"Political Culture" and Well-Being: Beyond Government Services

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1. Introduction

As I understand it, I have been invited to present an overview of some primarily objective indicator work dealing with a mixed array of areas of concern related human well-being, e.g., social cohesion, discrimination, democracy, minority rights, gender equity and arts-related and other kinds of cultural activities. Since there were many more areas than anyone could hope to cover in a single, relatively short paper, I focused on only a few areas and produced a relatively long paper. The central topics concern discrimination in general, gender equity and arts-related activities in particular. For each of these topics I tried to give an overview that included (a) references to more detailed useful publications, (b) descriptions of basic conceptual and/or political problems, (c) lists of existing or proposed indicators and indexes, (d) some existing or proposed general frameworks for indicators and indexes. Brief summaries of the ten sections of the paper follow.

The next section (2) begins with a quotation from the eighth century BCE poet Hesiod which provides a nice reminder of our common humanity across 2800 years. Many readers will be familiar with a general approach to indicators development called 'status-response', according to which one tries to identify measures of the current status of some area of concern and social or individual responses to it, e.g., measures of unemployment and policies and/or programs initiated to address the problem. My version of this approach considers people's actual living conditions and what people make of those conditions, and it uses the somewhat colorful language of Real versus Fools' Paradise and Hell. Within that general approach, I list 19 critical questions that all indicators developers have to address, wittingly or unwittingly. Different people will answer the questions in different ways, and the list is offered only as a heuristic device to aid development work.

The section on ethnicity, social cohesian and civic participation (3) begins by reviewing some of the definitional problems and political assumptions raised by these terms. It is useful to be reminded that both inclusion and exclusion can be oppressive, depending on who is choosing whom, by what criteria, for what purpose and with what consequences. Some of the research reviewed suggests that individual and community social/political/economic performance is only slightly related to social cohesion, and that performance has more influence on cohesion than *vice versa*. Other research suggests that the relationships among all the variables concerning civic participation and its positive, neutral or negative effects are extremely context-dependent, making broad generalizations hazardous.

The section on modern prejudice and discrimination (4) begins with the suggestion that specism, racism, classism, sexism and rationalism tend to co-exist and share common roots like branches of a tree. It is, therefore, useful for those who would resist such anomalies to collaborate with others in designing comprehensive policies and programs that address the issues in full measure. Since several researchers have found that people revealing relatively high levels of prejudice against certain groups also have relatively optimistic and unrealistic beliefs about how well off those groups are, it is vitally important to get reliable and valid measures of the relative status of all groups. The section ends with some observations on ableism as a particularly invisible but virulent form of discrimination.

The search for good measures of the relative status of all groups leads to a section (5) reviewing issues related to the unequal and possibly inequitable average levels and distributions of certain things, in certain areas of concern, for certain groups. Around the world and even across time some groups are usually more vulnerable than others, namely, those who may be

distinguished by ethnic or racial background, gender or sex, class, religion, age, disability and sexual orientation. Reaching agreement among all stakeholders on the best way to identify vulnerable groups and to assess their current status level in any domain of interest as appropriate or not are the most salient necessary conditions for progress. Inequalities in measures of central tendencies and distributions are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions of inequities or discrimination. They are the places to begin serious consideration of the possibility that some people are not being treated equitably or justly, and that perhaps rights are being violated.

Perhaps the most frequently studied vulnerable group in the past 40 years is that of women and girls. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to devote a section (6) of this review to the great variety of ways that have been used and proposed to measure gender equity and its absence, discrimination against women and girls. Because of the similarities among the causes and consequences of discrimination against any group, it is possible to use measures of equitable or inequitable treatment of women and girls as templates for measuring such treatment of other groups. Thus, in this section there are many measures of gender equity that might be applied with slight modification to other vulnerable groups, e.g., indexes of economic, workload, training, political, legal and overall equality.

Although this review is supposed to (and does) focus primarily on objective indicators, a brief discussion of some of the research connecting objective and subjective indicators seems to be appropriate (7). I have only presented some material around time use and spousal satisfaction with the distribution of housework, and the impact of feelings of equitable treatment and social support on health.

The section on arts-related activities and culture (8) is perhaps more of a *cri de coeur* than a dispassionate review of the issues. Compared to other areas of concern, arts-related activities have been significantly under-studied. Reading report after report from international, national, provincial/state and municipal levels of analysis, and typically finding nothing at all about the arts or only figures on expenditures, revenues, employment and attendance, one almost suspects willful neglect. If a visitor from another planet read the social reports of the earth's inhabitants, the visitor would get the impression that we earthlings do not care about the *design* of our clothes, offices, universities, homes, court houses, hospitals, vehicles, cities and parks; that we do not read books, magazines or newspapers; that we do not care about music, listening to it, playing instruments or even dancing; that we have no theatres nor any appreciation of dramatic performance; that we have no interest in painting or sculpture; that the very ideas of beauty and ugliness do not seem to have any salience; and worst of all, that we don't even care what we eat so long as it keeps us alive. Reading our social reports, a visitor might think we are, after all, a decidedly if not deliberately dull lot. We belong in Dante's outermost ring of hell with all those grey philosophers advocating an equally grey existence.

It need not be so. The brief section on arts-related activities suggests a variety of ways to investigate the impact of such things on the quality of people's lives. The relatively little work that has been done suggests that a great deal can be learned about public versus private goods, and about diverse ways of evaluating such things. Enthusiasts for civic engagement might be surprised to discover, for example, that the time spent on singing in a choir may be negatively correlated with singers' life satisfaction. As well, the non-market, social, existence, option, bequest, intrinsic and/or moral value of arts-related activities and facilities, like most if not all public goods, may be even more important than their market value.

The reviews presented in the last three sections (9, 10, 11) of the paper are offered to illustrate the central core of areas of concern for people around the world and the variety of approaches to framing and discussing the issues. There are collections of indicators and indexes from international organizations (governmental and NGOs), all levels of government and individuals. Some reviews are cited of subjective indicators of government performance and trust in institutions, and some mention is made of reviews of specific domains. Usually I would organize a literature review from the most general to the most specific material. However, I suppose that the most likely readers of this review will be familiar with many of the documents cited in these sections. So, they have been placed at the end rather than the beginning.

2. Background Assumptions

From ancient Greece to today, and around the globe, most people's understanding of a good life or a good quality of life is very similar. The poems of Hesiod of Ascra, who lived in the late eighth and early seventh century BCE, offer several illustrations. For example, consider the following passages from his *Works and Days.*

> "Those who give straight judgments to foreigners
> and citizens and do not step at all aside from justice
> have a flourishing city and the people prosper in it.
> There is Peace, the nurse of children, throughout the land,
> and wide-seeing Zeus never ordains harsh war for them.
> Famine and Disaster never attend men of straight judgment,
> but with good cheer they feed on the fruits of their labors.
> For these the Earth bears the means of life in abundance. . .
> But for those who have thoughts of evil violence and
> cruel deeds, wide-seeing Zeus son of Kronos has ordained justice.
> Often indeed the entire city of an evil man suffers, . . .
> Famine and Disease together, and the people perish.
> Women do not give birth, but houses are diminished. . ." (McKirahan, 1994, p.14)

Familiar themes of the good life are cited in these lines, i.e., flourishing and prosperous communities, populated by honest people, living in safety and peace, enjoying the fruits of their productive and reproductive labour, without worries about where the next meal will come from, with an absence of disease and with justice for all.

Generally speaking, the quality of life of a person or a nation (or a community, city or region) is a function of two variables, the actual living conditions of the person or people in a community, and what that person or those people make of those conditions. What a person or community makes of those conditions is in turn a function of how the conditions are perceived, what the person or community thinks and feels about those conditions, and finally, what a person or community does.

Taking the two main variables together (conditions of life and what people make of them), one can construct four scenarios which, with some exaggeration and over-simplification, may be described as different kinds of Paradise and Hell.

1. If one's living conditions are good, and one accurately perceives and thinks about them, feels good and acts appropriately in those conditions, we may describe that as 'Real Paradise'.

2. If one's living conditions are bad, and one accurately perceives and thinks about them, feels bad and acts appropriately in those conditions, we may describe that as 'Real Hell'.
3. If one's living conditions are bad, and one inaccurately perceives and thinks about them, feels good and acts inappropriately, we may describe that as the classical 'Fool's Paradise'.
4. If one's living conditions are good, and one inaccurately perceives and thinks about them, feels bad and acts inappropriately, we may describe that as a 'Fool's Hell'.

In each of these scenarios, the evaluative terms 'good' and 'bad' are used in two senses. In both senses, 'good' and 'bad' have the usual positive and negative connotations, respectively. Regarding living conditions, 'good' may be understood as 'life sustaining' in a broad and descriptive sense. Regarding people's feelings, 'good' may be understood as experientially pleasant in a descriptive sense. Besides these two relatively descriptive senses of 'good' (life sustaining and experientially pleasant), there is an evaluative sense recognizable insofar as one grants that some lives are not only longer and pleasant but richly or poorly endowed with mental and physical advantages and disadvantages of various kinds, with relatively vast or meager opportunities to put endowments to work in the pursuit of noble or base purposes, courageously or cowardly, and wisely or foolishly. Just as there are individuals with developed characters displaying a propensity to choose morally right or just actions, for the right reason and with the right attitude (as Aristotle might have said), there are communities or societies with developed cultures that provide socio-economic and political environments conducive to nourishing such individuals. Clearly, then, when we speak of a good quality of life for individuals or societies, we are speaking about life in both descriptive and evaluative terms.

In the best of all possible worlds, Real Paradise, people would have perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions consistent with each other and appropriate to their living conditions. Given the great variety of living conditions, perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions, it is impossible to make the crucial evaluative term in the previous sentence, 'appropriate', precise. In different particular circumstances, the specification of what is appropriate to perceive, think, feel and do may be different, as well as constructed as different by different people or even the same people in different circumstances. Although this is not particularly satisfying, it is an accurate description of the human condition. Aristotle addressed the problem by recommending consultations with the best people, in the sense of the most virtuous or excellent people. (Somewhat analogously and at least as dissatisfying, some epistemologists suggest the need for "ideal observers" to provide the foundations of knowledge.) Unless one believes (contrary to the assumption of this essay) that there is, finally, a naturalistic basis and solution to moral problems, it may not be possible to go father than Aristotle at this point. In any case, this is not the place to attempt a final resolution of the problem of the ultimate basis of morality. Let us return, therefore, to the four scenarios.

While the first two cases are uncontroversial (notwithstanding the foundational issues in the previous paragraph), the second two are not. In fact, what is most interesting about the second two cases is that some people seem very supportive of one or the other as *ideal.* This is revealed most clearly by the numbers of publications around the world in which the quality of people's lives is measured on scales consisting only of 'objective indicators' (e.g., counting things like crime rates, mortality and morbidity rates, education achievement rates, per capita income) or only of 'subjective indicators' (e.g., people's reported satisfaction with their jobs,

health, government services, life as a whole or overall happiness). While there are many researchers who recommend the use of both kinds of indicators and there are some mixed indicator sets, there are many more in which one or the other sort of indicator is simply omitted from consideration. Because it is impossible to make sense of the classical notion of a Fool's Paradise unless both sorts of indicators are considered, a reasonable set of quality of life indicators should include both sorts. The good life that we should want and achieve for all people is not just a life in which people feel good, no matter how terrible their real life conditions are, but one in which they feel good with the best of all reasons, because the objectively measurable conditions of their lives are worthy of a positive assessment.

The identification and measurement of a good life meeting the conditions just specified requires communities of people to reach agreement on acceptable answers to the critical questions listed in Exhibit 1 and then to follow through with appropriate collective action. The questions are not categorized or presented in any particular order of priority or importance because no single principle or set of principles seems sufficient to provide a single rank order of the total set. Some are clearly logically prior to others in the sense that answers to some must be obtained before others, e.g., one cannot select measures of causal interaction (#12) or benefits and costs (#8) without knowing what sorts of things (#5) have been selected for possible interaction or evaluation. Other ordering principles would lead to different orders, e.g., one might suppose that the most important question in the lot is who gets to assess the adequacy of answers to all other questions (#18), or perhaps, who is entitled to any consideration at all (#1). As well, it is unlikely that this set of questions or their answers are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Nevertheless, for all their limitations, in order to identify and measure *a life worthy of pursuit*, an individual or community must decide (most likely among other things):

Exhibit 1: Critical Questions

1. *Recipient population*: Who should be included as a recipient of benefits and/or burdened with costs?
2. *Spatial coordinates*: Across what amount of space should one look, from the actors' own homes and backyards to the whole world?
3. *Temporal coordinates*: Across what length of time should one look, from now into the future?
4. *Population composition*: How should the affected individuals be characterized, if at all, in terms of sex, age, education, ethnic background, income and so on?
5. *Domains of life composition*: What domains of life should be examined?
6. *Objective versus subjective indicators*: Should one ask recipients how they feel or what they think (subjective indicators) about how they or others are affected by actors' action, or is it enough to merely observe their behaviour or other things that may be affected (objective indicators), e.g., what people think or feel about being unemployed versus unemployment rates?
7. *Input versus output indicators*: Should one measure only what one invests in actions, what comes out of the investments, or both?
8. *Benefits and costs*: What particular kinds of benefits and costs should be counted?
9. *Discount rates*: How much should one discount costs and benefits delivered some time in the future, compared to those delivered today?
10. *Measurement scales*: How should one choose the best sort of scale or measuring devices for the diverse measurements to be taken?
11. *Distributions:* How should central tendencies and variations be measured in diverse fields?

12. *Interaction effects*: How should one measure causal interactions in any particular array of phenomena?
13. *Probabilities:* What interpretations of 'probability' should be employed and how?
14. *Confidence levels*: What level of confidence should one require to accept any particular claim?
15. *Research procedures*: What adequacy criteria should be used to assess the acceptability of any procedures employed?
16. *Research personnel*: How should one choose one's experts, if indeed experts are to be chosen at all?
17. *Aggregation function*: How should all the diverse elements of the assessment be aggregated?
18. *Assessment assessor*: Who should decide (audit) if any assessments are adequate or appropriate?
19. *Assessment criteria*: What criteria should be used to assess (audit) the adequacy of assessments, the adequacy of the procedures used for the audit, indeed, the adequacy of the answers to all the previous 18 questions?

The last question reveals the threat of either an infinite regress, a circular argument or an arbitrary end to analysis. Clearly, none of these options is very attractive, but it is in the very nature of foundational work that such a point must be reached. In any event, long before individuals or communities reach their most basic assumptions, considerable progress can be made in the interests of improving the quality of people's lives. Accepting the fact that our capacity is practically always limited in matters of public policy-making to improve the quality of life, the most one can hope for from any review of critical issues or questions is that it will serve as a good heuristic device for calling attention to such issues. If such devices turn out to be inadequate, which is highly probable, our clear duty is to replace them with those that are more adequate. As we search for better instruments to build a better world for our own and future generations, we will share the accumulated wisdom of previous generations who pursued the same goals and, like them, we will hope that reason aided by compassion and hard work will bring all the earth's inhabitants nearer to a good life.

3. Ethnicity, Social Cohesion and Civic Participation

In 1922 the pioneer sociologist Max Weber (1971) complained that while the concept of an ethnic group was practically inescapable, it was fraught with so much ambiguity that its scientific usefulness was severely limited. According to Bader (1997, p.106) "One main problem recognized long ago [by Weber] has always been that the demarcation of ethnicity from other ascriptive categories in general, and from racialized, national, cultural and religious categories in particular, was always unclear, in everyday language as well as in scientific discourse". Nearly eighty years after Weber's classic treatise was published Bader (1997, p.104) wrote that "Ethnicity is a highly complex and very much contested concept".

If one consults the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, one finds the following apparently simple definition: "An ethnic group is a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own" (Sills 1965, p.167). In fact, the definition is deceptively simple because the 'distinct category' can be specified by "a multiplicity of factors, among them language use, religious practice, endogamy, parochial education, choice of ingroup friends, use of ethnic media, and participation in ethnic voluntary

organizations" (Driedger 1996, p.130). Later in his book Driedger (1996, p.150) offered the following definition.

> "Ethnic identification may be defined as a positive personal attitude and attachment to a group with whom the individual believes he has a common ancestry based on shared characteristics and shared sociocultural experiences. Such identification can take place at various levels, ranging from persons to groups and categories such as ethnicity. Similarly there may be identification with a territory, ethnic institutions, culture, historical symbols, ideology, or leaders."

Isajiw (1997) claimed that for many years the concept of ethnicity has been embedded in 'the modernity paradigm' originally developed by Talcott Parsons (1951). In this paradigm,

> "...the transition to modernity is a transition from particularism to universalism. Included in this is a transition from an emphasis on ascription to an emphasis on performance, from an emphasis on general, diffuse social roles to the stressing of specialized, 'expert' roles, from expression of feelings to control of feelings. Last but not least, modernity moves from an emphasis on collectivity or community to an emphasis on individuality, individual independence and individual achievement.
>
> In the modernity paradigm, ethnicity, ethnic groups and ethnic identity were all matters connected with particularism, with who one is, with diffuse responsibility, emotion, community or collectivity, in short with pre-modernity, not modernity. Ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic groups were all seen as being dysfunctional for modernity, as nonadaptive, as a drawback to equality and social mobility and to full participation in society. The term 'ethnic' came to be identified with minorities only, and it came to be assumed that as modernity progresses ethnic groups change and eventually disappear... . Many still accept this paradigm, even though we have entered into the age of post-modernity.
>
> The threshold to post-modernity in regard to ethnicity was crossed when both the intellectuals and the politicians came to realize that not only has ethnicity not disappeared as modernity advanced but rather it has remained and often reappeared and asserted itself in societies in which it was thought to be unimportant or already gone. More than ever, the West has become aware that ethnic conflicts are ubiquitous and that societies must find ways of understanding ethnic diversity, of foreseeing the worst ethnic conflicts and of equitably incorporating diverse ethnicities into societal structures" (Isajiw 1997, pp.2-3).

The problem of 'equitably incorporating diverse ethnicities' into greater communities satisfying the needs and wants of all members occurs at all levels of human aggregations from rural villages to great cities and countries, including intra- and international relations. The concept of social incorporation is supposed "to be broader and more useful than the concept of assimilation" (Isajiw 1997, p.5). According to Herberg (1989, p.8), " 'Assimilation'... means the process whereby members of an ethnicity take on and celebrate the cultural attributes of another group, often the 'dominant' group, and, in this, abandon the values, attitudes, expectations, and/or practices of their original heritage". He contrasts 'assimilation' with 'integration', which he defines as

> "the time-limited, temporary or irregular participation by members of an ethnicity in the institutions of the entire city or society or other groups, but without any necessary implication that the members' loyalty toward or practice of the group's culture is endangered.
>
> ...such things as are either mandated by law or impractical to avoid by most ethnicities in most locales: formal education of ethnic youth in the 'public' (including religiously 'separate') schools; participation in local, provincial or federal politics; participation in the economy, and so on" (Herberg 1989, p.8).

Isajiw's concept of social incorporation is very similar if not identical to Herberg's concept of integration. It also seems that researchers who write about social cohesion are dealing with practically the same idea. The antithesis of social cohesion is social exclusion, and according to Silver (1994, pp.540-542),

> "The multiple, often contradictory, connotations and synonyms of exclusion transform it into an 'essentially contested concept', in that the proper use of it 'inevitably involves endless disputes' (Gallie, 1956). Essentially contested concepts are usually appraisive, complex, open in meaning, and explicable in terms of their parts, so that selecting from among the mutually exclusive meanings of exclusion necessarily entails the adoption of particular values and world views. ...
>
> Those unfamiliar with the term exclusion often ask the question 'exclusion from what?' since virtually any social distinction or affiliation excludes somebody. ...consider just a few of the things the literature says people may be excluded from: a livelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property, credit, or land; housing; the minimal or prevailing consumption level; education, skills, and cultural capital; the benefits provided by the welfare state; citizenship and equality before the law; participation in the democratic process; public goods; the nation or the dominant race; the family and sociability; humane treatment, respect, personal fulfilment, understanding. ...Like deviance or anomie, exclusion both threatens and reinforces social cohesion. The inverse of exclusion is thus 'integration' and the process of attaining it, 'insertion'. ...To the extent that group boundaries impede individual freedom to participate in social exchanges, exclusion is a form of 'discrimination'."

Similarly, in an excellent review of the social cohesion literature from a political point of view Jensen (1998, p.38) wrote that

> "This is not the first time social cohesion has seized the attention of policy communities. The concept has gained popularity as a way of maintaining social order each time that economic turbulence and political adjustment has loosened the mooring of familiar patterns and practices. At the end of the 19th century, in the 1930s and 1940s, and again today the concept of social cohesion appeals to social commentators who fear social turmoil associated with new forms of production, patterns of gender and other social relations, and population movement. At each of these times popular discourse expressed fears and uncertainty, that 'things were falling apart.' In response, some - but always only some - analysts sought mechanisms and institutions that might foster shared values and commitment to community. ...Therefore, a first general conclusion of this paper is that social cohesion remains a contested concept. Those who use it demonstrate an analytical proclivity for seeing social order as the consequence of values more than interests, of consensus more than conflict and of social practices more than political action. Other ways of seeing may have been displaced by enthusiasm for social cohesion but they remain as alternative voices in on-going conversations. It is for this reason that Part III ends the paper on a note of concern about too enthusiastic an embrace of an agenda that fails to acknowledge continuing claims for social justice and diverse values, particularly in a multinational and modern country such as Canada."

One of the most interesting reviews of the literature on social cohesion was written by Mullen and Copper (1994). These authors did a careful meta-analysis of 49 studies of the relationship between group cohesiveness and performance in order to measure the extent to which "a cohesive group will exhibit successful task performance". The 49 studies contained 66 distinct tests of the relationship and involved 8,702 subjects. Sixty-one (92%) of those tests resulted in a significant positive cohesiveness-performance effect averaging about $r = .25$, i.e., only 6% of the variance in either variable might be explained by the other. Besides demonstrating the existence of the relationship, Mullen and Copper showed that while the causal arrows run in both directions, successful performance had a greater impact on group cohesiveness than the latter had on successful performance. The difference in the relative

strength of the impacts was only a couple of percentage points. Concluding their investigation, they claimed that

> "...the studies integrated here suggest that what distinguishes the groups that perform well is not that their members interact with smooth coordination, like one another, or are proud of their group but that they are committed to successful task performance and regulate their behavior toward that end" (Mullen and Copper 1994, p.225).

There is an interesting similarity between these results and those presented by Iaffaldano and Muchinsky (1985). These authors did a meta-analysis of 217 studies of the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance, and they found an average zero-order correlation of $r = .17$. That is, only about 3% of the variance in either variable can be explained by the other. So, just as groups may perform their tasks well even though their members do not particularly like each other, individuals may perform their tasks well even though they do not get much satisfaction from them. Of course, if all other things are equal, it is preferable to enjoy one's work and the company of one's colleagues, but very often all other things are not equal and one should not assume that the absence of such enjoyment implies poor performance (i.e., a dysfunctional individual or community) any more than the presence of such enjoyment implies good performance (i.e., a highly productive individual or community).

Much of the recent literature around the concept of social capital (e.g., Putnam 1993, 1995, 1996) is focused primarily on the upside, sometimes real and sometimes imagined, of social incorporation, integration or cohesion, too often in the absence of any realistic assessment of any downside. In a critical analysis of some of the key research studies involving this idea, Portes (1998, pp.2-3) asserted that

> "During recent years, the concept of social capital has become one of the most popular exports from sociological theory into everyday language. ...Despite its popularity, the term does not embody any idea really new to sociologists. That involvement and participation in groups can have positive consequences for the individual and the community is a staple notion, dating back to Durkheim's emphasis on group life as an antidote to anomie and self-destruction and to Marx's distinction between atomized class-in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-itself. ...
>
> The novelty and heuristic power of social capital come from two sources. First, the concept focuses attention on the positive consequences of sociability while putting aside its less attractive features. Second, it places those positive consequences in the framework of a broader discussion of capital and calls attention to how such nonmonetary forms can be important sources of power and influence, like the size of one's stock holdings or bank account. The potential fungibility of diverse sources of capital reduces the distance between the sociological and economic perspectives and simultaneously engages the attention of policy-makers seeking less costly, non-economic solutions to social problems."

So, to individuals' and communities' stocks of financial, physical and human capital, one may add social capital, and to some extent deficits of one sort may be compensated by surpluses of another sort. What's more, unlike physical capital stocks, for example, which tend to decrease with use, social capital stocks tend to increase with use. Exchange networks grow in numbers and variety of participants, they grow across political jurisdictions, and communication becomes easier as trust builds with each successful exchange. In other words, social capital is a species of public good, like morality, love and knowledge (Michalos 1995).

Portes (1998, pp.21-22) concluded his review by observing that

> "Social ties can bring about greater control over wayward behavior and provide privileged access to resources; they can also restrict individual freedom and bar outsiders from gaining access to the same resources through particularistic preferences. For this reason, it seems preferable to approach these manifold processes as social facts to be studied in all their complexity, rather than as examples of value. A more dispassionate stance will allow analysts to consider all facets of the event in question and prevent turning the ensuing literature into an unmitigated celebration of community. Communitarian advocacy is a legitimate political stance; it is not good social science. As a label for the positive effects of sociability, social capital has, in my view, a place in theory and research provided that its different sources and effects are recognized and that their downsides are examined with equal attention."

Schugurensky (2003) reviewed studies of civic participation and discovered that the phrase seemed to mean somewhat different things to different writers. To some, 'civic participation' suggested certain political rights (e.g., the right to vote, run for office, join political parties, engage in political campaigns) and responsibilities (e.g., voting, becoming informed about political issues and party platforms, engaging others in political discussions and obeying the law). To others, it suggested a broader array of activities, including active participation in the organized life of one's community, e.g., in service clubs, recreation centres or associations, arts councils, City Council advisory committees, parent-teacher associations, neighborhood associations, environmental groups and community planning councils.

In Canada, at least, one finds a considerable difference in the level of civic participation depending on what one means by the phrase. While only 3% of Canadians participate in political parties, 21% belong to labour unions, 18% to recreation associations and 13% to religious groups. Studies of American college students have also found relatively low participation rates for political activities compared to volunteer activities. A general drop in participation was documented by Robert Putnam for the period from 1973 to 1994, which he and others blamed largely on television viewing, e.g., Moskalenko and Heine (2003).

Among the benefits of civic participation, Schugurensky (2003) and Tossutti (2003) mentioned positive contributions to physical and mental health, length of life, crime reduction, reduction of discrimination, improved child welfare, improved student achievement, trust and feelings of community solidarity, democratic capacities, more innovative public policy, economic prosperity, feelings of and actual citizen empowerment.

Abelson and Gauvin (2006) reviewed several evaluative studies of public participation in order to assess "the extent to which the goals of public participation in policy have been met" and "the extent to which research evidence has been used by policy makers and public participation practitioners to design and improve public participation" (p.iii). The most positive conclusions of the report are that public participation

> increased levels of interest in and knowledge of public issues
> improved capacity for future public involvement
> increased propensity for social bond formation and,
> improved trust of fellow citizens (p. 27)

However, some summary comments by another review article that is frequently cited in the Abelson and Gauvin report present a more confusing picture. According to Delli Carpini, Cook and Jacobs, (2004, p.336),

> ". . .the impact of deliberation [i.e., public participation in policy making]. . .is highly context dependent. It varies with the purpose of deliberation, the subject matter under discussion, who participates, the connection to authoritative decision makers, the rules governing interactions, the information provided, prior beliefs, substantive outcomes, and real-world conditions. As a result, although the research summarized in this essay demonstrates numerous positive benefits of deliberation, deliberation under less optimal circumstances can be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst" (quotation from Abelson and Gauvin, 2006, p.28).

In the interest of "institutionalizing" public involvement in policy making, Turnbull and Aucoin (2006) undertook a study designed to construct a strategy to achieve that end. Anyone reading their list of benefits of public participation would probably welcome such a strategy.

> "Public involvement in policy strengthens rather than threatens representative democracy. Public involvement enables, even requires, that citizens become informed, formulate considered opinions, and discuss them with others, especially with those whom they would not otherwise interact. In the process, social capital, social trust and civic knowledge are strengthened. It helps political leaders to gain better insight into the public's opinions, values and priorities which supports them in their roles as the people's representatives. It can make for better public policy, as citizen feedback on the successes and failures of previous policies can better inform policy decisions. And, the inclusiveness of the process better legitimizes the policy outcome, as groups with diverse opinions have been given a fair chance to engage" (Turnbull and Aucoin, 2006, p.iii).

The most important aspects of the recommended strategy seem to be to make elite policy makers aware of the all the benefits just listed. As one would expect, those in power tend to create barriers to increases in public involvement. Their reluctance to share power tends to produce apathy on the part of ordinary citizens, which tends to re-inforce the elites' reluctance, which continues in a vicious circle. It is apparently easier to get successful engagement at the level of municipal politics, what some people call the "laboratories of democracy". So, initiatives at that level are highly recommended. Use of the internet is also recommended when the issues involve people in geographically remote areas. Parliament itself, including especially Parliamentary Committees, will require some reforms. The authors would like to see more opportunities for citizens to bring proposals to such committees in order to engage Members of Parliament in specific legislative initiatives. Finally, they would like to see political parties more open to grassroots, bottom-up participation in place of the usual top-down variety.

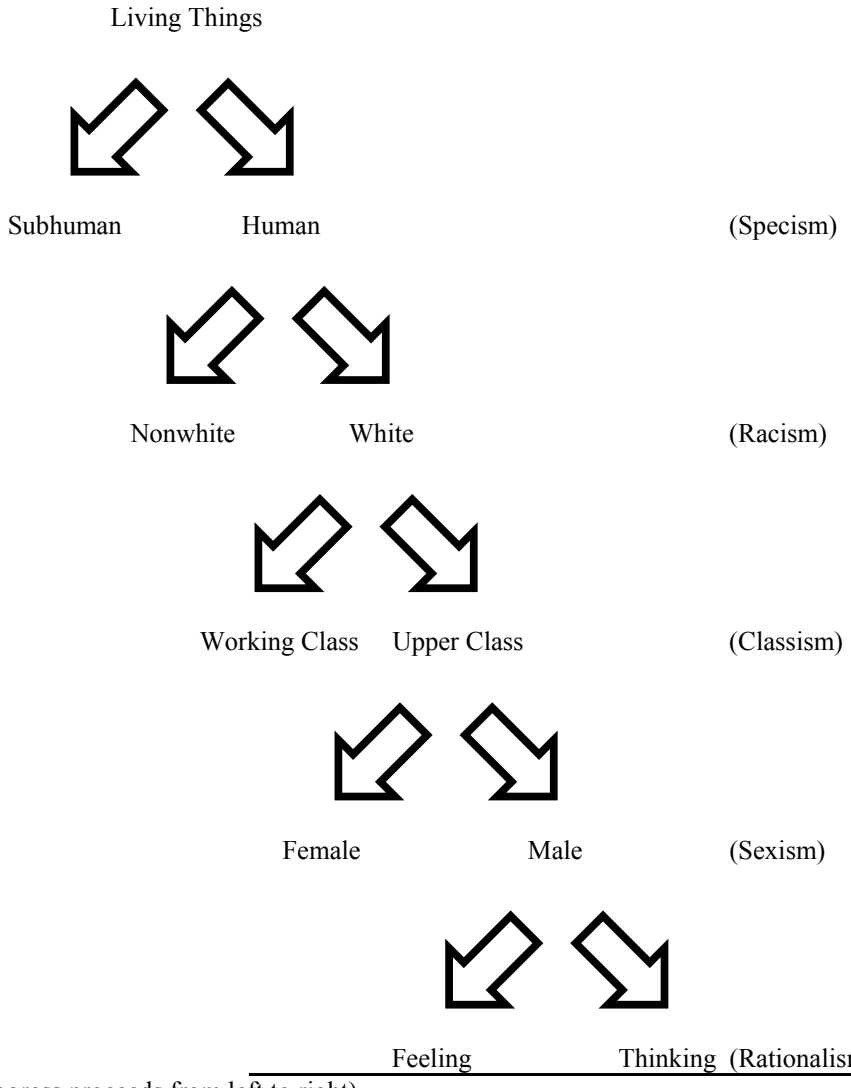
4. Modern Prejudice, Optimism and Discrimination

At this point in time most people, in North America and Europe at least, are sensitive to expressions of prejudice and reluctant to utter or otherwise display it. For example, in a public meeting or discussion, most people would not refer to women as 'broads', 'dames' or even 'girls' today as they might well have twenty years ago. They will not casually say that they think women should get married, have babies and look after men and children as their life work, although they might very well think it. Most people would be reluctant to say they do not believe women and men should receive equal pay for work of equal value, if that was what they believed. Modest progress as it surely is, there is no doubt that most people have a good sense of what is politically correct and acceptable in most circumstances, and they usually behave accordingly.

That creates a problem for contemporary researchers interested in measuring levels of prejudice. To solve this problem, measures of subtle forms of prejudice have been developed. For example, McConahay (1986) designed and tested a scale of *modern racism*, Swim, Aikin, Hall and Hunter (1995) developed a scale of *modern sexism*, and Morrison (1998) developed a scale of *modern homonegativity*.

Racist, classist and sexist views tend to co-exist and mutually support each other (Michalos 1988, Henry, Tator, Mattis and Rees 1995). In Michalos (1988) it was shown that a number of distinct kinds of prejudice form a logically compact and coherent view of human development. The view was called the Sun City Plan, named after the South African resort city that was boycotted by some artists during the apartheid period. Exhibit 2 illustrates the Plan.

Exhibit 2. Sun City Plan of Human Development



(Progress proceeds from left to right)

First, all living things are divided into those that are subhuman versus those that are human. '*Specism*' designates the belief that human beings are in some essential respect(s) superior to any other living things. Within the class of humans, white people are supposed to be essentially superior to nonwhite people. This is *racism*. Within the class of white folks, the (economic) upper classes are supposed to be essentially superior to the working classes. This is *classism*. The hierarchy continues within the white upper classes, for even there, men are supposed to be essentially superior to women. This is *sexism*. Finally, even within the illustrious class of white upper class males, one may find an inherently superior class, namely, those who emphasize the virtue of thinking versus mere feeling. This, for want of a better name, we may call '*rationalism*'. Human progress in the Sun City Plan, as indicated in the exhibit, proceeds by moving presumably genetically as well as politically from left to the right.

Since most people do not have carefully thought-through belief systems, one would not expect them to have thoroughly consistent and logically tidy clusters as illustrated in Exhibit 2. Nevertheless, casual observation indicates that chunks of the Sun City Plan do tend to exist in the same individuals. People who express racist views, for example, frequently tend to reveal sexist and classist views as well. Andersen and Collins (1995, pp.3-4) hit the nail right on the head when they wrote

> "...knowledge is not just about content and information; it provides an orientation to the world. What you know frames how you behave and how you think about yourself and others. If what you know is wrong because it is based on exclusionary thought, you are likely to act in exclusionary ways, thereby reproducing racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, class oppression, and homophobia of society. This may not be because you are overtly racist, anti-Semitic, sexist, elitist, or homophobic (although it may encourage these beliefs), but it is simply because you do not know any better. Challenging oppressive race, class, and gender relations in society requires a reconstruction of knowledge so that we have some basis from which to change these damaging and dehumanizing systems of oppression."

Interestingly enough, a certain kind of optimism and discrimination also appear to be mutually supportive. From a logical point of view, it is certainly possible for someone to be prejudiced against certain groups in one's society and optimistic about how thoroughly democratic that society is. From a psychological point of view, if one is prejudiced it is probably easier to believe that one's society is thoroughly democratic because that reduces the perceived costs of one's prejudice. Conversely, if one believes one's society is thoroughly democratic then it is probably easier to believe that relatively few people are prejudiced, including oneself. Indeed, from this point of view, the two attitudes, subtle prejudice and optimism, are mutually supporting. Swim, Aikin, Hall and Hunter (1995) reported that their measure of Modern Sexism was positively correlated with optimism. In their words,

> "As predicted, respondents who were high in Modern Sexism were more likely to overestimate the percentage of women in male-dominated jobs than were those who were low in Modern Sexism. This is consistent with the concept that Modern Sexism measures the belief that women are not currently victims of discrimination. ...Respondents who scored high on Modern Sexism were less likely to indicate that discrimination, socialization, and prejudice against women were causes for sex segregation and were more likely to indicate that biological differences were causes. These explanations may translate into different assumptions about the likelihood of attaining equality and the extent to which organizations should address gender-related issues" (pp.205-208).

Michalos and Zumbo (2001) constructed an 8-item *Index of Inegalitarianism* and tested it on a community sample of 731 adults. Among other things, they showed that people who tended to be prejudiced in a subtle way also tended to believe that they (r=.27) and all others (r=.44) were usually treated fairly. Examining demographic categories, they found three significant relationships. First, people with aboriginal backgrounds had the lowest average scores for inegalitarianism, people with visible minority backgrounds were slightly higher and everyone else had still higher scores. In other words, members of the largest group of respondents tended to be most prejudiced (and optimistic), people with aboriginal backgrounds tended to be least prejudiced (and optimistic) and people with visible minority backgrounds tended to be between the other two groups. Second, they found that on average males had higher inegalitarianism scores than females. This was consistent with the finding of Swim, Aikin, Hall and Hunter (1995) that males scored higher than females on both Old-Fashioned and Modern Sexism. Third, they found employment status was significantly related to inegalitarianism, with retired people scoring highest and students scoring lowest. Generally speaking, students are fairly notorious for typically being very tolerant of all kinds of people and ideas (Michalos 1991).

5. Minority Rights, Equity and Observable Inequalities

At a minimum, rights are entitlements implying responsibilities, duties and moral obligations. When nations signed on to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights agreeing that all people have a right to life, liberty and the security of the person, they were creating by mutual consent and contract moral obligations for themselves. In effect, they were asserting that people deserve or are entitled to life, liberty and security. Thus, if any individual or group fails to get what he, she or it deserves, there is at least a suspicion of inequity. There is a reason to examine the case more carefully.

When we look for observable or objective indicators of inequities or violations of people's rights, it is useful to begin with a null hypothesis about the central tendencies and distributions of most attributes of most social groups. That is, for example, it is useful to begin with the assumption that in a modern, physically, socially and economically mobile population, groups with different ethnic backgrounds will not have significantly different average levels of income, life expectancy, illness, suicides, educational attainment and voting behaviour. If, on the contrary, research reveals that there are significant differences among average levels, then it is useful to ask why. For example, is the relatively low income level of some groups compared to others the result of chance, choice, discrimination, something else or all of the above? Observable inequalities may be regarded as necessary but not sufficient conditions of discrimination. So it is a good place to begin to monitor fair treatment.

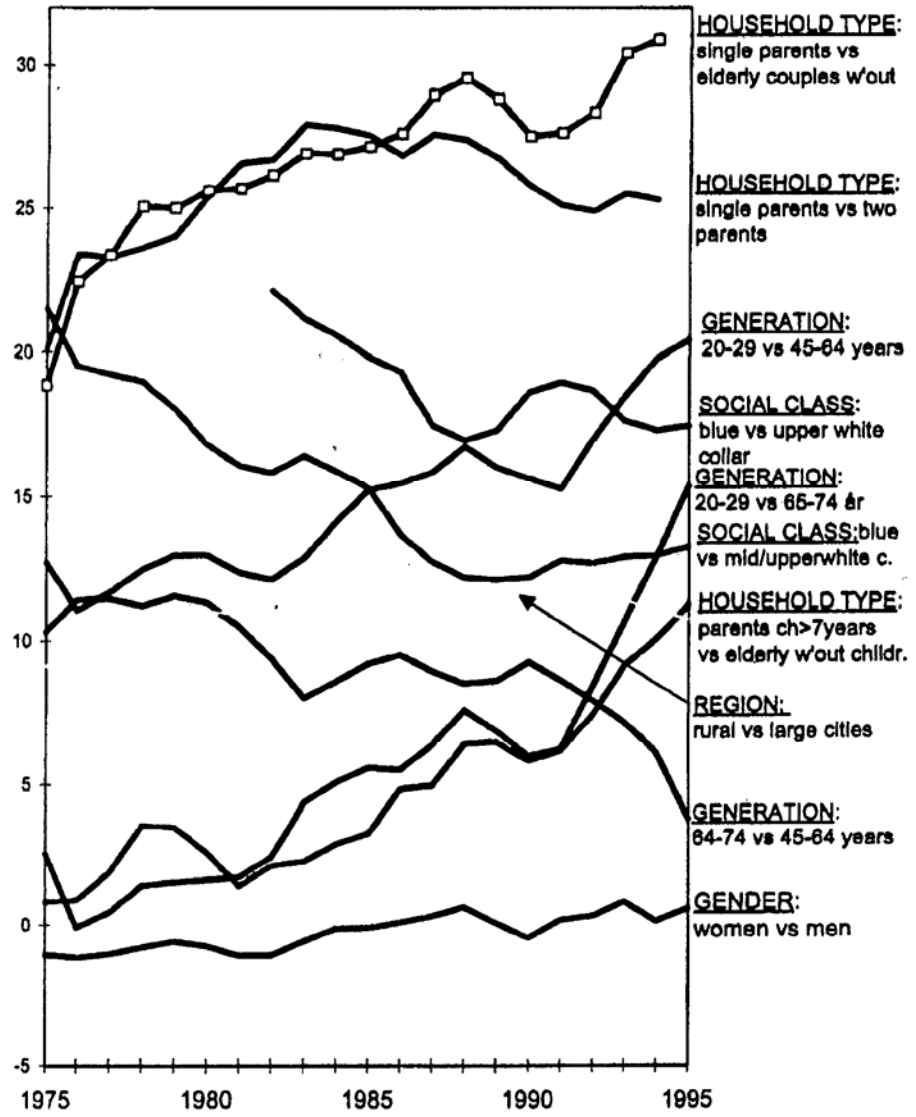
In the literature of transparent measures of inequalities, one of the most provocative instruments appeared in a review article of the Swedish social reporting system (Vogel, 2002). The Swedish surveys of living conditions have been conducted by Statistics Sweden annually since 1974. The total data set today includes over 180,000 cases and 700 variables, including a core of 125 social indicators, across 13 domains of life. The main focus is on objective measures. According to Vogel (2002, p.102),

> "If we accept the basic notion that the most important task of politics is to improve living conditions of everyone, and in particular for disadvantaged groups, then regular social indicators and regular social reporting

> must be regarded as an essential tool for assessing progress toward that goal. . .For example, separate Swedish reports deal with disabled persons, immigrants, public allowance recipients, students, the unemployed, farmers, young people, manual workers, women, etc."

In all, the Swedish system allows for disaggregation of indicators for about 120 subgroups of the population. So, it is unlikely that any disadvantaged group would fail to be considered in the Swedish overview of living conditions. A simple *Index of Inequality in Material Living Conditions* was constructed using 10 indicators: absence of overcrowded housing, high standard of housing space, dishwasher, car, second home, caravan, boat, video, freezer, and access to a daily newspaper. The index is applied in pairwise comparisons between groups. It ranges from +100 = total inequality and – 100 = perfect equality, and "The inequality index equals the difference in the percentage in each of the two groups having a certain good (e.g., a car)" (Vogel, p.108). Exhibit 3 illustrates 20 year trends in the Index for for 10 pairs of groups.

The Swedish case is fairly unique given the homogeneity of its population, its social and political traditions, and its thoroughly inclusive national registry. Presumably, different groups in different countries or communities would have different resources and constraints, would be more or less interested in certain comparisons, and might find a different basket of material goods more appropriate to their needs or interests. That is understandable. The most important point to be made is that we have a very simple, transparent model of an index of observable items that could be used to measure the disproportionate access to material goods which might be a sign of inequitable treatment, unfairness or discrimination.



Graph 1. Material inequality by social class, gender, generation, household type and region. 1975–95. Inequality index (based on 11 indicators, see text). Pairwise comparisons. N = 130 000.

Exhibit 3. Material Inequality In Sweden

Material consumer goods are not the only important observable items that might be used as signs of unequal and perhaps inequitable access to aspects of a good life or a good quality of life. Having once selected a set of important domains of life (e.g., health, work, education, recreation, political participation, personal security, residential mobility), it is fairly easy to identify observable features or aspects of the domain. The Dutch *Living Conditions Index* (Boelhouwer, 2002) includes 8 "clusters" (i.e., housing, health, purchasing power, leisure activities, mobility, social participation, sport activity and holiday), with relatively observable indicators for each cluster. For example, health

includes the number of self-reported psychosomatic symptoms and serious illnesses; social participation includes volunteer work and active contributions to activities of organizations. The proposed *European System of Social Indicators* (Noll, 2002) has 14 life domains, including one called Labour Market and Working Conditions, which itself has 162 indicators. The dimension of unemployment and underemployment has 14 indicators, including obvious candidates for an index measuring unequal access to important aspects of the dimension, e.g., rate of total unemployment, persons seeking work, discouraged persons currently not in the labour force, average duration of unemployment, long-term unemployment, benefit coverage rate, short-time workers.

From these two examples (the Dutch and European cases) it is immediately obvious that some self-reported observables are more objective than others. Different people will be willing to use self-reported symptoms or discouraged persons. Again, however, the main point is that one can explore diverse important domains of life and discover different kinds of observable signs of possible discrimination. The technical problems are relatively small compared to the political and philosophical problems of reaching agreement among all interested parties about exactly what indicators to accept, especially, what particular self-reported observables to accept. In the field of health, simple self-reports of height and weight (formed into Body Mass Index scores) can be very useful lead indicators of health.

Simon (2004) coordinated an excellent review of policies and practices related to monitoring and combating discrimination in five OECD countries, United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and the Netherlands. The most vulnerable groups in these countries were identified by race or ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation. Following the approach of identifying and measuring indirect discrimination by revealing significant differences in the average levels of educational attainment and incomes, kinds of occupations, mortality and morbidity statistics, criminal offenses and victimization rates for different groups, Simon and his colleagues showed that the most difficult problems were, generally speaking, political. The most difficult problems involved finding ways of identifying and counting members of vulnerable populations without creating new or reinforcing old stereotypes, invading privacy and inviting invidious comparisons. Even "the interpretation of what 'statistics on discrimination' should be varies significantly according to each country" (Simon, 2004, p.6). While there is relatively little difficulty identifying people by sex and age, there are substantial difficulties identifying people by race or ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation and religion. Different people are counted in different groups depending on the identification methods used, e.g., self-identification, third party observation based on visible criteria, indirect measures like country of birth, nationality, father's or mother's country of birth, first language spoken and language spoken at home.

For present purposes there is no need to review the specific problems which for diverse historical and sociological reasons are more or less salient in different countries. The main point is that in order to carry out the strategy of measuring significant differences among central tendencies and distributions for different groups, the first step of identifying groups is the most difficult and different communities have to address the problem pragmatically in ways that work best for them. Once this problem is solved, different opportunities for measurement arise in different domains. For example, considering occupational discrimination, employment equity programs may monitor companies' policies and records for recruitment, dismissals, promotions and salary ranges. In the United States, for some legislation, a "four-fifths rule" is applied such that when "the success rate of members of a protected group is lower than 80% of the rate obtained by the benchmark [general population] group", then an unfair bias will be declared and some remedial action required. Simon

(2004, p.49) remarked that there has been "a complete reversal" in the use of racial statistics in that country.

> "In the past, they were intended to strengthen the 'separate but equal' segregationist model, but they are used today to rectify past prejudice and promote equality without discrimination. Thus, the American case teaches us that the same categories can provide the means for domination and exclusion, or can be just as essential for undoing what took place as a result of decades of institutional discrimination and for promoting equality."

By practically any measure imaginable, disabled groups are more vulnerable and their problems are more invisible than those of all other "abled" groups. Three general approaches to defining disabilities have been used, namely, (1) a *medical perspective* that "views disability as an illness, abnormality and personal tragedy", (2) an *expanded medical perspective* that quantifies the "functional limitations" of certain persons, and (3) an *ecological perspective* that views disability as

> ". . .a result of the interaction between impairment, activity restrictions and barriers to participation in a specific social or physical environment, such as work, home or school. It rejects the linear cause-and-effect explanation of disability and presents disability as the interaction between personal factors (age, sex and cultural identity), environmental factors (the social context in which the person lives) and lifestyle (the person's daily activities). It shifts the focus from a fixed impairment that is part of a person's organic system to other more changeable factors that affect the person's participation in society. If an environment is adapted to the person, disability can change and even disappear. Even if the impairment has an objective reality related to the body or mind, disability has more to do with society's failure to account for the needs of disabled people. There are many variations of the social model, but all portray disability as a social construct created by ability-dominated environments" (Simon, 2004, pp.69-70).

Reflection on the social construction of disability emphasizes a point made at the beginning of this essay, namely, that what people make of the objective circumstances of their own and others lives is at least as important as the circumstances themselves. It is reminiscent of William Isaac Thomas's often quoted remark that "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Faris, 1967, p.18). In the final paragraph of Simon's report, he emphasized the importance of this important human element for the elimination of discrimination.

> "*The first result of anti-discrimination policies, particularly of monitoring, is the increased awareness of inequalities in treatment and their structural nature.* Changing social structures and mentalities requires this awareness and cannot be envisaged without the continuous assessment of the fairness of practices. This assessment must not only be carried out by independent bodies, but must also, and most importantly, be carried out by all of the stakeholders who will thus become co-producers of non-discrimination. The consequences of this level of involvement can only be assessed over the long term. Anti-discrimination initiatives are part of a long – very long – historical process" (p.87, emphasis added).

6. Gender Equity

Considering the great variety of agencies with a legal mandate or other interest in the status of women, it is safe to say that there are thousands of relevant publications in many languages. The surface will only be skimmed in this review.

There is no logically tidy way to show that a particular policy designed to create gender equality is necessary and/or sufficient to bring about such equality. The 1960s were years of social, political and economic experimentation, with challenges to the status quo in many countries coming

from many directions. Racism, classism, sexism, militarism and even specism were all attacked, and the various progressive movements reinforced each other through conscious and unconscious sharing of energy and other resources. People in diverse single-issue Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) found themselves cooperating with others pursuing a vision of an egalitarian world free of discrimination and oppression. In this context it was and usually still is difficult to determine exactly what policy, strategy or tactic was introduced where, by whom and with what result. In the best case, one would like to be able to measure the marginal benefit or value-added by a particular policy or by implementing a particular policy in a particular area. But, in order to make such measurements, decisions must be made regarding, for example, such questions as whose benefits and costs, when, where, with what composition, what sorts of measures, confidence levels, research procedures, research personnel, aggregation functions and discount rates. Assuming that such decisions could be appropriately negotiated, the scope of one's analysis would be severely limited. One would have to examine one or very few policies in order to provide a detailed evaluation.

Several worthwhile publications have come out of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Of particular relevance are *Compiling Social Indicators of the Situation of Women* (1984) and *Improving Concepts and Methods for Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Women* (1984). A series of studies on The Role of Women in International Economic Relations was sponsored by INSTRAW, with a summary overview prepared by Joekes (1987). Among other things, Joekes emphasized the impact that time budget studies have had in understanding women's productivity, and the limitations of the traditional economic categories of gainful versus nongainful employment. Many studies have examined the ways in which the division of labour into productive and reproductive types has served patriarchy by distorting the nature and value of the latter type (e.g., Waring 1988). Joekes claimed that the increasing internationalization of trade has tended to intensify the male/female division of labour and to force women to "concentrate on reproduction, that is, on nurturing (male) entrants to the labor force rather than in participating in gainful employment for themselves" (p.10). Thus, one crucial indicator of the degree to which such reactionary forces are being resisted or overcome is women's labour force participation rate. Rough as it is, this indicator provides some measure of the ability of women to earn and control their income, which is a necessary condition of their emancipation. Indicators of actual income levels, gaps between male and female income levels and family support services obviously provide a more complete picture of the economic status of women.

Johnston (1985) wrote an excellent analysis of issues related to the construction of an *Index of the Status of Women*, and proposed a preliminary model. While he was, like many of us, committed to quantitative research, he was sensitive to the fact that such research can miss entirely and otherwise misrepresent important phenomena. "Many of the more subtle factors affecting the situation of women", he wrote, "are difficult to quantify. This is especially true of the several forms of influence and prestige that are important components of the status of women in any society; equally difficult is the task of measuring different value systems and orientations and their relation to popular conceptions of fairness or equity" (p.245). (A review of some of the literature on perceived fairness or equity may be found in Michalos 1990.) Regarding the status of women in rural areas, Johnston recommended indicators related to land ownership, rights to land use, size of landholdings by sex, types of crops cultivated by sex, ownership and size of livestock.

Tepperman (1985) re-analyzed data from the December 1980 monthly Labour Force Survey of Statistics Canada regarding migration to Alberta in the 1976-1980 period. He found that most men moved to Alberta to find a job or a better job, while most women moved as a result of their spouse or

parents' move. Labour force participation and employment increased for both men and women, but men more frequently changed from part-time to full-time work while women more frequently changed in the opposite direction. So, migration widened sexual differentiation at work. "At least in the short run," Tepperman wrote, "the benefit gained by migrant men was proportional to the benefit lost by migrant women, perhaps even by their own spouses. Thus, migration may not so much increase total household benefits as re-assign the benefits from wives to husbands" (p.53). Since 79% of the occupational change did not involve any upgrading or downgrading, he characterized the change as mostly "a game of musical chairs".

Sugarman and Straus (1988) constructed a composite *Gender Equality Index* out of indices of economic, political and legal equality for the 50 United States of America in the 1979-83 period. They began by distinguishing indices of *gender attainment* (e.g., male and female literacy rates, post-secondary graduation rates) from indices of *gender equality* (e.g., female literacy or graduation rates as a percentage of male rates). Previous research was cited showing that measures of gender equality were positively correlated to lower crime rates, lower marital violence and lower rates of reported depression among women.

There were 7 indicators in their *Economic Equality Index*, namely,

1. Percent of 16 years and older females who are in the civilian labour force relative to the percent of 16 years and older males who are in the civilian labour force.
2. Percent of women who are managers and administrators in non-farm occupations relative to the percent of men who are managers and administrators in non-farm occupations.
3. Percent of 16 years and older female labour force members who are employed relative to the percent of 16 years and older male labour force members who are employed.
4. The median income of 15 years and older full-time female workers relative to the median income of 15 years and older full-time male workers.
5. The percent of Small Business loans given to women relative to the percent of Small Business loans given to men.
6. The percent of Small Business Loan money loaned to women relative to the percent of Small Business Loan money loaned to men.
7. The percent of female headed households with incomes above the poverty level relative to the percent of male headed households above the poverty level (p.237).

There were 4 indicators in their *Political Equality Index*, namely,

1. Percent of State Senate members who are women relative to the percent of State Senate members who are men.
2. Percent of State House members who are women relative to the percent of State House members who are men.
3. Percent of mayors who are women relative to the percent of mayors who are men.
4. Percent of Municipal Governing Board members who are women relative to the percent of Municipal Governing Board members who are men (p.244).

Their *Legal Equality Index* contained the following 13 indicators, with indicator values of 1 or 0 depending on whether states had a particular legal feature or not.

1. State passed fair employment practices act.
2. Women may file lawsuit personally under fair employment practices act.
3. State passed equal pay laws.
4. Women may file lawsuit personally under equal pay laws.
5. Sex discrimination law in the area of public accommodations.
6. Sex discrimination law in the area of housing.

7. Sex discrimination law in the area of financing.
8. Sex discrimination law in the area of education.
9. Statutes provide for civil injunction relief for victims of abuse.
10. Statutes that define the physical abuse of a family or household member as a criminal offence.
11. Statutes that permit warrantless arrest based on probable cause in domestic violence cases.
12. Statutes that require data collection and reporting of family violence by agencies that serve these families.
13. Statutes that provide funds for family violence shelters or established standards of shelter operations (p.251).

Among other things, these authors found that "in a typical state, women have achieved only 55% of what is necessary for economic equality with men, only 12% of what is needed for political equality, and only 55% of the statutory protections which will enable further progress toward gender equality" (Sugarman and Straus, 1988, p.255). Results from their composite index showed that "in the typical American state, women have achieved less than half [42%] of what is needed for equal status with men" (p.257). States with "an active feminist movement" tended to have relatively higher levels of gender equality (p.261).

An Expert Group was given the task of reviewing the United Nations *1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* and concluded, among other things, with the following summary.

> "If a balance sheet were drawn up for women in the economy, it could be shown that women entered the labour force in large numbers, saw improvements in access to education in most regions, began to appear in sectors where they were previously absent, made up a slightly larger proportion of managerial and technical jobs. But it could also be shown that the rate of improvement in all of these indicators was slower than in the previous decade, that in terms of remuneration and conditions of work no aggregate improvement was registered, that women's unemployment rates tended to be higher and that overall incomes declined. Poverty particularly afflicted families in which women are the sole income earners, a phenomenon that is growing.
>
> The balance sheet on social conditions of women is similarly mixed. Improvements in legal conditions, in access to goods and services, such as education, have been registered. But increases in maternal and infant mortality in some developing countries have been observed for the first time in decades, as social services have been cut as part of adjustment packages.
>
> The bottom line shows that, despite economic progress measured in growth rates, at least for the majority of developing countries, economic progress for women has virtually stopped, social progress has slowed, social well-being in many cases has deteriorated and, because of the importance of women's social and economic role, the aspirations for them in current development strategies will not be met" (United Nations 1989, pp.5-6).

The report emphasizes again that economic growth is not sufficient for the advancement of women, though in many cases and in some ways it is necessary. However, it is clear from Anderson's (1991) study (See below.) that economic growth and strength are not necessary for the advancement of women relative to men.

Among the interesting observations made in the report regarding the impact of national debts and adjustment policies on women, there is the comment that "women make adjustment socially possible by increasing their own economic activity, by working harder, by self-abnegation" (p.21).

A list of priority problems and possible indicators were also suggested. In the domain of education, indicators included "school attendance, drop-out rates, completion rates, and vocational and technical training, including retraining". For health, they included "weight of children at birth and those associated with the health of children in the context of the increased burden on mothers in taking care of such children". For women's participation in economic sectors, indicators included

female participation rates, by age, education, industry, occupation, status, income and unemployment (pp.72-73).

Another comprehensive report from the United Nations (1991) is *The World's Women, 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics*. Among other things, the report indicated that "Women almost everywhere have the right to vote; they make up more than half most electorates and many more women work in the public sector than ever before. Yet women rarely achieve elective office or have equal access to political careers. They are blocked from top positions in trade unions, political parties, government, interest associations and business. . .they are strong advocates for environmental protection and for peace" (p.31).

The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Nairobi, Kenya in July 1985 agreed to the *Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*. Since 1986 many countries have been preparing annual Fact Sheets that explain their progress or lack of it in implementing the Strategies. Status of Women Canada's 1992 Fact Sheet, for example, provided information on such things as equality rights, participation of women in political and public service, family law, child care, female lone parents, employment equity and so on.

Such reports are full of relevant country-specific references and can easily be supplemented by academic studies addressing particular issues in greater detail. For example, regarding equality rights, Poff (1990) examined the impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on the economic and social status of women. She concluded that the Charter has done little, if anything, to improve women's incomes, pension rights or likelihood of poverty. As a matter of strategy, she argued that "feminists must continue to channel at least some of their energy through the Supreme Court of Canada, even though the ultimate goals of feminism require a radical departure from and transformation of the theories of justice" (p.93).

Jones, Marsden and Tepperman (1990) provided an analysis of trends in the individualization of women's lives using mainly Canadian data but including comparisons with the USA, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, France and Sweden. The basic thesis of their book was that contemporary women's lives have become and are becoming more individualized than those of earlier generations. In the authors' words:

> "Young women today hold a wider variety of positions occupationally than their mothers did at the same age. They also play a wider range of marital and parental roles, for these domains of activity have also become much more diverse. Second, women's lives today are much more fluid than in the past. [They move more rapidly from one job to another.] Third, partly as a result of the first two changes, women's lives are much more idiosyncratic than in the past: less predictable, more "tailor-made" to suit family circumstances and personal needs" (p.57).

The thesis was defended with a judicious use of statistics and analyses obtained from government and academic studies, and additional creative analyses produced by the authors themselves. While the main sociological focus was on work, the authors' description of the process of individualization occurred in "other domains—marriage, parenthood, recreation—as well" (p.71). Among other things, the authors said that "twenty-year-old Canadian women can now expect to have 37 years of working life—only five years less than comparable men... [and] by 1981, the working-life expectancy of married women was only three years less than that of single women" (p.99).

In Canada and the other countries reviewed, the twentieth century has displayed a tendency for increasing proportions of divorces, delayed marriages, delayed parenthood, compression of child-bearing years and smaller families (pp. 7-27). All of these personal life changes contribute to work

life changes, especially for women. "For every ten men aged 15 to 24 in the labour force, there are more than nine working women of the same age. . . .For every ten men with a university degree who are in the labour force, there are nine women with a university degree also in the labour force" (p. 35).

Among the countries reviewed in this book, there is a spectrum of policies regarding the state's role in child-care running roughly from Sweden's very progressive to Britain's very regressive position. Again, it is worth quoting the authors at length directly.

> "The Swedish pattern combines high rates of female labour-force participation with a high level of child-care provision. This implies a strong sensitivity to Sweden's interest in present and *future* prosperity. The next generation is not, as in the United States, Great Britain, and (to some degree) Canada, being sacrificed because of high day-care charges, insufficient spaces, and overburdened mothers.... Britain illustrates an extreme version of a social problem: a large proportion of women working part-time to meet their needs for additional income. ...It will take another decade or two to see the full consequences—social, economic, and cultural—of this neglect of the next generation's needs. But it is already plain that the system does not work in the interest of mothers. In Britain, as in most of the other countries we have examined, the flight from parenthood continues. The flight should be most extreme in countries, like Britain, that make parenthood (and especially motherhood) most costly. But it is also to be observed in France, Germany, and the rest of the Western world. Everywhere family sizes are falling, facilitating women's labour-force participation and the economic survival of the poor and middle classes" (Jones, Marsden and Tepperman, 1990, pp.97-98).

Clearly, ordinary Canadians and their elected officials must take the issue of universal, publicly funded and licensed child-care seriously as an issue of demographics, politics and economics. To try to use increases in immigration to address the "problem" of our population not replacing itself through reproduction because people are avoiding parenthood, as Canada's current Federal government seems to be doing, simply pushes the real problem forward in time. At some point in the future, the new immigrants will join the flight, at which point the futility of the increased immigration solution will be obvious—but it will be too late to help.

Harvey, Blakely and Tepperman (1990) constructed an *Index of Gender Equality* with properties similar to the Consumer Price Index in order to measure the status of women in Ontario, Canada in the 1975-1984 period. The six indicators of the Index included:

1. The ratio of male to female unemployment rates.
2. The ratio of female to male labour force participation.
3. The ratio of female to male earnings: all workers.
4. The ratio of female to male full-time university enrolment.
5. The extent to which the distribution of female labour force participants across occupational groups deviates from the distribution of male labour force participants across the same occupational groups.
6. The ratio of percent male labour force to percent female labour force in part-time jobs (pp.308-311).

Among other things, they concluded that "there was a strong upward trend toward gender equality in the latter half to the 1970s and the early 1980s...[and]...this trend appears to have flattened (and possibly even reversed) in 1984 by the return to economic growth in the Ontario economy" (pp.315-316).

Anderson (1991) provided a good overview of women's work experience in 12 developed countries, namely, Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Broadly speaking, she concluded that the status

of women was lowest in the first three countries just listed, slightly higher in the next three, higher still in the next three and highest in the final three. While her comparative statistics and anecdotal analyses were instructive, for our purposes her major contribution lies in the great number and variety of relatively objective indicators suggested in her book.

They included the following:

Historical dates when women given right to vote
Numbers and percent of women (hereafter NPW) voters
NPW candidates, elected officials, cabinet officers for national, state/provincial/regional, municipal governments
Literacy rates, by sex, age, mother tongue, race, income, marital status, religion
Dates when women admitted to post-secondary education
NPW in post-secondary education, by type of education, age, race, mother tongue, marital status, income, religion
NP women's studies courses and programs in post-secondary education
NP special education, apprenticeship and training programs, courses
Graduates of educational institutions, by type, age, sex, mother tongue, income, marital status, religion
NP women's publishing houses, bookstores, magazines
Status of feminism, common understanding of the word, the philosophy and the movement
Pornography, and sexism and sex stereotyping in media, advertising and textbooks
NP women's organizations, by type, purposes, political orientation, size, funding
Dates when women admitted to professions
NPW in professions, by type, age, income, race, mother tongue, religion
NPW employed and unemployed in labour force, by occupational category, age, education, full-time versus part-time, race, mother tongue, marital status, religion
Affirmative action provisions
Provisions for dealing with discrimination and sexual harassment, special commissions, ombudspersons, court challenge funding
Employment and pay equity rights and provisions for guaranteeing them
Minimum wages, NPW earning by race, mother tongue, education, religion
Unemployment benefits and pro-rata benefit provisions for part-time workers
NPW unionized, by occupation types
Status of women in unions, NPW office holders
NPW in various income brackets, by occupation, education, age, race, mother tongue, marital status, religion
Low-income/poverty level individuals and families by size, age, sex, education, mother tongue, race, religion
Male/female income disparities by occupation, education, age, race, mother tongue, religion
Homelessness, by sex, age, race, education, mother tongue
Social security, welfare, family allowance, housing subsidy benefits
Old Age Security and Pension benefits and costs
Medical and hospital care benefits and costs
Hospital admissions, prescription drugs, surgical operations, disease and death rates for various causes by sex, age, race, mother tongue, income, education, religion
NPW headed families, by type, numbers of children, economic status
NPW victims of crimes, violent versus property, by type, age, race, mother tongue, marital status, religion
Drug abuse, by type, abuser age, race, mother tongue, marital status, sex
Parental and maternity leave benefits, including right to return to work
Child care and after-school care programs by regional accessibility, numbers of places by age of children, types of care/care-givers, funding
Birth control/family planning provisions
Sex education in schools
Birth rates, by age, race, mother tongue, incomes, education, religion
Abortions, legal and illegal, abortion rights, accessibility provisions, funding

Property rights and provisions for guaranteeing them
Legal protections against family violence in the form of rape, battering and incest
Rape crisis centres and shelters for victims of family violence, number, funding, staffing, remedial programs
Reliable and valid data on family violence
Reliable and valid data on distribution of labour in families, including housework, child care, elder parent/relative care
Marriage and common-law families, by size, age, race, education, mother tongue, income, religion
Divorce and family law protections regarding division of assets, child care and financial support

In Michalos (2000) an attempt was made to review all Canadian studies relevant to the agenda for change outlined in the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (1970). The rich body of information assembled in the *Report* and its 167 recommendations created the foundation for many of the policies introduced by successive governments since the *Report* was issued. Here only a few particularly interesting indexes will be presented.

A fairly sophisticated analysis of income, work and learning was published by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women (1997, hereafter, FPM 1997). To begin with, the authors of that investigation reported that in 1995 the wages of women working full-time for a full-year were 73% of those of men (FPM 1997, p.8). About this apparently progressive achievement, the authors thoughtfully remarked that

> "The conceptual problem of only using a male standard can be seen if the full-time, full-year wage gap example is taken a step further, by comparing women and men who are even more similar. The wage gap almost disappears for young, well-educated women and men who have never had children. But this closing of the gap results from women behaving just as men traditionally have - devoting almost all their work time to earning income" (FPM, 1997, p.9).

The new indexes developed by those authors assessed male/female disparities by taking account of rather than by neglecting differences in the living experiences of women and men. First, they created an *Index of Total Income* which included income from such things as

> "wages, salaries, farm and non-farm self-employment income, investments, net rental income, child and spousal support payments, employment insurance, private and public pensions, and government transfers, including benefits for children, seniors and persons with disabilities, workers compensation and social assistance" (FPM 1997, p.13).

Counting all these sources of income, the authors found that in 1995, "the average total income for all Canadian women aged 15 or over was roughly $16,600", compared to $29,600 for men (FPM 1997, p.13). Since the *Index of Total Income* was defined as the ratio of the average total income received by women to the average total income received by men, the 1995 Index was .56, indicating that on average women's income was 56% of men's.

Besides the *Index of Total Income*, FPM 1997 presents a *Total Earnings Index* based only on the "wages, salaries and net income from farm and non-farm self-employment" of people aged 18 to 64 (p.14) and a *Total After-Tax Income Index* based on subtracting income taxes from total income. The average earnings (narrowly defined) of women in 1995 were $14,600, compared to $28,000 for men.

According to FPM (1997 p.14), "The total earnings index, by comparing all working-age men and women - full-time and part-time, earners and non-earners - better reflects the overall reality of women in Canadian society". However, it seems to me that this is a mistake for a couple reasons.

First, it is a mistake to include non-earners in an index purporting to measure earnings and second, it is a mistake to use a narrower income base (earnings from employment) instead of a broader income base (total income after-taxes from all sources) to reveal "the overall reality of women in Canadian society". If non-earners had been excluded from the calculation of earnings, then the *Total Earnings Index* would have been a good indicator of the relative earning capacity from employment of women compared to men, which is certainly a fundamental measure of gender equality. But relative earning capacity is not an accurate measure of relative command over financial resources, which is more reflective of women's and men's overall economic status.

Exhibit 4 summarizes the Index figures for all three Indexes for three years, 1986, 1991 and 1995. Perhaps the most encouraging thing about the figures for the three years is the fact that every column indicates a progressive trend in the Index from 1986 to 1995.

Exhibit 4. Gender equality indexes for Total Income, Total After-Tax Income and Total Earnings, 1986, 1991, 1995.

Year	*Total Earnings Index*	*Total Income Index*	*Total After-Tax Income Index*
1986	.44	.49	.52
1991	.49	.54	.58
1995	.52	.56	.60

Source: FPM 1997, pp.17-18.

Three indexes were created in FPM (1997, pp.20-31) regarding work and they were applied to selected populations in order to make more extensive gender comparisons. The overall scheme that seems to be implicit in the FPM report is as follows. First, human activities were divided into those that are valuable as ends in themselves (intrinsically valuable) versus those that are valuable as means to obtaining intrinsically valuable things (instrumentally valuable). An example of an intrinsically valuable activity might be something like listening to music for pleasure. The class of instrumentally valuable activities was then divided into those that might in principle be marketed (e.g., meal preparation) versus those that cannot be marketed (e.g., sleep). Activities that in principle might be marketed are identified as "work of economic value", and such activities may be paid or unpaid. According to the FPM (1997, p.20),

> ". . .unpaid work includes child-oriented work; providing help to other relatives and friends; performing household work such as meal preparation, laundry and maintenance; and volunteer work for organizations. Overall, Canadians spend more time in unpaid work than in paid work. By far the largest amount of unpaid work time is devoted to children, relatives and friends, and household work".

Using results from time-use diaries provided by the national General Social Surveys of 1986 and 1992, the authors of FPM were able to construct a *Total Workload Index*, an *Index of Paid Work* and an *Index of Unpaid Work*. The *Index of Paid Work* is defined as the ratio of the average number of hours per day of paid work that a woman works to the average number of hours per day of paid

work that a man works, and the *Index of Unpaid Work* is defined similarly for unpaid work. The combination of these two Indexes constitutes the *Total Workload Index*.

Exhibit 5 summarizes the three Indexes for the two years. As the first column of the exhibit shows, considering all kinds of work, on average women apparently worked more hours per day than men in 1986 and in 1992. The Index values are 1.07 and 1.08, respectively, and the difference between them is so small that it may be only sampling error. The second two columns really show the difference in the nature of women's and men's workload. Column two shows that on average women had roughly half the paid workload as men, with the Index values increasing from .53 in 1986 to .60 in 1992. Regarding unpaid work (third column), on average women had over twice the workload of men in 1986 (Index=2.16) and over one and one-half times the workload of men in 1992 (Index=1.73). Assuming the goal of gender equality implies that women and men should have similar workloads for paid and unpaid work, the second two columns of this exhibit indicate some progress toward that goal in the 1986 to 1992 period.

Exhibit 5. Gender Equality Workload Indexes for 1986 and 1992

Year	*Total Workload Index*	*Paid Workload Index*	*Unpaid Workload Index*
1986	1.07	.53	2.16
1992	1.08	.60	1.73

Source: FPM 1997, pp.26-27.

Using results from Statistics Canada's Adult Education and Training Surveys of 1991 and 1993, the authors of the FPM report were able to construct gender equality indexes for employer-supported and total job-related training. In the words of FPM (1997, p. 34),

> "*Employer-supported training* is training paid for by the employer, including such costs as tuition and compensation in time. *Total job-related training* includes both employer-supported training and job-related training paid for by employees themselves."

Exhibit 6 gives gender equality indexes for training by participants and time for the two years. The top half of the exhibit shows that in 1993 there was nearly gender equality regarding the percentages of women and men getting job-related training, employer-supported or not. The bottom half of the exhibit shows that in 1993 a considerably larger percentage of male than female workers got employer-supported training, and that the situation of women was worse that year than in 1991. There was virtually no change over the three years in the job related index.

Exhibit 6. Gender equality indexes for training by participants and time, 1991 and 1993.

Year	*F/M% People Employer-Supported Index*	*F/M% People Job Related Index*
1991	*.91*	*1.03*

1993	*.97*	*1.02*
	F/M% Hours Employer-Supported	*F/M% Hours Job Related*
Year	*Index*	*Index*
1991	*.75*	*.88*
1993	*.68*	*.87*

Source: FPM 1997, pp.39-40.

Exhibit 7 shows some international comparisons of the percentages of low income, lone parent families with children under age 18 in seven OECD countries. It apparently showed relative lack of interest in the problems of lone parents and their children by Canadians and Americans compared to the Dutch and Swedes.

Exhibit 7. Percentages of low income families among lone parent families with children under age 18.

Country	*Year*	*Percent*
Canada	1987	45.4
United States	1986	53.3
W.Germany	1984	25.5
United Kingdom	1986	18.0
France	1984	15.8
Netherlands	1987	7.5
Sweden	1987	5.5

Source: Oderkirk 1992, p.12.

Of all the indexes and indicators reviewed in Michalos (2000), 14 seemed to permit easy assessment as positive or negative. Accordingly, one point was assigned for each indicator showing progress, and the ratio of such points to the total number of relatively clear indicators was taken as a rough measure of progress. The 14 indicators are followed with a + or - sign to identify it as a measure of progress or not, respectively.

Real average annual wages by gender, -
Gender equality index for total earnings, +
Percentage of women and men employed, +
Gender equality workload indexes, +
Percentages of men and women attending school, +
Women as percentage of full-time university enrolment, +
Percentages of university degrees granted to women, +
Gender equality indexes for training, -
Ratio of female to male poverty rates, +
Total sexual assault rates, -
Average ages at first marriage, +
Custody of children involved in divorces, +
Proportion of births to unmarried women, +

Ratio of supply to demand for childcare spaces, -

Ten of the 14 indicators show some progress. It was concluded, therefore, that all things considered, there was more evidence of improvement than of deterioration in the status of women, including more evidence of progress toward gender equality, since the 1970 *Report*

The UNDP's *Human Development Report* includes a *Gender-Related Development Index* and a *Gender Empowerment Measure* (UNDP 2000). The first (GDI) is crafted from the 3-indicator *Human Development Index* plus a measure of "disparity in achievement between women and men". The second (GEM) is based on a combination of indicators for shares of parliamentary representation and shares of administrative, technical and professional positions.

The Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat produced *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics* (2000). No attempt to construct a composite index is made in the document, but many useful indicators are provided in six broad categories: population (9 indicators), women and men in families (8), health (7), education and communication (7), work (7), human rights and political decision-making (5). The indicators listed in the last category include percent of parliamentary seats in Single or Lower chamber occupied by women, percent of women in decision-making positions in government (ministerial vs sub-ministerial level), whether a national plan of action was provided to the UN Secretariat, and year of ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Statistics Canada published *Women in Canada 2000*, which has 12 chapters and numbers of indicators as follows: female population (11), family status (12), health of women (26), education (11), paid and unpaid work (29), income and earnings (16), housing and household facilities (7), women and the criminal justice system (20), immigrant women (27), women in a visible minority (20), aboriginal women (19) and senior women (22).

The contents of the chapter on Women in a Visible Minority will be used to illustrate the kinds indicators provided in each chapter. Groups counted include Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab/West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islander. Indicators include,

Percentage of women aged 15-44 in private households who are lone parents, by group
Percentage of women aged 65 and over in private households who are living alone, bg
Percentage of employed women aged 15-64 who worked mostly full-time, bg
Percentage of employed women aged 15-64 who were self-employed, by
Percentage of visible minority women and other groups aged 15-64 who had a bachelor's degree or higher and who worked in selected occupations, bg
Average employment earnings for women aged 15-64, bg
Gov. transfer payments as a percentage of all income received by women aged 15 and up, bg
Women, bg
Immigrant status of women, bg
Urban/rural distribution of women, bg
Central Metropolitan Areas of residence for women, bg
Age distribution of women living in a private household, bg
Family status of women aged 15 and over, bg
Knowledge of official languages of women aged 15 and over, bg
Percentage of women aged 15 and over attending school either full-time or part-time by age/group
Highest level of education for women aged 15 and over, bg

Major field of study for visible minority and other women and men with a university degree, bg
Employment rates for women aged 15-64, by age and group
Unemployment rates for women aged 15-64, by age and group
Occupational distribution of the population aged 15 and over, bg
Average total income of women aged 15 and over, by age and group
Incidence of low income among women living in a private household, by age and group

The 20 items in this list are good candidates for inclusion in a composite *Index of Visible Minority Inequalities*.

Kjeldstad and Kristiansen (2001) constructed an *Index of Gender Equality* for 435 Norwegian communities using 9 indicators.

1. Percentage of children in public day care
2. Female percentage in municipal councils
3. Percentage of women with higher education
4. Female/male higher-education ratio
5. Female/male population ratio 20-39 years
6. Percentage of women in the labour force
7. Female/male labour force participation ratio
8. Average gross income of women
9. Female/male income ratio
10. Total index

The total index was constructed by (1) averaging the absolute and relative scores (i.e., 3 &4, 6&7, 8&9) reducing the number of indicators to 6, (2) assigning 4 points to communities in the best 25% of an indicator, 3 points to those in the next 25%, etc., and (3) summing the scores for each indicator and dividing by 6 for each community. An easily readable map of all the communities was produced. The best single predictors of the total Index score (based on simple correlations) were the female/male labour force participation ratio (r = .65) and the percentage of women in the labour force (r = .57).

Critics of the index claimed that

> "certain important indicators are missing, for examples, indicators reflecting health conditions, health and elderly care services, housing and general well being. Of course these criticisms are partly right, . . .One way of improving the gender equality index then, could be to supplement the aggregated data with survey data at the individual level, covering also the more subjective elements of gender equality" (Kjeldstad and Kristiansen, 2001, p.49.).

7. Selected Connections between Objective and Subjective Indicators

There is a variety of research on similarities and differences in the subjective well-being of men and women. Much of it has been produced by people whose primary concern is not the quality of life or even the narrower topic of subjective well-being, but with specific domains of life like the family, marital relations, organizational behaviour, the quality of work-life, or simply gender studies. Much of it is also produced by people interested in examining the implications of important socio-psychological theories like equity theory, social comparison theory, and so on. This review is largely neglecting research on subjective indicators. However, it is worthwhile to mention here that many subjective well-being studies can be usefully linked to objective indicators. For examples, studies of the impact of residential mobility, perceived job

opportunities, job satisfaction, marital satisfaction, the presence of children in families and the management of chronic illness by men and women can be linked to objective data on migration, employment and unemployment, marriage, family size and population health.

Using results from eight American General Social Surveys of the National Opinion Research Center from 1972 to 1980 (N=12,120), Fletcher and Lorenz (1985) examined the relationship between respondents' reported satisfaction with their present financial situation and their total family income. On the basis of stratification theory and previous research, they hypothesized that at least three characteristics of social structure, namely, age, sex and race, "reflect differential constraints on access to economic resources and opportunities", that the greater the constraints, the greater the likelihood that people will make psychological accommodations to their situations rather than make objective improvements, and that age, sex and race can be "viewed as proxies for accommodation processes which may explain variation in the strength of the relationship between objective and subjective indicators of economic well-being" (pp.334-335). As expected, they found that "The strength of the relationship between family income and financial satisfaction is weaker (1) for the oldest age group compared to other age groups; (2) for females compared to males; and (3) for nonwhites compared to whites" (p.335). For example, regarding age, their results indicate that although "the oldest age group is the most satisfied" with their financial situation, "that satisfaction is the most independent of objective financial circumstances. To an extent not true of the other age groups, the oldest group has accommodated to their circumstances" (p.339).

House, Umberson and Landis (1988) wrote an excellent review of the literature on social relationships (social support, social integration and social networks) and health. They claimed that "few if any studies fail to find evidence for either main or buffering effects of social relationships on health. Thus, it now seems that the more appropriate research question is not whether both effects exist, but when, how, and why each occurs" (p.295). Granting that social relationships are inversely related to morbidity and mortality for men and women, the authors note that "both men and women seem to benefit more from relationships with women than relationships with men" (p.300).

Several studies have shown that equitable relationships are generally perceived to be more satisfying than inequitable relationships. Clark and Reis (1988) reported that people in such relationships are more confident of staying together, more content in the relationship and less likely to have extramarital sexual affairs. Women tend to be more distressed than men by being "overbenefited" and men tend to be more distressed than women by being "underbenefited". As well, they claimed that inequity tends to have a greater impact on men's than on women's emotions. Some researchers have reported that the absolute level of benefits obtained by a partner is at least as important as the perceived equity that those benefits represent (Cate, Lloyd and Long 1988).

According to one literature review, "No matter what technique is used to measure household division of labor, wives typically do much more than husbands. . . .Study after study has shown that attitudes and shared norms continue to define household work as 'women's work,' and most wives seem satisfied with the small amount of housework their husbands do" (Thompson and Walker 1989, p.854). Nevertheless, these authors also emphasized the fact that the more each partner perceives that the other is doing a fair share of housework, the more satisfied they are with their marriage (p.858). The trouble is that partners collectively construct their perceived reality in ways that tend to benefit men at the expense of women. Regarding

parenting, for example, Thompson and Walker claim that "Partners seem to collaborate to sustain the belief that fathers are intimately involved with their children and 'fairly' sharing child care when mothers actually are doing the daily parenting. . .Partners tend to view men's minimal help with raising children as substantial, and women's substantial help with provision as minimal" (pp.863-864).

Besides doing most of the housework in the obvious sense of this term, i.e., cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc., wives also do most of the psychological work required to keep a household together. According to Thompson and Walker (1989, pp.848-849), "Wives...usually have more responsibility than their husbands for monitoring the relationship, confronting disagreeable issues, setting the tone of the conversation, and moving toward resolution when conflict is high." Besides having greater responsibility in this area, "wives usually are more expressive and send clearer messages than husbands in marital communication. Since most wives are better senders, most husbands, especially the happily married, have an advantage over wives in receiving messages." Apparently, then, husbands and other household members are probably lucky that wives do have a disproportionate share of the responsibility in this area.

Thornton (1989) reviewed the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey of Americans from the late 1950s to the middle 1980s and found marked increases in egalitarian sentiments regarding sex roles and the family. He also found significant "weakening of the normative imperative to marry, to remain married, to have children, to restrict intimate relations to marriage, and to maintain separate roles for males and females" (p.873).

Chambers (1989) surveyed a sample of 1,502 graduates of the University of Michigan Law School from the classes of 1976 to 1979, and found, among other things, that "Women lawyers who are parents continue to bear substantially greater burdens for the care of children than men. ...[but]...five years after law school, and again seven to ten years after law school, the women with children report themselves, as a group, somewhat more satisfied with their careers and with the balance of their family and professional lives than women without children and than men, with or without children, report themselves to be" (pp.251-252). However, both women and men reported relatively lower levels of satisfaction with the balance of their family and work lives than with most other aspects of their careers. Chambers speculated on some possible explanations for the relatively superior satisfaction levels of the women lawyers who were parents and concluded that these women had plenty of reasons to feel good about themselves: they were successful competitors in a male-biased profession (demonstrating to themselves and everyone else that they had "the right stuff"); 80% were married to other lawyers or professional people; they could afford and probably had good child-care arrangements; and they probably had more opportunities than most working people to be selective about their jobs (pp.278-284).

8. Arts, Culture and Economics

The impact of the arts broadly construed on the overall quality of people's lives is without a doubt the most understudied and possibly the most under-rated issue in the field of social indicators research. In all of the roughly 1570 papers of the 75 volumes of *Social Indicators Research* published since the first issue in March 1974, there is *only one* focused precisely on this question, namely, Michalos (2005).

I regard measures of people's beliefs and feelings about the arts as cultural indicators, and the latter as a species of subjective social indicators. Similarly, also I regard simple counts of things like art museums, festivals, attendance at museums and festivals, visual and performing

artists, arts-related volunteers, trade in diverse art works, private and public revenues and expenditures for art works as cultural indicators, more precisely as species of objective social indicators. This is in contrast to the views of Rosengren (1992) and Gouiedo (1993), who want to reserve the term 'cultural indicator' for what most researchers call 'subjective social indicators' and 'social indicator' for what most researchers call 'objective social indicators'.

It appears as if social indicators researchers are considerably more biased than their sociological colleagues, although the latter were certainly biased. According to Zolberg (1990, p.199),

> "When H. D. Duncan did a literature count of books and articles in *Current Sociology* and UNESCO's *International Bibliography of Sociology*, he found that from 1965 to 1969, of between 4,700 to 5,700 items listed each year, not more than 22 to 30 [about .5%] dealt with works on the sociology of art or music. Moreover, of those listed, more than half had been done outside the United States, and about one-sixth were merely repeats from previous years. Expanding on those findings, I found that in recent years, although the bulk of sociological publications is still in fields remote from the arts, nevertheless, the proportions have shifted somewhat. Whereas in the late 1960s the arts never attained as much as 1 percent of all publications, currently they hover around 2 percent, and although the literature coverage in those compendia is far from complete, at least repeats of entries have been eliminated (UNESCO 1984, 1985, 1986)."

After carefully documenting the variety of ways in which music is used to partially construct people's feelings and behaviour in elevators, airplanes, hospitals, prisons, restaurants and shops, as well as when they are dancing, working, exercising, celebrating, protesting, worshipping, daydreaming and making love, DeNora (2000, p.155) leveled one of the sharpest criticisms of sociologists when she wrote

> "Sociological discourse itself is biased against the perception of the aesthetic dimension of modern life. Instead, the sources of orderly conduct are depicted as residing in rules, knowledge, skills and sanctions. This aspect of sociological discourse separates individual from society, subject from object, and culture from agency. It achieves this separation through its use of concepts such as 'interest', 'rationality' and 'free will'."

Given the profoundly social aspects of the arts, their relative neglect by sociologists in general and by social indicators researchers in particular is both surprising and disturbing. Nobody appreciated and expressed these social aspects more deeply than Howard Becker in his classic *Art Worlds* (1982). Early in that book he wrote,

> "Think of all the activities that must be carried out for any work of art to appear as it finally does. For a symphony orchestra to give a concert, for instance, instruments must have been invented, manufactured, and maintained, a notation must have been devised and music composed using that notation, people must have learned to play the notated notes on the instruments, times and places for rehearsal must have been provided, ads for the concert must have been placed, publicity must have been arranged and tickets sold, and an audience capable of listening to and in some way understanding and responding to the performance must have been recruited. A similar list can be compiled for any of the performing arts. With minor variations (substitute materials for instruments and exhibition for performance), the list applies to the visual and (substituting language and print for materials and publication for exhibition) literary arts" (Becker 1982, p.2).

Becker used the term ‘art world’ to designate “an established network of cooperative links among participants. . .[with artists as] some subgroup of the world’s participants who, by common agreement, possess a special gift, therefore make a unique and indispensable contribution to the work, and thereby make it art” (p.35).

Since people have speculated about the nature and role of the arts in a good life at least since the eighth century BCE, it is impossible to do justice to the variety of well-reasoned views. In Michalos (2005), the term ‘arts’ was used in a very broad sense to include such things as music, dance, theatre, painting, sculpture, pottery, literature (novels, short stories, poetry), photography, quilting, gardening, flower arranging, textile and fabric art. In Michalos (1981, p.147) I wrote “In the presence of at least 160 different definitions of ‘culture’ [Berelson and Steiner, 1964], I have scrupulously tried and will continue to try to avoid the word”. Since that still seemed to be a wise policy in 2005, I avoided any discussion of the degree of coextensiveness of the ‘arts’ and ‘culture’. As English is ordinarily used, there is clearly some overlap in the connotation and denotation of the terms ‘arts’ and ‘culture’. Jackson (1998, p.ii) was not using extraordinary language when she used the two terms as synonyms in the following sentence.

> “With the exception of research on the impact of the arts on school performance and economic development, there is very little empirical research that clearly links forms of cultural participation with other specific desirable social outcomes, particularly at the neighborhood level.”

A deliberate attempt was also made to avoid what Jensen (2002) described as the “mass culture debate” about the “real” nature of art, its differences from entertainment and its threat from mass culture. Zolberg (1990, p.x) was right when she wrote that “shrinking the arts to a subset known as fine art is of doubtful validity”, but there is no need to enter into that debate here. Becker (1982) correctly observed that because “‘art’ is an honorific title”, many people want their work to be called art. However,

> “Just as often, people do not care whether what they do is art or not (as in the case of many household or folk arts – cake decorating, embroidery, or folk dancing, for instance) and find it neither demeaning nor interesting that their activities are not recognized as art by people who do care about such things” (p.37).

There is a sizable literature on the use of music in therapeutic settings and considerable evidence for the positive impact of music on health; e.g., Maranto (1993), Standley (1996), American Music Therapy Association (2000), Lipe (2002), Gregory (2002). As early as 1993, Maranto was able to write that

> “Music listening has been shown to significantly reduce stress hormone levels, decrease anxiety, diminish side effects of anesthesia. . .reduce pulse rate, stabilize blood pressure, reduce postoperative pain and need for pain medication, increase speed of recovery. . .reduce irritability, crying and stress behaviours. . .Passive and active music experiences have been shown to. . .improve motor functioning. . .decrease muscle tension. . .improve respiration and vital capacity. . .reduce psychological trauma. . .decrease fear. . .provide measure of control/reduce helplessness, help patient deal with issues of illness and dying” (Maranto 1993, pp.161-164).

Barrera, Rykov and Doyle (2002) showed that interactive music therapy reduced anxiety and increased the comfort of hospitalized children with cancer. Browning (2001) reported that women in a music therapy group “were significantly more relaxed than those in the control

group during the 3 hours prior to delivery" of their babies. Weber (1999) exposed patients in an isolation ward to a variety of live concerts and reported that "The concerts contributed much to patients' improved sense of well-being, ability to cope with depression, increased socialization, and quality of hospital stay". Gallant, Holosko, Gorey and Lesiuk (1997) used rehabilitation and music intervention on matched couples in the Brentwood Recovery Home for Alcoholics in Windsor, Ontario and found that "clients who received rehabilitation and concurrent music intervention fared better on a number of outcomes than those who received rehabilitation alone". Osgood, Meyers and Orchowsky (1990) showed that older people (65 years or more) participating in creative dance had "significant positive changes in life satisfaction" compared to a matched control group, and that "creative dance and movement encouraged expression of feelings and needs, group participation, friendship formation, body awareness and sensitivity, laughter, joy and fun".

Acknowledging all these very positive ways in which music has been shown to have an impact on the quality of people's lives, it is worthwhile to end this brief review with the following remarks by DeNora (2000, pp.162-163). Although her particular focus is on music, what she says is directly relevant to all the arts and all the aesthetic dimensions of life.

> ". . .music is appropriated by individuals as a resource for the ongoing constitution of themselves and their social psychological, physiological and emotional states. As such it points the way to a more overtly sociological focus on individuals' self-regulatory strategies and socio-cultural practices for the construction and maintenance of mood, memory and identity. . . If music is a medium for the construction of social reality, then control over the distribution of the musical resources in and through which we are configured as agents is increasingly politicized and the movements, such as Pipedown in the United Kingdom, against piped background music, have been spawned in reaction to what is perceived as the commercial dominance of the public sphere. . .Further explorations of music as it is used and deployed in daily life in relation to agency's configuration will only serve to highlight what Adorno [1967, 1973, 1976], and the Greek philosophers [notably Plato and Aristotle], regarded as a fundamental matter in relation to the polis, the citizen and the configuration of consciousness; namely, that music is much more than a decorative art; that it is a powerful medium of social order. Conceived in this way, and documented through empirical research, music's presence is clearly political, in every sense that the political can be conceived."

The aim of the study in Michalos (2005) was to measure the impact of the arts broadly construed on the quality of life. A randomly drawn household sample of 315 adult residents (aged 18 years and older) of Prince George, British Columbia served as the working data-set. The sample could not be regarded as representative of the city population, but it may have been representative of those residents of the city with a particular interest in the arts.

A mailed-out questionnaire identified 66 arts-related activities and obtained information on respondents average weekly and yearly participation rates, as well as levels of satisfaction with their participation. Among other things, it was found that 89% of respondents listened to music on average 13.5 hours per week, with an average satisfaction level of 5.9 on the 7-point satisfaction scale; 73% reported that they read novels, short stories, plays or poetry on average 8.3 hours per week, with an average satisfaction level of 6.2; 71% went to movies (cinema) on average 5.6 times per year, with an average satisfaction level of 5.5 and 67% of respondents visited historic sites on average 2.4 times per year, with an average satisfaction level of 5.8. Surprisingly, there was no significant correlation between the average amount of time spent on activities and the average level of satisfaction obtained from them.

On hearing the words 'arts' or 'artistic activity', about 19% said that the first thing they thought of was 'acting/theatre' and 18% said 'painting/drawing'. Responding to a somewhat similar question, 51% of a national sample of Australians said 'painting' and 40% said 'theatre' (Costantoura, 2001, p.94). Thirty percent of the Prince George sample said the *most important* arts-related activity for them was 'music/symphony' and 14% said 'acting/theatre'. Thirteen percent identified the following statement as expressing their own feelings about their most important arts-related activity; 'My artistic activities contribute to my overall well-being'. On average, on a 7-point scale, people reported that they were satisfied with their access to information about their most important arts-related activity (5.3), to the arts facility housing the activity (5.1) and to the activity itself (5.3). They were roughly equally satisfied with the price (5.0) and the place of the activity (5.2). On the other hand, they were dissatisfied with city (3.7), provincial (3.1) and federal (3.0) government support for the activity. The largest percentage (48%) first learned about their most important activity in school, while the three largest percentages following that were listening to the radio (28%) and to a parent (27%), and watching television (26%).

Three indexes were created to measure respondents' views about the functions of arts-related activities, namely, an *Index of Arts as Self-Health Enhancers* (α=.91), *Index of Arts as Self-Developing Activities* (α=.93) and an *Index of Arts as Community Builders* (α=.90).

Examining zero-order correlations, among other things, it was found that playing a musical instrument a number of times per year was positively associated with general health (r = .37), while singing alone a number of hours per week was negatively associated with general health (r = -.19). The strongest positive associations with life satisfaction were satisfaction obtained from gourmet cooking and embroidery, needlepoint or cross-stitching, at r = .39 and r = .32, respectively. The satisfaction obtained from gourmet cooking (r = .35) and buying works of art (r = .32) were the most positive influences on happiness. The strongest associations with the *Index of Subjective Well-Being* were the satisfaction obtained from gourmet cooking (r = .37) and the satisfaction obtained from knitting or crocheting (r = .34).

Examining multivariate relations, it was found that eight predictors combined to explain 59% of the variance in life satisfaction scores, with self-esteem satisfaction (β=.35) and friendship satisfaction (β=.27) most influential. Among the arts-related predictors in the eight, singing alone was fairly influential and negative (β=-.18), while the satisfaction obtained from reading to others (β=.08) and the *Index of Arts as Self-Health Enhancers* (β=.11) were somewhat less influential. When the arts-related predictors were combined with a set of domain satisfaction predictors, total explanatory power was increased by only 3 percentage points.

Seven predictors could explain 58% of the variance in satisfaction with the overall quality of life scores, and arts-related predictors did not increase explanatory power at all beyond that obtained from domain satisfaction variables alone.

Eight predictors explained 42% of the variance in happiness scores, with the *Index of Arts as Self-Developing Activities* adding 3 percentage points of explanatory power to that obtained from domain satisfaction scores.

Seven predictors could explain 65% of the variance in scores on the *Index of Subjective Well-Being*, with the *Index of Arts as Community Builders* increasing the total explanatory power by a single percentage point.

Summarizing these multivariate results, it seems fair to say that, relative to the satisfaction obtained from other domains of life, the arts had a very small impact on the quality

of life (measured in four somewhat different ways) of a sample of residents of Prince George who generally cared about the arts. Even in absolute terms, arts-related activities could only explain from 5% to 11% of the variance in four plausible measures of the self-perceived quality of respondents' lives.

Defining his work as that of "cultural economics", Frey (2003) provided an excellent review of economic approaches to measuring the value of arts-related activities and entities. Cultural economists try to measure the "social value of art". They are interested in capturing not only the economic or market value or benefits to art users, but also the non-economic, non-user value or benefits. Drawing on the distinction between private and public goods, one may say that cultural economists are especially interested in the value of art- or culture-related activities and entities as public goods. By definition, public goods are such that non-purchasers cannot be excluded from their benefits, e.g., if a community enjoys clean air, even those who make no contribution to keeping it clean are not excluded from breathing it. Alternatively, one might define public goods by the fact that, unlike private consumption goods, using them does not imply using them up, e.g., any number of people can enjoy a beautiful piece of music, alone or together, as long as there are people who remember how it sounds. Indeed, as Alfred Marshall (1891, p.151) observed many years ago, "It is. . .no exception to the Law (of diminishing marginal utility) that the more good music a man hears, the stronger is his taste for it likely to become". Throsby (1994, p.3) expressed this important feature of cultural goods in the language of economists. The assumption that some goods are such that one's appreciation, taste and appetite for them increases monotonically with their consumption provides

> ". . .a plausible explanation for the rightward shifting of the long-run demand curve. . .cultural consumption can be interpreted as a process leading both to present satisfaction and to the accumulation of knowledge and experience affecting future consumption. Extension of the standard lifetime utility maximization models to include cultural as well as material goods can demonstrate the cumulative nature of the utility generated by consumption of cultural goods. In contrast to ordinary goods, the current consumption of cultural goods can be seen as adding to rather than subtracting from the process of capital accumulation over time, with obvious implications for growth theory and its predictions for optimal growth rates".

This important feature of cultural goods (i.e., consumption tends to produce self-sustainable demand for and capital accumulation of similar goods with superior or more refined quality) is apparently characteristic of other public goods. Over 23 hundred years ago Aristotle observed that the institution of morality feeds on itself in the sense that the more people engage in activities that others regard as morally virtuous, the more likely others are to engage in similar activities. For present purposes, it should be noticed that not only engagement in the consumption and/or production of cultural goods, but all kinds of civic participation and nondiscriminatory human interaction share this important feature. Thus, any reasonable composite measure of the wellbeing of individuals or communities must include measures of such things that capture this very special feature.

Besides the direct consumption value that art-users get, a community's non-users may enjoy arts' *existence value* (e.g., the presence of museums in a community may increase the value of housing even for those who do not use the museums), *option value* (e.g., non-users may one day choose to visit a local museum), *prestige value* (e.g., non-users may feel some sense of pride for living in a city with a famous museum), *education value* (e.g., non-users might find it

advantageous to have museums available as part of a community's overall education resources), *innovation value* (e.g., art works might increase the creative or innovative capacity of other members of a community), *intrinsic or merit value* (e.g., non-users may believe art has some special intrinsic or merit value although they have no interest in it), and *bequest value* (e.g., non-users may like the idea of leaving museums for future generations). Frey did not mention *moral value*, but it is certainly possible that non-users might believe that in fairness to the preferences of others or possibly just because it is the right thing to do, communities ought to have and support museums. It is also possible, depending on one's view of the nature of value or of how one defines value, that this great variety of apparently distinct types of value might be regarded as species of a single intrinsically valuable thing. For example, a naturalistic, subjectivist account of value might treat *option value*, *existence value*, etc. as merely the names of different sources of a stream of personal satisfaction flowing from the existence of some resource or the knowledge that some resource is available in case one wanted to use it. Thus, the apparent pluralism suggested by the diverse value names might be reducible to some sort of monism regarding the nature of value, e.g., see Michalos (1981, 1985). There is so much good information available about the psychometric properties of satisfaction measures that if one adopted a monistic view, one's measurement instruments would be on very solid ground, e.g., see Andrews (1984) and Michalos (1991, 2005a).

Frey demonstrated the usefulness of a cultural economics approach to measuring the social value of art in particular and more generally and potentially, the *social value of anything,* by considering the case of a public referendum in Basle, Switzerland on the purchase of two paintings by Picasso. Briefly, he estimated the ratio of 'yes' to 'no' votes (his dependent variable) using two regression equations, one with predictors measuring only "direct private benefits" and another with those benefits plus "non-use values". All of the indicators were objective and more or less indirect, but the results are extremely provocative. For the first equation, the three predictors were average per capita income, expected increase in tax burden and the transport cost (based on geographical distance) to the museum. Applying this equation to 21 voting districts, Frey was able to explain 47% of the variance in voting outcomes. For the second equation, he added indirect measures of bequest value (number of children aged 0-15 per citizen), prestige value (proportion of voters born in Basle) and option value (proportion of citizens with season-tickets to two local theatres), education (proportion with at least a secondary school education) and intensity of involvement in the issue (proportion of voters with membership in "Friends of the Art Gallery"). Applying this equation to the 21 voting districts, he was able to explain 85% of the variance in voting outcomes. Considering the explanatory power of the value variables, Frey (2003, p.136) concluded that it is "crucial to take voters' bequest, prestige and option values into account". It seems to me that no better demonstration of the importance of measuring non-economic, non-market values or, put positively, of measuring the public good or social value of art could be produced. By implication, it is a powerful demonstration of the potential importance of such measurement for anything that anyone regards as important for human wellbeing. Failure to identify any presumed important feature of human existence, to measure its social value and to include the latter in one's overall assessment of that feature's total value is plainly a mistaken total evaluation.

Both Frey and Throsby (1994) emphasized the difficulties encountered by cultural economists as a result of the somewhat highly contested definitions of 'art' and 'artist'. Some agreements have been reached on definitions of visual and performing arts and artists, and some

rough comparative statistics have been obtained. Measurable ways in which governments contribute to the arts include

> Subsidies to companies and individuals
> Direct provision of artistic goods and services through state-owned enterprises
> Tax concessions to individual and corporate donors to the arts
> Tax exemptions to artists and arts organizations
> Regulation, such as local content requirements for television drama
> Provision of information
> Support for arts education and training
> Legislation on the economic rights of artists, e.g., copyright laws (Throsby, 1994, p.20)

Throsby presented some comparative statistics based on such measures indicating, for example, that in 1987 France and Germany tended to provide more support from regional and local sources, while Sweden provided more support from the central government. American public support for the arts was noticeably lower than that of Canada, United Kingdom, W. Germany, France, Netherlands, Sweden and Australia "even after allowance [was] made for indirect support for the arts through the tax system" (Throsby, 1994, p.21). Armed with some measures of the financial value of the arts or cultural goods of the sort just listed, governments can begin to address the question of the relative merits of spending tax revenues on the arts or cultural goods versus other things. The inclusion of measures of the other kinds of genuine and important value(s) clearly makes the relative assessments much more complicated.

9. International Reviews

Two summary reports of societal performance indicators are worth mentioning, one from Germany by Berger-Schmitt and Jankowitsch (1999) and the other from Norway by Hass, Brunvoll and Hoie (2002). Both are excellent summaries that focus on describing the contents of the reports in terms of topics covered, without attempting evaluations of how well anything is covered. Berger-Schmitt and Jankowitsch thought that "the indicator systems are missing a real theoretical foundation which defines the concept of welfare used and explains the relations between the various components" (p.11). Since there is no generally accepted definition of a "scientific theory" (Michalos 1980a), this may not be a very serious complaint.

Hass, Brunvoll and Hoie reviewed sustainable development reports from 30 countries plus some international agencies, and actually listed the indicators included in the reports for 12 countries and 3 international agencies. The indicators of the German report are not listed, but there are nearly 400 listed in GESIS (2003), including objective and subjective indicators. All things considered, the *German System of Social Indicators* provides a good model for a national performance report, including objective and subjective economic, environmental and social indicators. The French report has 307 indicators, and those for Denmark, Portugal, Switzerland and the U.K. have over 100 each. Out of all the indicators listed, it appears as if the only subjective indicators used are 29 in France and 3 in the U.K. Notably, the only report that mentions "the arts" is the American report (i.e., U.S. Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators, 2001). Taxes are almost totally neglected in all the reports except for one or two mentions of "green taxes". Hass, Brunvoll and Hoie say that their report covers "national sets of indicators covering the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and

environmental)", and that several countries followed the Bellagio Principles in selecting their indicators (pp.4-6). These Principles are without doubt the best set of generic guidelines for indicator development that I have seen. According to Hass, Brunvoll and Hoie,

> "Because of the very different approaches to indicator development used by the countries covered in this review, it is not possible to evaluate whether an indicator set from one country is 'better' than another country's. Each of these approaches reflect the cultural, natural and economic heritage of each country, and are tailored to the specific strategy or plan of that country" (p.14).

Since 1999 the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) has had a major initiative called the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, which features among other things, a "flagship product" called the *Urban Governance Index (UGI)*. Our focus here is not exactly on cities or urban areas, but there are clear overlaps in our concerns and the measures suggested for this Index. A four page summary of the UGI is included as an Appendix.

A nine-member committee of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) evaluated 22 quality of life indexes (qol indexes) against 14 criteria determined by the committee. The report of the committee was published in Hagerty (2001). Each member of the committee was asked to rate each index on each criterion as 'excellent=3', 'satisfactory=2' or 'not satisfactory=1', and each index was assigned an average score based on the ratings of all members. The index designed by Veenhoven (1996, the *Happy Life-Expectancy Scale*) topped the list. It is a simple product of average life expectancy and happiness for any society. The criteria of adequacy for the indexes were very similar to those recommended in other reports with two important exceptions. First, a majority of the committee thought an acceptable qol index should be reported as a single number, which would be easier to understand, like the Gross Domestic Product or the United Nations' Human Development Index. The minority view was that the "problems in combining disparate domains of life into QOL are considerable, that weights for combining components vary greatly among people, and that most public policy interventions can be achieved merely by tracking the components of QOL" (Hagerty 2001, p.6). Second, everyone on the committee believed that subjective indicators are at least as important as objective indicators.

Although I do think it is possible to evaluate different reports using generic criteria like the Bellagio Principles or the 14 ISQOLS criteria, I also think that every community has to make its own decisions regarding the Critical Issues (Exhibit 1) around indicator development. I also think that wherever it is possible, communities ought to adopt internationally agreed upon classifications and reporting systems, as long as these do not compromise their own development agenda.

Using data from several OECD countries, Boarini, Johansson and d'Ercole (2006) examined the question of the adequacy of GDP per capita to serve as a proxy measure of well-being by estimating its correlation with such things as life expectancy, infant mortality, volunteering, victimization and suicides. Their general conclusion was that

> "Across OECD countries, levels of most of these social indicators are significantly correlated to GDP per capita while changes over time are not. A composite index based on these indicators points to a significant difference in performance relative to GDP per capita in around half of countries, whatever the weights used. Survey-based data on happiness and life-satisfaction across OECD countries are only weakly related to levels of GDP per capita. . .In summary, measures of economic growth remain critical

> for any assessment of well-being but they need to be complemented with measures of other dimensions of well-being" (p.6).

The authors also cited several earlier studies with roughly the same overall assessment.

The most recent version of *Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators* (2005) and the work behind it provides a useful foundation for further development. It has a basic set of 5 indicators roughly showing the *context* in which OECD objectives in 4 categories are pursued: *self-sufficiency* (9 indicators), *equity* (9), *health* (5) and *social cohesion* (6). Each set of indicators includes some measures of current status and societal responses, i.e., in my terms, conditions in which people are living and what people are doing (collectively) about them. Appropriate combinations of such indicators are at least proxies for efficiency measures, e.g., "whether countries where social spending is relatively high also achieve better social outcomes" (p.12). The text refers to the combinations as measures of "policy effectiveness", but I am inclined to think of the status indicators as effectiveness measures and the combinations as efficiency measures. The latter at least attempt to link what is happening to some cost figures. The collection "includes only indicators that are available for at least half of OECD countries" (p.13), and disaggregations are possible "by age of individuals, gender, and family type" (p.20).

In some ways the most promising and advantageous feature of this publication is the fact that it might be connected to several other OECD volumes, e.g., *Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard*; *Education at a Glance*; *Key Environmental Indicators*; *Health at a Glance*. My assignment was "limited" to a particular array of topics, but a careful examination of all these key documents should (and probably will) be made to find additional useful measures of diverse features of well-being. It is encouraging that the current set of indicators in *Society at a Glance* allows disaggregation by age and gender, but discouraging that nothing can be said about more vulnerable racial, ethnic or disabled groups. As indicated elsewhere in this paper, the main barriers to progress in measuring the difficulties faced by these more vulnerable groups are technically definitional, which means more generally, political and philosophical. It might be useful for those countries that can reach agreement on core definitions to press ahead with a publication covering the most vulnerable groups with the widest array of indicators. The available volumes focused on women and gender equity provide excellent templates for work on other vulnerable groups.

One way to get a thoroughly integrated set of economic, environmental and social accounts is to build separate systems of environmental and social accounts, and to connect them to national systems of economic accounts. The London Group on Environmental Accounting appears to be an international ad hoc group of practitioners that began meeting in 1993 to develop a system of environmental accounts (a so-called satellite system) that would complement the System of National Accounts (SNA). Meetings have continued periodically, with papers circulated and discussed, and a very sophisticated, very promising handbook produced called *System of Environmental and Economic Accounts* (SEEA) (London Group, 2002). Authors of the handbook emphasize early on that although "the social dimension of sustainability" is important "for a well-rounded view of sustainable development, this is not a prime focus of the SEEA" (p.1-2). The "prime focus" is explained briefly as follows.

> "There are essentially three strands to the accounting system of the SEEA. The first is to look at physical data and marshal it according to the conventions, definitions and classifications of an economic accounting system. The second is to look at the economic accounting system, as it presently stands, to

> identify those elements which are relevant to the good management of environmental resources. The third and last is to consider how these two approaches could be united in a single system. . . .Once the physical data are aligned with economic classifications, an obvious development is to compare the physical quantities with the matching economic flows. This is developed throughout the SEEA by means of so-called 'hybrid' accounts. . . .A key policy goal is to maintain or improve economic performance while simultaneously reducing or eliminating the impact on the environment. This process is sometimes referred to as 'de-coupling'" (pp. 1-5-1-6).

The accounts provide a means of comparing the economic contribution to the environmental burden of diverse industries by measuring, for example, the total percent of GDP or employment contributed by an industry versus that industry's total percent of environmental pollution. Such comparative statistics are called "environmental-economic profiles" or "eco-efficiency" profiles.

The latest round of World Bank sponsored assessments of government performance was written by Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2005), based mainly on perceptions or personal assessments but also on some objective indicators. In broad strokes the authors say that

> "The governance indicators measure the following six dimensions of governance: (i) voice and accountability; (ii) political instability and violence; (iii) government effectiveness; (iv) regulatory quality; (v) rule of law, and, (vi) control of corruption. The cover 209 countries and territories for 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004. The indicators are based on several hundred individual variables measuring perceptions of governance, drawn from 37 separate data sources constructed by 31 different organizations. . .the margins of error associated with estimates of governance are not trivial. . .that there is substantial disagreement among sources about even the direction of changes in global averages of governance. For now we cautiously conclude that we certainly do not have any evidence of any significant improvement in governance worldwide, and if anything the evidence is suggestive of a deterioration, at the very least in key dimensions such as regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption" (Kaufman, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2005, pp.2, 15).

The usefulness of the aggregated indicators in this report is limited at best. The principles used to select the sample of agencies, individuals and question items from surveys are not provided. Without such information, it is impossible to determine how plausible the estimation procedures and reported error margins are. Examining the information provided in the document's Appendix about the 31 sources and kinds of indicators that might have been used (exact question items are not given), one finds that 71% (22) were business/bank sources and 29% (9) were NGO/university/polling firms. Thus, one would expect to find a pro-business bias in the final assessments of government performance. In the dimension called 'regulatory quality', such a bias is pretty clear. Good quality is largely measured by fewer controls on any sort of profit-taking, rather than, for example, regulations designed to distribute the benefits and costs of profit-taking equitably to all stakeholders. There are, however, some useful items in various lists provided from the different sources, e.g., see the NGO Freedom House annual publication *Freedom in the World*, which has been running since 1978 and covers 192 countries.

There is a review paper on trust currently being circulated for discussion among some OECD reviewers, i.e., Van de Walle, Van Roosbroek and Bouckaert (2005). It is based primarily on OECD country results of surveys taken as part of the 4 collaborative World Values Studies (1981, 1990, 1995-1997, 1999-2000. The main item asks respondents how much trust they have in several institutions, with 4 response categories, 'a great deal', 'quite a lot', 'not very much' and 'none at all'. A second item asks about which of 4 goals is most important to respondents,

'maintaining order in the nation', 'giving people more say in important government decisions', 'fighting rising prices', and 'protecting freedom of speech'. Self-reports of people's trust are paradigm cases of subjective indicators, since trust is not observable. Although people's verbal or written reports about their levels of trust are observable, trust itself is not. Anyhow, here are some conclusions from that report.

> There is an "optimal level of citizen trust in government. . .contingent upon the political and administrative culture of a country, and may thus be different in different countries".
> "Despite assertions that there is a constant decline in citizens' trust in the public sector, there often are no suitable time-series data for supporting these statements."
> "There is no evidence of a direct causal link between the performance of government, and citizens' trust in government."
> Nevertheless, the authors also report that "Higher levels of interpersonal trust not only increase government performance, but also the performance of large firms. An increase in trust raises judicial efficiency, bureaucratic quality and tax compliance, as well as share of large firms in total GDP, and lowers corruption. In other words, 'trust facilitates all large-scale activities, not just those of government' (La Porta, Lopez-de Silanes, Schleifer and Vishny, 1991: 335)" (Van de Walle, Van Roosbroek, Bouckaert, 2005, pp.3,4, 16).

From my own point of view, what is most desirable is to have a public sector whose performance is trustworthy and citizens who give it the amount if trust it merits, Real Paradise. This is clearly better than a justifiably mistrusted poorly performing public sector, a highly trusted poorly performing public sector and an unjustifiably mistrusted well-performing public sector.

Regarding trust, the Anonymous Iamblichus, writing around the late fifth and early fourth century BCE, had some brilliant observations. Iamblichus believed that the implications of living in communities that have good laws and law-abiding people (i.e., communities characterized by EUNOMIA) are quite different from those characterized by the opposite qualities (i.e., by ANOMIA). The following passages describe the sorts of social capital he envisioned.

> "In the first place, trust arises from EUNOMIA, and this benefits all people greatly and is one of the great goods. For as a result of it, money becomes available and so, even if there is little it is sufficient since it is in circulation. . .Fortunes and misfortunes in money and life are managed most suitably for people as a result of EUNOMIA. For those enjoying good fortune can use it in safety and without danger of plots, while those suffering ill fortune are aided by the fortunate. . .Through EUNOMIA. . .the time people devote to PRAGMATA [a word which can mean 'government', 'public business', or 'troubles'] is idle, but that devoted to the activities of life is productive. In EUNOMIA people are free from the most unpleasant concern and engage in the most pleasant, since concern about PRAGMATA is most unpleasant and concern about one's activities is most pleasant. Also, when they go to sleep, which is a rest from troubles for people, they go to it without fear and unworried about painful matters, and when they rise from it they have other similar experiences. . .Nor. . .do they expect the day to bring poverty, but they look forward to it without fear directing their concern without grief towards the activities of life, . . .And war, which is the source of the greatest evils for people. . .comes more to those who practice ANOMIA, less to those practicing EUNOMIA" (McKirahan, 1999, pp.406-407).

Self-reported measures of trust are probably the most frequently used subjective indicators of social capital today. Following trust, which resulted from living in communities with good laws and law-abiding people, many familiar observable and unobservable features of a good life appear in the quotation, i.e., money and financial security, personal safety, freedom to

pursue and enjoy the pleasures of one's special interests and activities, absence of worries and fears, peaceful and restful sleep, hopefulness for the future, and freedom from war.

10. National Reports

U.S. President Clinton's President's Council on Sustainable Development existed from 1993 to 1999 and, among other things, produced a useful document called *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for the Prosperity, Opportunity and a Healthy Environment for the Future* (1996). The Council's remarks on appropriate vehicles to carry the message of *Sustainable America* are instructive.

> "Thick books of statistical tables, piles of computer printouts, or databases buried in government computers are not the forms in which information is most accessible or useful. Development of simplified formats for presentation and reporting of information would help all sectors of society reach more fully informed decisions. . . .For example, use of a daily clean air index in a city increases awareness among citizens about local air quality and enables them to take steps to protect themselves and their children" (Chapter 3, p.8).

A report of the U.S. Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (2001) seems to have begun in 1996 in response to the President's Council on Sustainable development. It was first released for public review in 1999 and the authors had considerable feedback on it. They believed that there is a difference between "measures of sustainability and measures of current well-being sometimes called 'quality of life indicators'. We relate the term 'sustainability'," they write, "to the capacities of the natural and built endowments from which we derive our current economic output, environmental quality and social services" (p.4). From this point of view, indicators that I and others would usually regard as output measures (e.g., educational achievement rates and life expectancy) are regarded as capacity (endowment, capital) indicators. What is regarded as input or output is relative to one's purposes. So, depending on one's purposes, it is as reasonable to think of educational achievement, for example, as indicating capacity as it is to think of it as indicating an output of investments of government funds, one's own time, energy, genetic endowment, socio-economic environment and so on. Although I would not make much of the alleged distinction between sustainability and quality of life indicators, I think the Interagency Group's distinction between "Outputs from economic and environmental processes" and "Results defined as the value or satisfaction that people experience through the process of 'consuming' or using economic and ecological goods and services" (p.13) is useful. I would prefer to draw the line by distinguishing objectively and subjectively measured outputs, or even between objectively measured outputs and satisfaction with those outputs, but these are also semantic quibbles. The important thing is that these authors recognize personal satisfaction as something to be achieved and sustained. In their words,

> "Although separating Output from Results may create challenges in the development of indicators, it would offer several important advantages. One is recognition that needs and wants are involved and that economic, environmental and social processes affect them. If we take needs and wants (economists call them preferences) as given, and assume they are adequately measured by consumer expenditures, we will deprive ourselves of the ability to develop indicators to measure how what people want is changing and to understand what is causing the changes. . . .A second advantage is that it focuses attention on processes that are actually under the control of 'consumers' rather than only on those under the control of producers. . . .A third advantage that may arise is the development of a broader consensus about what

> needs to be done about 'consumption' to make progress in sustainable development. . . .Broader consensus on sustainable development may be promoted by development of indicators that show the extent to which people are finding new ways to increase Results even when Output is constant or reduced. If we can develop indicators that focus on maintaining or increasing 'consumer satisfaction' or Results, we are more likely to get consensus about changes that may reduce Output in physical terms if not in monetary terms" (p.14).

These authors did not suggest appealing to micro-economic utility theory, but I suppose many economists would be happy to do so at this point. I would follow the lead of most social indicators researchers and use survey research to measure personal satisfaction directly, as suggested above and explained more thoroughly in Michalos (1985, 1991-93). The most heartbreaking line in the whole Interagency report came a few pages later. "Since we have no direct measures of human satisfaction," they wrote, "we usually rely on the market value of the goods and services people use as a proxy measure" (p.20). Forty years of good work on subjective indicators disposed of with one line! For each indicator in the report, the authors answer the questions "Why is this indicator important?", "What does this indicator show?" and "How does this indicator relate to sustainable development?". Finally, the last chapter in the report provides a plan for "An Institutional Home for Reporting SDI for the US".

The US National Research Council's Committee on National Statistics's panel report by Nordhaus and Kokkelenberg (1999) covers some of the same ground as that covered in the London Group report, and members of the panel interacted and shared information with members of the London Group. It is worthwhile to quote the following passage from the Executive Summary found on the National Academies of Science website.

> ". . .the NIPA's [National Income and Product Accounts] focus on market activities has raised concerns that the accounts are incomplete and misleading because they omit important nonmarket activities, such as nonmarket work, the services of the environment, and human capital. In response to these concerns about standard measures of economic activity, private scholars and governments have endeavored to broaden the national accounts in many directions. Most recently, attention has focused on extending the accounts to include natural resources and the environment. *The guiding principle in extended national accounts is to measure as much economic activity as is feasible, whether that activity takes place inside or outside the boundaries of the marketplace*. . . .a full set of accounts would require incremental outlays for BEA [Bureau of Economic Analysis] and other agencies of about $10 million per year for a decade or more " (p.8, http://books.nap.edu/html/natures_numbers; emphasis added).

Although one might have been more impressed by the estimated price tag in this passage than by the bit I italicized, for purposes of developing a comprehensive set of key performance indicators for the United States, it is extremely important to recognize that an environmentally extended NIPA system is *not* such a set. As explained above, some extremely important public goods have high levels of social value but are not normally traded in the market place and cannot reasonably be measured by the yardstick of money.

The *Index of Social Health* (Miringoff and Miringoff 1999), *Genuine Progress Index* (Cobb, Glickman and Cheslog 2001) and the *Index of Economic Well-Being* (Osberg and Sharpe 2002) are included in the Hagerty (2001) review. All of them are based on objective indicators, with Social Health focusing on the relatively vulnerable groups in the United States, and the other two assembling a richer collection of economic indicators than those found in the National Income and Product Accounts. They are worthwhile initiatives that illustrate the limitations of

the National Accounts and provide useful models of alternatives. In the long run, reports like the SEEA combined with a proper set of social accounts will achieve national and international support, but these more modest efforts will still be useful. In Canada, for example, groups have gathered on the east and west coasts to construct Genuine Progress Atlantic and Genuine Progress Pacific indicators. There is also an active group working on a *Canadian Index of Wellbeing*, funded by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation.

The Australian report called *Measuring Australia's Progress*, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) is organized around four broad forms of wealth referred to as human capital, natural capital, produced and financial capital, and social capital. Within these fields, it has headline dimensions (e.g., health, work), headline indicators (e.g., life expectancy at birth, unemployment rate) and supplementary indicators. It is divisible into discrete, short reports, which is good, but lacks any subjective indicators. Australia now has national level quality-of-life subjective indicators in the Australian Unity Index (Cummins http://www.acqol.deakin.edu.au). So one would hope to see some of them used in future reports. The "capital approach" proposed by Smith, Simard and Sharpe (2001) in Canada was developed more thoroughly in this Australian report independently of the Canadian effort. Under the Headline Dimension called 'Social Attachment', 8 indicators are listed, namely, attendance at live performances, participation in organized sports, voluntary work, marriage and divorce rates, persons living alone, waking-time spent alone, homelessness, suicide and drug-related death rates. Some of these indicators require self-reports from special surveys (e.g., time use surveys to get waking-time spent alone) and some use administrative data (e.g., marriage and divorce rates).

11. Specific Domain Reports or Accounts

The OECD (2000) report called *A System of Health Accounts* is a good example of one type of satellite accounting system. It does not attempt to do anything but provide a "core set of financial data" covering "health care spending" by constructing "a conceptual basis of statistical reporting rules and. . .a newly developed International Classification for Health Accounts (ICHA) which covers three dimensions: health care by functions of care; providers of health care services; and sources of funding " (p.3). Comprehensive and detailed as it is, it is not a general system of health accounts in the sense of covering economic, environmental and social issues related to health. As a set of financial accounts (a bookkeeping system), it tells us how much money is spent on health care, where it comes from, where it goes to and for what purpose. It does not tell us what "good" was actually accomplished in the sense of how many people of what sort (rich, poor, old, etc.), suffered what health ailment, received what treatment with what result, and with what measurable change in the quality of their health or life.

In contrast to *A System of Health Accounts*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000) report called *Healthy People 2010, Volume 1* focuses on the specific goals of increasing "the quality and years of healthy life" and eliminating "health disparities" (p.1). It is based on an extensive public consultation process described briefly as follows.

> "The Healthy People Consortium – an alliance of more than 350 national organizations and 250 State public health, mental health, substance abuse, and environmental agencies – conducted three national meetings on the development of Healthy People 2010. In addition, many individuals and organizations gave testimony about health priorities at five Healthy People 2010 regional meetings held in late 1988. . . .More than 11,000 comments on draft materials were received by mail or via the Internet from individuals in every State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico" (p.2).

The report has 28 focus areas and 467 specific objectives, with the latter focusing on the determinants of health. It includes objective and subjective indicators from all States, the District and Puerto Rico. I do not know what more one could want from a comprehensive health report, including the production process and the product, apart from a detailed financial accounting system as found in the other report. If one had a consultation process like the *Healthy People 2010* process for a comprehensive societal performance report, that would be an excellent foundation.

The Oregon Progress Board (2001) report, *Achieving the Oregon Shines Vision: The 2001 Benchmark Performance Report*, is the sixth biennial report on progress made in achieving 90 benchmarks by 2000. The foundation of the work is called a "circle of prosperity". Three basic goals of quality jobs, caring communities and sustainable surroundings each have objectives, key benchmarks and ordinary benchmarks, and results on each benchmark are assigned a grade from A to F. Benchmarks are added and deleted to accommodate changes in living conditions. Although 14 of the 90 benchmarks are based on data from the Oregon Population Survey, there are only two clear cases of subjective indicators, one giving self-reported health status and one about feelings of community connectedness.

The report called *The Wisdom of Our Choices: Boston's Indicators of Progress, Change and Sustainability 2000*, by the Boston Foundation (2000), is described as a

> "remarkable new tool [developed] in partnership with residents, community-based organizations, public agencies, civic institutions and local universities. In many sessions hosted at the Boston Foundation, hundreds of people and scores of organizations met to reach agreement on a way to measure and guide change in our communities and region. A draft report was released. . .at a Boston Citizen Seminar. . .attended by 250 Bostonians. . . .The draft report was distributed for review to almost 1000 people and met with acclaim both locally and nationally. . . .The *Indicators Project* is moving to the next phase. . . .we will work with our partners to coordinate sessions among a cross-section of Bostonians to further an informed, collaborative civic agenda" (covering letter by Anna Faith Jones, President, Boston Foundation).

The Vision statement for Boston is notable for its absence of any specific mention of economic development and for its great emphasis on culture and the arts. There is no evidence of what Bertram Gross called the 'new philistinism' in the Boston report. Each of eight broad goal areas has objective and subjective measures, and a short sentence describes how Boston is doing on each measure. Each chapter has a vision statement, a narrative account of the historical, regional, citywide and neighborhood contexts, a review of remaining challenges, and an array of statistical tables, charts and maps.

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Appendix

Urban Governance Index (UGI)

A tool to measure progress in achieving good urban governance

What do we mean by good urban governance?

Urban governance can be defined as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens. The Global Campaign on Urban Governance proposes that good urban governance is characterized by a series of principles, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. More information on the campaign can be found at: http://www.unhabitat.org/ governance

What is the purpose of the Urban Governance Index?

Within the framework of the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, UN-HABITAT is currently developing and testing an index to measure the quality of urban governance. The index has a two-fold purpose:

- At the *global level*, the index will be used to demonstrate the importance of good urban governance in achieving broad development objectives, such as the Millennium Development Goals and those in the Habitat Agenda. Research at the national level has demonstrated that the good governance correlates with positive development outcomes. The index will also permit the regional and global comparison of cities based on the quality of their urban governance. The process of comparison is designed to catalyse specific action to improve the quality of local governance.
- At the *local level*: the index is expected to catalyse local action to improve the quality of urban governance. Local indicators will be developed by cities and their partners to respond directly to their unique contexts and needs. The Urban Governance Index, therefore, will be supported by tools, training guides and an appendix of additional indicators to help cities develop their own monitoring systems.

What are the benefits of developing urban governance indicators?

- Indicators are essential to assess the effectiveness of policies (eg. decentralization policy, gender policy)
- Indicators can help in monitoring if capacity building efforts yield the expected results (Value for Money; Cost-Benefit Analysis)
- The design of an indicators system can help creating a platform to involve civil society and private sector in local governance
- Indicators give us an objective set of data to feed the review of urban governance strategies when necessary
- Monitoring through indicators can provide an objective account of achievements of local elected leaders (for instance at times of elections).

What is the focus of the index?

The Urban Governance Index and its constituent indicators focus on the processes, institutions and relationships at the local level. This should be seen as part of a wider range of indicators, focusing on inputs, processes, performance, perception, output, or outcome. For example, the following indicators all measure different aspects of the "access to water".

- Input: Resources available for improvement of basic services in a municipality ($)

- Performance: Average time required by municipal authority to process a water connection (# days)
- Process: Is civil society involved in a formal participatory planning and budgeting process before undertaking investment in basic services? (Y/N – incremental steps)
- Perception: Satisfaction with transparency in access to water (through report card/ survey result)
- Output: Households with access to water within 200m of dwelling (%)
- Outcome: Under-Five Mortality Rate: of male and female children who die before having attained their 5th birthday (%)

The *structure* of the index reflects four core principles of good urban governance promoted by the Campaign as the overall organising framework for the Index: effectiveness, equity, participation and accountability. The index can then be used to test for correlation between the quality of urban governance and issues such as urban poverty reduction, quality of life, city competitiveness and inclusiveness. Some of these issues are already captured by other indices.

How has the Index been developed?

The Urban Governance Index has been developed jointly by the Global Urban Observatory and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, supported by selected cities as well as key members of the Campaign's **Global Steering Group**. An internal UN-HABITAT Flex-Team was established to prepare initial framework and indicators in 2002. Initial indicators were developed based on Urban Indicators Programme and in-house research. An **Expert Group Meeting** made recommendations regarding the structure and content of the index in November 2002. **Field-testing** was carried out in two stages with a group comprising first 12 and later 24 large and medium-size cities from different regions.[1] It is intended to expand this to a larger group based on the Global Urban Observatory's monitoring programme and through the ongoing city-based work of UN-HABITAT programmes. A long-list of indicators was selected for the initial field test with partners. Based on the results, indicators that demonstrated the strongest correlation to the quality of governance have been selected for inclusion in the Index. Opportunities for **national adaptation** of the Index are being actively pursued, including in Indonesia, Somalia and Sri Lanka. **National (multi-city) application** is already underway in Zimbabwe and Mongolia. Discussions are ongoing with local authorities' associations to develop a **Good Governance Hallmark** or Award system for cities based on the Index results.

Which criteria are used to evaluate the usefulness of indicators?

A list of criteria was proposed for evaluating the *indicators* that will make up the Index. The key criteria include the following:

- *Relevance* for monitoring Urban Governance Principles and Relationships
- *Ease of collection* including availability and/or effort required to obtain data
- *Credibility* for Partners, Investors, Media, Electorate
- *Universality* of use, at local, national, regional, global levels

How can a city design its own governance indicator system?

The following steps can serve as a guideline for designed a local governance indicator system for a particular city or group of cities.

- Step 1: Sensitize local leaders about the importance of measuring progress in improved urban governance
- Step 2: Develop locally appropriate indicators: definition, selection criteria, linkages with other indicators

[1] Cities which participated in the field tests include, in alphabetical order: Amman, Bayamo, Colombo, Dakar, Douala, Enugu, Guadalajara, Ibadan, Ismailia, Kandy, Kano, Louga, Matale, Montevideo, Montreal, Moratuwa, Naga City, Negombo, Pristina, Quito, Santo Andre, Tanta, Vancouver, Yaounde.

- Step 3: Define benchmarks and targets
- Step 4: Assigning scoring and weighting to the indicators and sub-indices and the proposed formulae for the local adaptation of the Urban Governance Index.
- Step 5: Field test in cities
- Step 6: Collect data on a periodic basis
- Step 7: Integrate findings in urban policy development

List of UGI Indicators

The following list gives an overview of 25 indicators, which have been tested in 24 cities. Although some modifications are expected, this list can serve as a starting point for cities, civil society organisations, associations of local government, Ministries of Local Government, or coalitions of these key actors to start designing their own urban governance indicators systems.

Ideally, the data on the indicators should be collected through a stakeholder meeting where all key urban actors are present. The questionnaire is circulated in advance and the information is discussed and agreed upon by all stakeholders before being fed into the questionnaire. The UGI does not replace or substitute household surveys, citizen's report cards, statistical data or perception surveys. It is a fact-based tool, which can complement the findings of all the above. The UGI is not expensive to undertake. It involves some technical capacity building for a partner organisation, which can facilitate the exercise, and the organisation of a one-or-two day meeting for selected stakeholder representatives.

The Index is composed of four sub-indices, namely: Participation sub-index; Equity sub-index; Effectiveness sub-index; and Accountability Sub-Index. These are based on core principles of good urban governance, which are accepted and promoted by UN-HABITAT and other organisations working in the field of governance.

Effectiveness

1. Local government revenue per capita

Defined as the total local government revenue (income annually collected, both capital and recurrent for the metropolitan area, in US dollars) per capita (3 year average)

2. Ratio of actual recurrent and capital budget

Assessment of the distribution of local government budget sources. Ratio of income derived on a regular basis (e.g. through taxes and user charges) and that obtained from allocation of funds from internal or external sources.

3. Local government revenue transfers

Percentage of local government revenue originating from higher levels of government. This includes formula driven payments (such as repatriation of income tax), other grant donations from higher government levels including national or state governments and other types of transfers.

4. Ratio of mandated to actual tax collection

Ratio of mandated tax collected to the actual tax collected. Tax collection is one of the sources of income for the local government.

5. Predictability of transfers in local government budget

Does the local authority knows well in advance (2-3 years) about the amount of budget and level of consistency/regularity in receiving transfer from higher government?

6. Published performance delivery standards

Presence or absence of a formal publication by the local government of performance standards for key services delivered by the local authority.

7. Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Existence and frequency of a survey on consumers' satisfaction with the local authority's services**.**

8. Existence of a vision statement

The measure of local authorities commitment in articulating a vision for the city's progress. Does the local authority articulate a vision for the city's future through a participatory process?

Equity

9. Citizens' Charter: right of access to basic services

Presence or absence of a signed, published statement (charter) from the local authority which acknowledges citizens' right of access to basic services.

10. & 11. Percentage of women councillors in local authorities

10. Women councillors as a percentage of the total number of councillors in a local authority (in the last election).

11. Percentage of women councillors in key positions

12. Pro-poor pricing policies for water

Presence or absence of a pricing policy for water which takes into account the needs of the poor households, translated into lower rates for them compared to other groups and prices applied to business/industrial consumption.

13. Incentives for informal businesses

13a.Presence of particular areas in the central retail areas of the city where small scale (informal) street vending is not allowed (or submitted to particular restrictions).

13b. Also measures the existence of incentives for informal businesses e.g. street vending, informal public markets, and municipal fairs.

Participation

14. Elected council

The indicator measures whether the local governing council is elected through a democratic process or not.

15. Selection of Mayor

The indicator measures how the Mayor is selected, whether directly elected, elected from amongst the councillors or directly appointed.

16. Voter turnout

Total voter turnout (both male and female) in percentage in the last election

17. Public forum

The public forum could include people's council, city consultation, neighbourhood advisory committees, town hall meetings etc.

18. Civic Associations per 10,000 population

Measured as the number of civic associations (registered) per 10,000 people within the local authority's jurisdiction.

Accountability

19. Formal publication (contracts and tenders; budgets and accounts)

Existence of a formal publication (to be accessible) by the local government that consists of contracts, tenders and budgets and accounts.

20. Control by higher levels of government

Measures the control of the higher levels of government (National, State /provincial) for closing the local government and removing councillors from office.

21. Codes of Conduct

Existence of a signed published statement of the standards of conduct that citizens are entitled to from their elected officials and local government staff.

22. Facility for citizen complaints

The existence of a facility established within the local authority to respond to complaints and a local facility to receive complaints and information on corruption.

23. Anti-corruption Commission

Existence of a local agency to investigate and report cases of corruption.

24. Disclosure of Income/Assets

Are locally elected officials required to publicly disclose their income and assets (and those of their immediate family) prior to taking office?

25. Independent audit

Is there a regular independent audit of municipal accounts, the results of which are widely disseminated?

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