</i>					
(a) Access to economic resources including					
(i) income and wealth	-	Yes	✓	✓	'Good/ more income'
(ii) goods and services	-	Yes	✓	✓	
(b) Access to discretionary income, and luxury and consumer durable goods, such as	-	Yes	✓	X	'luxury goods'
(i) Cars	-	Yes	✓	na	
(ii) Bicycles	-	Yes	✓	na	
(iii) Radios	-	Yes	✓	na	
(iv) televisions	-	Yes	✓	na	
(v) refrigerators, washing machines, irons, kettles, cookers, vacuum cleaners	-	Yes	?	na	'Electrical appliances'
(vi) telephones	-	Yes		na	

*Table 2 Normative Ranking of the Top 30 Aspects of a 'Good Life' in Murraysburg and Wallacedene*

1 Jobs	16 Support of family
2 Housing	17 Relaxation
3 An education	18 Good area to live/ live elsewhere
4 Adequate/ regular income	19 Nice/ good clothes
5 A good family	20 Security/ safety
6 Living a religious/ Christian life	21 Having/ caring for children
7 Good health	22 Respect (especially for others)
8 Enough food	23 Sport(s)
9 Happiness/ joy	24 To get married
10 Love (each other)	25 Independence (especially financial)
11 Good friends	26 Peace in the household/ community
12 Education for children	27 Recreation
13 Motor car	28 Communication (between people)
14 Owning a business	29 Acquiring skills/ qualifications
15 Understanding (between people)	30 Furniture

Source: fieldwork database

*Figure 1 The Top Five Aspects of a 'Good Life' in Murraysburg and Wallacedene*



Source: fieldwork database

*Table 3 Normative Evaluation of 38 different 'functional capabilities' in Murraysburg and Wallacedene*

	PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE				
	Essential	Valuable	Unimportant	Undesirable	No Response
1 Jobs	89.8	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
2 Access to clean water and sanitation	81.5	17.2	0.6	0.0	0.6
3 Housing and shelter	93.6	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
4 Family and friends	70.1	29.3	0.6	0.0	0.0
5 Personal safety and physical security	78.3	20.4	0.0	0.0	1.3
6 An education	93.6	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
7 Happiness	70.1	28.0	1.3	0.0	0.6
8 Good health	82.8	16.6	0.0	0.0	0.6
9 Sleep and rest	63.7	33.8	0.6	0.0	1.9
10 Fuel for cooking and heating	52.2	43.3	3.2	0.0	1.3
11 Access to family planning	38.2	44.6	7.0	0.0	8.9
12 Exercise	42.7	49.0	7.6	0.0	0.6
13 Capacity to think, reason and make choices	56.1	40.8	1.9	0.0	1.3
14 Sexual satisfaction	14.7	35.7	25.5	3.2	21.0
15 Basic clothing	63.7	30.6	4.5	0.0	1.3
16 Fashionable clothing	27.4	42.7	28.7	0.0	1.3
17 Freedom/ self-determination	63.1	35.0	1.9	0.0	0.0
18 Income and wealth	64.3	29.9	3.8	0.0	1.9
19 Consumer durable and luxury goods	29.9	44.0	21.7	1.3	3.2
20 Self-respect	76.4	20.4	1.3	0.0	1.9
21 Land and cattle	27.4	42.0	26.1	2.6	1.9
22 Living in a clean natural environment	67.5	28.0	1.9	0.0	2.6
23 Coca-Cola (or other fizzy drink)	19.8	35.0	38.9	4.5	1.9
24 Transportation	54.8	40.1	3.2	0.0	1.9
25 (All weather) roads	52.2	41.4	2.6	0.0	3.8
26 Watching sport(s)	40.8	40.1	14.7	2.6	1.9
27 Playing sport(s)	43.3	34.4	19.1	1.3	1.9
28 Electricity	78.3	20.4	0.0	0.0	1.3
29 Free time/ recreation	41.4	53.5	3.8	0.0	1.3
30 Having children	40.8	33.1	15.3	1.3	9.6
31 Watching TV/ going to the cinema	29.9	47.1	17.8	1.9	3.2
32 Drinking alcohol	3.8	7.0	33.8	54.8	0.6
33 Living long	36.3	40.1	15.9	5.7	1.9
34 Smoking cigarettes	5.1	8.3	31.2	54.1	1.3
35 Property rights (right to own personal property)	61.8	36.3	1.3	0.0	0.6
36 Equal opportunities for personal advancement	58.6	38.9	2.6	0.0	0.0
37 Determination, motivation, self-reliance	58.6	38.2	1.9	0.0	1.3
38 Political rights (right to vote, hold public office and freedom of speech and association)	65.6	29.3	3.8	1.3	0.0

Sample = 157

Percentages rounded to one decimal place

Source: Fieldwork Database

Table 4 A Selection of Other Items Nominated as Valuable 'Functional Capabilities'

<p><b>(A) Physical Capabilities</b></p> <p>Being clean and hygienic</p> <p>Adequate living space</p> <p><i>Inputs:</i></p> <p>To save money Investment/ insurance Acquiring assets</p> <p>Pay-off debts, bonds, loans/ settle bills Pay rent</p> <p>Having a business</p> <p>Good/ fashionable clothes</p> <p>Furniture</p> <p>Motor car</p>	<p><b>(B) Mental States and Intellectual Development</b></p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Peace of mind/ less worries Avoiding stress and frustration</p> <p>Feel safe and secure</p> <p>Status and prestige Feel proud (pride)</p> <p>Feel good</p> <p>To be somebody/ to be successful To be reliable/ responsible</p> <p>Privacy</p> <p>To broaden view of life</p> <p>Satisfying appetite</p>
<p><b>(C) Interacting/ Relating</b></p> <p>Living a religious/ Christian life</p> <p>Strong family relations Emotional security, moral support and comfort Avoiding loneliness Family provide advice and help solve problems</p> <p>Having children Provide/ care for children</p> <p>Support/ care for family and friends Assist/ help others</p> <p>Gain respect Mutual respect Respect others</p> <p>Be successful/ achieve something</p> <p>Living in a good area ('live elsewhere')</p> <p>Keep occupied/ avoid boredom Keep away from crime, mischief and trouble</p> <p><i>Inputs:</i></p> <p>Sport(s)</p> <p>Music, singing and dancing</p>	<p><b>(D) Personal Autonomy and Freedom</b></p> <p>Independence 1) Self sufficiency/ earn own money 2) 'Do own thing'</p> <p>Convenience</p> <p>Good/ secure future prospects</p> <p>To comply with social protocol To be like others/ fit in Being fashionable/ having a good image Being neat and tidy/ smart and presentable Looking attractive/ beautiful</p> <p>Facing a challenge</p>