The Politics of Wellbeing, Conservation and Development in Chiawa, Zambia
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Introduction

• Wellbeing in Scotland, wellbeing in Zambia?

• Introduce our research
• Describe Zambia field site (Chiawa)
• Present some of our findings
• Suggest implications for discussion
Wellbeing and Poverty Pathways

- Project to test ‘value added’ of looking at subjective dimensions of wellbeing
- Aim to explore relations and tensions between subjective experience and objective circumstances
- Development of new measure ‘inner wellbeing’ based in research in global south
- Not just satisfaction with life: what people think and feel themselves able to be and do
- Qualitative and quantitative

Two rounds of 4 months research, rural Zambia and India, 2010-2014
Modelling Wellbeing

- Wider context that enables or constrains wellbeing
- Seven, five item domains
- Survey (370 x 2) plus 52 qualitative interviews
- Husbands and wives (separately) and women heading households

- Model refined through mixed methods, qualitative reflection and statistical testing (what to ask about and how to ask it):
  - consultation with NGOs and other local people
  - intensive qualitative field testing
  - ongoing reflection within local teams
  - statistically tested and revised
Chiawa

• The Disconnect:
  – Dusty roads, mud houses, rain-fed no or low technology agriculture
  – Luxury safari tourism marketing wilderness
  – Large agribusiness plantations ‘feeding the nation’

• Classic modernisation imaginary:
  – Stagnant ‘traditional’ sector
  – Development through ‘modern’ sector employment
  – Local people as obstacles to (conservation-based) development: need to be better educated – and policed
But….

• ‘Modern’ and ‘traditional’ are deeply intertwined
• Some benefits (jobs) but overall livelihoods undermined by development
• New bridge and road this year will reverse historical remoteness and bring new development
• Challenge to manage new development to promote maximum benefit that is fair and sustainable: contributing to national economic growth, environmental conservation, local people’s wellbeing

‘Chiawa is very blessed in the sense that we have the natural resources in place, we have fertile land, we have abundant water source but how to tap these things for betterment of the people - that is the difficult part.’
Wellbeing offers a person-centred approach

‘People here, right now they are not sure how long we shall be in this area because you see, yes, development, we need it, but the development which is coming in this area is a development which is consuming our land bit by bit. Bit by bit, our land is being consumed. It means the community, eventually the community will have very little place to live, so that's why it is a hazard.’

NB Cultural resonance of ‘consuming’
‘Life this time in Chiawa is difficult, it is not the way it used to be in the past…. We are facing a lot of challenges. Maybe the first challenge is the farming situation; we are not able to farm the way we used to because of the poor rainfall pattern, also because of the human animal conflict … also, because of the floods. When the spillway gates get opened then the crops are washed away by the floods.’

In 2012 only 25% report farming as main source of survival
• 2010 97% planted crops in previous year; 2012 78%
• 2012 70% planted maize – but only 37% harvested any due to combination of flooding, drought and animal damage
Employment and Gender

• 2012 Employment = main source of survival for 25% people
• Strongly gendered – men have almost all the better jobs
• Safari lodge work mainly to young men, ambiguous impact in community – some support to wider families, but also conspicuous consumption, girlfriends, and bars
• Single women doing worst on most indicators objective and subjective
• Economic and social marginality and limited networks
A Risk Environment

- Since Game Management Area (1991) increasing numbers of wild animals, leading to personal injury and death, loss of livelihood, climate of fear/uncertainty
- Conservation restrictions mean they can only scare animals away, not shoot them
- Zambia Wildlife Authority seen as policing people, prioritising animals over them, and slow and ineffective in responding to incidents

‘So I have to go very far away into the bush so that I can cut some firewood there.. for cooking. And, if I am again to say there are a lot of elephants so I must not go and do some farming, then again there I will starve. So I also have to take a risk. So every now you have to take risks in order for you to earn a living, you see..... It’s just a game of win and lose. This year maybe there are not so many elephants, we are lucky. And this year there are so many elephants, you lose.’
Land alienation

- Human-wildlife conflict masks more dangerous human-human conflict
- Few local people have land titles - customary land held by chieftainess
- 1995 land act – customary land may be given on title for development
- Land registry process very complicated and expensive, not viable for most local people
- Loss of access to water, grassland and fuelwood undermines livelihoods
- Fear of displacement, insecurity
- Reprisals when challenge land sales

‘Threatened, ok the threat that I have is that they have just written that they will push me out of that place, demolish your house, so all those are threats that I have faced……..

Now is quite difficult and hard for me to explain, the way I am coping up with it, because it’s every day it’s confusing me, every time is confusing, so unless it is fully settled, then I’m over that uncertainty.’
Chiawa culture of wellbeing

• Economic sufficiency comes first
• But about *taking care* of others
• Own family most immediately, but broader ethic of generalised reciprocity extending over time and place
• Giving and receiving of material goods affirms moral identities and personal and social relationships
• This interweaving of material, relational and moral should guide the way that the community, and even the nation, should be governed – a motif for power properly used

‘By helping both the sides I was not looking at my direct personal benefit because they being relatives, I felt maybe at one point that you never know who is going to help whom; because maybe if I helped my relatives maybe at some point they also help me or my children, or maybe their children who help my children. My wife’s relatives also look at me as being a good person. Also, you never know who is going to be helped between my children and them.’
### Quantifying Subjective Experience

#### Eight Lowest IWB Scores 2012 (-2/+2 scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP2 If official decisions are made that affect you badly, do you feel that you have power to change them?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-1.44</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC2 When do you get to hear about events in the community?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>1.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC4 What proportion of people in the community are helpful to you?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>0.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC3 Do you feel that people around you have got ahead of you?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>0.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW1 How well have you been able to face life’s difficulties?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>0.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP3 Do you feel that you are heard (beyond family)?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>1.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC1 How well would you say you are managing economically at present?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC1 Do you know the kind of people who can help you get things done?</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>1.062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: AP= Agency and Participation; SC= Social Connections; EC= Economic Confidence; SW= Self-Worth

Low economic confidence, little sense of agency, low social trust
‘What brings about this division is that each time people try to come together there are always spies there. As soon as you plan for something then some people from that group will again go and report whatever is being discussed. And then those now will say “who are the ring-leaders, I think it was this one and that one?” and then those are called and then threatened. From there they will not come back to the group, they will say “ah, I think it is enough for me.” ’

A: Sometimes you want to demonstrate and you are called and food is provided and you eat and then what follows next? (He is laughing now)

Q: So once you have been fed it is difficult then to demonstrate? So you are saying you want to demonstrate against them but they are the ones who feed you? (A: Yes!) And once you have eaten you cannot demonstrate against them?

A: Yes, that is the problem.
Key Findings - Overall

- Wellbeing emerges in interaction - between people, between collective and individual, between people and context
- Relations with the natural environment are integral to human wellbeing – a ‘wellbeing ecology’?
- Better socio-economic status is matched by higher inner wellbeing scores
- Gender significantly affects wellbeing
- Politics matter to wellbeing! The presence/absence of the state is the most striking difference between the field sites
- Our findings support a continued focus on livelihoods and rights, and not their replacement by subjective wellbeing
However: the Value Added of a Wellbeing approach

- Person-centred focus: Development has occurred – but in ways that undermine people’s wellbeing
- Broader ‘whole of life’ view – risk environment, psycho-social effects of insecurity
- Affirmation of local culture as resource – and recognition of where it may be a constraint
- Quantification of subjective experience is valuable in (policy) worlds where numbers matter but MUST be complemented by qualitative data and analysis
- Apparently non-political character of wellbeing can be a significant advantage in situations of conflict
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