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Measuring cohesion and wellbeing

The development of international and national indexes

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Parallel with efforts to conceptualise and define social cohesion, substantial governmental and academic effort has been devoted to identifying metrics to measure social progress.

In the post-war decades, monitoring of social progress had emphasised economic development, measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—the total value of the goods and services produced by the economy of a country in a given year. This focus was driven by a belief in the power of economics to transform society, reduce poverty and improve wellbeing.

In the 1980s a new emphasis came to prominence, recognising, in the words of Mahbub ul Haq, Founder of the United Nations Human Development Report, the need to measure "more significant things regarding human life than just the market value of commodities brought and sold":

> People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in higher measured income or growth figures: better nutrition and health services, greater access to knowledge, more secure livelihoods, better working conditions, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, and a sense of participating in the economic, cultural and political activities of their communities. (UN Human Development Report 1990: 9)

It was acknowledged that rapid GNP growth and high-income levels on their own were no guarantees for human

progress or a cohesive society. On its own, GDP did not address distributional concerns about how economic resources were shared between individuals. In 2017, in a summary of the limitations of GDP as a measure of social welfare, Miles Fletcher of the UK Office of National Statistics wrote:

> There are a number of reasons why GDP is, at best, limited as a measure of welfare. First, it focuses solely on the value of goods and services produced each year, and an increase in this doesn't necessarily lead to a proportionate increase in the wellbeing of individuals. Second, it doesn't fully take into account things like social, natural, or human capital – things which all improve our lives and contribute to our happiness and health.
>
> This means that a focus on GDP growth may encourage activities which negatively affect wellbeing in the long term, such as the depletion of natural resources faster than they can be replaced. Additionally, GDP doesn't count hours spent on unpaid work like volunteering or caring – things which are important for us in other ways, and which contribute billions to the economy. (Fletcher 2017, Beyond GDP: Measuring the economic well-being of individuals)

BEYOND GDP

The challenge of identifying improved metrics of social progress and wellbeing has occupied leading intellects for more than 50 years, with contributions from two Nobel Prize winners, among others, working under the auspices of major international agencies (UN, OECD, World Bank), regional bodies, academic centres, think tanks and corporate consultants.

Indicators of social progress have been evaluated by a number of international projects and inquiries, including:

1. 1976 – OECD, "Measuring Social Wellbeing: A progress report on the development of social indicators."
2. 1990 – United Nations Human Development Programme.
3. 2008 – The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress established by President Sarkozy of France and headed by Joseph Stiglitz (Nobel Prize winner in economics, 2001), advisor Amartya Sen (Nobel Prize winner in economics, 1999), co-ordinator Jean Paul Fitoussi, a leading French economist and sociologist. Authored what came to be known as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission Report.
4. 2010 – The OECD High-Level Expert Group on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, referred to as HLEG.
5. 2012 – A UN high level meeting on "Wellbeing and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm."

There was high point of interest in indicators of social progress in the years 2008-12. In 2010 the UK Office for National Statistics began a series of consultations to inform the development of measures of national well-being. In Australia the Australian Bureau of Statistics led a high level national consultation the resulted in a major 2012 report, *Measures of Australia's Progress. Aspirations for Our Nation: A Conversation with Australians About Progress.*

The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission reported that:

> The time is ripe for our measurement system to *shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's wellbeing*. And measures of wellbeing should be put in a context of sustainability .... Changing emphasis does not mean dismissing GDP and production measures... But emphasising wellbeing is important because there appears to be an increasing gap between the information contained in aggregate GDP data and what counts for common people's wellbeing. This means working towards the development of a statistical system that complements measures of market activity by measures centred on people's wellbeing and by measures that capture sustainability. Such a system must, of necessity, be plural – because no single measure can summarize something as complex as the wellbeing of the members of society... (Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress 2009, p.8)

The commission also recommended that data collection should include both objective and subjective indicators (Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, p.16). In a later publication, Professor Stiglitz and his co-authors argued for complementing GDP with a "dashboard" of indicators that "would reflect the distribution of wellbeing in society and its sustainability across its social, economic and environmental dimensions." Here, the challenge would be to "make the dashboard small enough to be easily comprehensible, but large enough to summarise what we care about the most."

In identical terms, the OECD High-Level Expert Group recommended complementing GDP with a range of indicators that would reflect societal wellbeing and "its sustainability across its social, economic and environmental dimensions."

One recommendation of the group is of particular relevance to the post-pandemic world. In its report, it noted that the full impact of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis was inadequately understood by governments because key metrics were not consulted. Its central message was "what we measure affects what we do. If we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing. If we don't measure something, it becomes neglected, as if the problem didn't exist."

While there has been substantial research undertaken on a framework of indicators to supplement the measure of GDP, as in the work on social cohesion, there has emerged no agreed position. Although there is general agreement that the problem exists, a range of approaches, different descriptors and different metrics have been put forward. Key conceptualisations include 'human development', 'quality of 'life', 'wellbeing', 'happiness,' and most simply, 'better life'.

Although not focused on social cohesion, however defined, this significant body of work is of direct relevance to the development of a broadly conceptualised Australian National Index of Social Cohesion as it incorporates leading international evaluations of indicators of socially cohesive societies. There is also an overlap of concepts, as indicated in the OECD's 2011 definition, which conceptualises "a cohesive society as one that works towards the wellbeing

of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility." Overlap is also evident in the paper "Social Cohesion in Canada: Possible Indicators" (2000) prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development, which discusses "conditions favourable for inclusive social cohesion," including economic conditions, life chances and quality of life, alongside ideational and behavioural aspects of cohesive activity in society. This body of work also informs methodological approaches to the construction of indexes and considers their advantages and limitations.

In the following discussion the methodology of two leading international and two national projects are considered to inform the development of an Australian index incorporating both objective and subjective indicators. The projects reviewed are the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI), the OECD Better Life initiative, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and the United Kingdom's Personal Wellbeing indicators, incorporated in the Measures of National Wellbeing Dashboard.

UN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) was launched in 1990, with its thirtieth anniversary in 2020. It covers 189 countries and highlights disparities between first world and developing countries. Human development is defined in terms of "enlarging people's choices." Based on the view that too many indicators would do more to confuse than to enlighten, the measurement of human development was restricted to three indicators:

- Life expectancy: which serves as a proxy measure for several important variables in human development, including adequate nutrition and the availability of health services.
- Literacy: a reflection of access to education, a first step in a person's learning and knowledge-building. In later iterations, years of schooling was added as a fourth indicator.
- Income: purchasing power-adjusted real GDP per capita, indicating the command over resources needed for a decent living.

When the HDI was developed there was awareness of its limitations, but in 1990 there were few indicators available in many third world countries. This is in contrast to later indexes, which were developed at a time when the range of indicators was wider.

A number of additional United Nations indexes, comprising the family of human development indices, have been developed to supplement the HDI. These include:

- IHDI – An inequality-adjusted HDI in each of the three domains, 'discounting' each dimension's average value according to its level of inequality, indicating the overall loss to human development due to inequality.
- GDI – Gender Development Index, which estimates HDI values separately for women and men, with the ratio of female to male HDI value comprising the GDI value.
- GII – Gender Inequality Index which provides a composite measure of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health (maternal mortality and adolescent birth rate), empowerment (the percentage of parliamentary seats held

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by women and secondary education by gender) and participation in the labour market by gender.

- Multidimensional Poverty Index – Calculated for developing countries to indicate the multiple deprivations that people in developing countries face in terms of their health, education and standard of living.

OECD BETTER LIFE INITIATIVE

The Better Life initiative was the result of almost ten years of reflection on more effective ways to measure social progress. It incorporated the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi commission, as well as a variety of other national and international initiatives.

The initiative was timed for the 50th anniversary of the OECD and was released in the immediate aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis, with the explanation that "in this challenging environment, we are committed more than ever to our founding mission to foster economic prosperity, improve development perspectives and the wellbeing of our citizens."

Unlike the HDI, however, it was narrower in focus, covering 37 OECD and four partner countries: Russia, Brazil, South Africa and Costa Rica.

The Better Life initiative conceptualises wellbeing as a multi-dimensional construct. It is described as ground-breaking at the international level, as "the best set of comparable and comprehensive wellbeing indicators for advanced and emerging economies" (OECD *How's Life?* 2013).

On the recommendation of the HLEG, which concluded "there is no simple way of representing every aspect of wellbeing in a single number in the way GDP describes market economic output," it did not produce a single number index, but rather a "dashboard of indicators." In place of calculating an index, it provided a website that included an option for individual users to compare results across 11 broad domains for specific countries. In doing so, the OECD captures the choices that are made when users are asked to indicate the most important aspects of their lives for their sense of wellbeing (Beyond GDP: Measuring What Counts for Economic and Social Performance 2018: 134).

The Better Life data is structured as two broad categories and includes 11 domains described as essential to wellbeing:

- Material living conditions. Three dimensions: Housing, Income, Jobs.
- Quality of life. Eight dimensions: Community, Education, Environment, Governance, Health, Life satisfaction, Safety and Work-Life Balance.

Each dimension includes specific indicators. For example, the Work-Life Balance dimension is based on three indicators: the proportion of employees working long hours; the percentage of working mothers and the time people devote to leisure and personal activities. Education is based on the cognitive skills of those aged 15, adult skills and educational attainment.

As recommended by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report, the OECD framework also covers sustainability in terms of the resources that are critical for future wellbeing—natural, human, economic and social capital.

Although not core indicators, a broader set of indicators give attention to inequalities, conceptualised as:

- Vertical inequalities: the gaps between groups of people at the top and at the bottom of the various measures of inequality.
- Horizontal inequalities: the gaps between groups of people by gender, age and education level.
- Wellbeing deprivations: the share of the population falling below a threshold value or standard of deprivation.

CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING (CIW)

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing, launched in 2012, at almost the same time as the OECD Better Life initiative, was presented as a significant enhancement to the measure of GDP:

> From quarterly updates of Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) we know our economy is slowly beginning to improve, but what does this mean for everyday Canadians? How are we *really* doing? Asking these questions highlights the weakness in relying solely on GDP to measure how our country is faring... GDP tells us nothing about our people, our environment, our democracy, or other aspects of life that matter to Canadians...
>
> The CIW provides a broader depth of understanding that, when partnered with GDP, gives us the evidence needed to help steer Canada forward and build a society that responds to the call for greater fairness (Canadian Index of Wellbeing 2012: introduction).

Its developers expressed concern at the growing inequality in Canadian society, which was expected to have wide reaching negative impact on health and wellbeing.

The CIW was focused on distributive and behavioural dimensions, not ideational. It defined wellbeing as:

> The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access

> to participation in leisure and culture. (Canadian Index of Wellbeing, What is Wellbeing?)

Indicators that enabled backward casting of the index to 1994 were prioritised to enable the establishment of trends from the outset of the project. The base year—1994—was chosen as the National Population Health Surveys were initiated in that year and provided the source for most of the health statistics. Following the 2012 report, a second report was released in 2016 and a third is planned for 2022.

The CIW comprises eight domains, with eight indicators in each domain for a total of 64. The domains comprise:

1. Community Vitality
2. Democratic Engagement
3. Education
4. Environment
5. Healthy Populations
6. Leisure and Culture
7. Living Standards
8. Time Use

The CIW employs objective and subjective indicators but with a heavy emphasis on the objective. For example, the education domain comprises the ratio of childcare spaces per child, early childhood education, student-teacher ratios, the knowledge and skills of 13- to 15-year-old students, the school completion rate, university completion numbers and long-term unemployment. Subjective indicators included level of satisfaction with democracy (Democratic Engagement), rating of the Canadian public health system (Healthy Populations) and sense of safety walking alone at night (Community Vitality).

To calculate the CIW, baseline values for the 64 indicators were set at 100 for 1994 as the first step in standardisation, then percentage changes in each indicator were calculated for subsequent years. Each indicator within each domain carries the same weight. On the basis of this procedure, each domain obtains an average score, which enables comparison with the other domains and provides "a snapshot of the relative status of diverse aspects of wellbeing." In addition, domain averages are summed and divided by eight to provide "an overall measure of wellbeing" —the CIW for the year.

Individual indicators are also presented to "contribute a more nuanced understanding of how specific aspects of wellbeing in each domain vary according to changes in social trends and policy over time."

UK WELLBEING AND PERSONAL INDICATORS

In the context of the race riots in the United Kingdom in 1981, 1985, 2001 and 2005, perceived as indicating the breakdown of social cohesion, British governments have been at the forefront of funding research to provide a better understanding of those factors that lead to disturbances, as well as programs to address future threats to social cohesion. Their ongoing concern has been with "what works," a priority indicated by the establishment of the UK What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

In addition to policy innovation, the British government has led efforts to monitor the public mood. To this end a number of different approaches have been taken.

Between 2001 and 2011 biennial Citizenship Surveys were conducted in England and Wales, with large population samples of almost 10,000 and sample boosts to better understand minorities

of interest. The surveys, which were discontinued as a cost saving measure, covered a range of issues, including community cohesion, empowerment, values, racial and religious prejudice and discrimination, volunteering and charitable giving.

In 2010, the UK National Wellbeing Program began, including "Measures of National Wellbeing," with the aim of developing a trusted set of statistics to measure national progress, "not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving; not just by our standard of living, but by our quality of life."

A Personal Wellbeing component, utilising annual surveys, provides time series data at the national and local area level. It is based on the British Annual Population Survey (APS), which is completed yearly by a sample of 320,000 respondents aged 16 years and over, a sample sufficiently large to provide for the mapping of attitudes at the local authority level, with the capacity for users to undertake online analysis of their own local area and compare it to other areas they specify.

Personal Wellbeing, by definition a subjective indicator, is measured using four questions from the National Population Survey, which asks people to respond on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely."

> Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?
>
> Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
>
> Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
>
> Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

A further outcome of the Measures of National Wellbeing initiative is a dashboard of wellbeing indicators, incorporating "10 broad dimensions which have been shown to matter most to people in the UK as identified through a national debate." The selected domains are:

1. Personal wellbeing
2. Relationships
3. Health
4. What we do
5. Where we live
6. Personal finance
7. Economy
8. Education and skills
9. Government
10. Environment

The dashboard comprises 41 individual indictors (24 that are objective and 17 that are subjective), with two to six indicators per domain. For example, the indicators for Health are healthy life expectancy, disability, health satisfaction and depression or anxiety; indicators for Environment are greenhouse gas emissions, protected areas, renewable energy and household recycling. Subjective measures are also included on the rationale that "objective measures, such as levels of crime, don't always reflect the way people feel, for example, their fear of crime – and the differences can have important implications for policy."

The indicators were designed to supplement the GDP, not to replace it nor to simply create a "happiness index." They sought to "complement more traditional economic measures" and provide a different way of understanding what people value and societal progress.

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It was decided not to aggregate indicators in an index, despite the fact that this could be advantageous, but rather to present a simple numerical tracking of change. The dashboard indicates change to the extent possible using graphs. Most indicators track between 1999 and 2012 and the most recently available data, although one data source—electoral turnout—is tracked from 1945.

Tracking change over time for each indicator provides a simple summation of indicators for which the results from one year to the next are deemed "more positive," "have stayed the same" or "have deteriorated." In its latest report—October 2019— long-term change, defined as "mainly 5 years," found that 26 (60%) indicators improved, nine (21%) did not change and three (7%) deteriorated, while remaining indicators were not assessed.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES SUMMARISED

Just as there are different approaches to conceptualising social progress and wellbeing, so there are different approaches to selecting indicators and aggregating data. The main approaches are

1. Gross Domestic Product, with various adjustments to reflect social as well as economic development.
2. As index based on objective (statistical) indicators, subjective (survey derived) indicators, or a composite index incorporating both objective and subjective indicators.
3. A dashboard of indicators organised within domains, hosted on the internet. (see, for example, J.Hawkins 2014, The Four Approaches to Measuring Wellbeing', in A. Podger and D. Trewin (eds), *Measuring and Promoting Wellbeing)*

In the leading projects discussed here, the number of domains extends from one to 11, and indicators extend from four to more than 80. In addition to the four projects discussed, there are a number of others outlined in the following section of this report. The simplest indexes use only one indicator, such as the World Happiness Report, which uses a self-assessed level of happiness (rated on a scale of 0 to 10) obtained from the Gallup World Poll, which ranks 95 countries by their level of happiness. There is also variance in the use of objective and subjective indicators.

Some indexes and dashboards use only objective indicators (such as the Human Development Index), some use only subjective (UK Personal Wellbeing), and others use a mixture of objective and subjective, with the UK Wellbeing dashboard close to an even division, comprising 24 objective and 17 subjective indicators.

Table 1 Structure of indexes: range of indicators

	DOMAINS	INDICATORS	OBJECTIVE INDICATORS	SUBJECTIVE INDICATORS
Index				
Human Development Index	3	4 (+50 contextual and associated indexes)	4	0
Canadian Wellbeing Index	8	64 (8 per domain)	55	9
UK Personal Wellbeing Indicators	1	4	0	4
Dashboard				
OECD Better Life	11 + 4	36 (+80 in extended list)	29	7
UK Wellbeing Indicators	10	41	24	17

THE VALUE OF AN INDEX

There are differing views on the value of an index.

Ian Castles, the Australian Statistician from 1986-94, argued in 1998 that 'Composite indicators are unsatisfactory because they imply there is a single answer to the question of whether life in a particular country is getting better or worse. But there can be no single answer.' One of his successors, Trevor Sutton, argued in terms similar to the OECD Better Life Initiative that 'we prefer an approach where there is a dashboard, and where there are a range of social, economic and environmental indicators that people can look at and come to their own judgement about how they might want to weight those various measures of progress in Australia's society, and about whether they think Australian society is progressing across those key areas of interest.' The major impediment to compiling an index, in his view, was the difficulty of reaching a reasonable agreement on the weighting to be assigned to specific indicators.'(Hawkins 2014: 201)

Proponents of indexes, on the other hand, argue that their value lies in providing an important summary of complex datasets that provide the basis for determining social progress over time. An index also provides an effective introduction and guide to the data on which the index is based. It is argued that GDP, in various forms, has been influential because it is presented in a single number. Indexes of social progress that reduce a complex reality to a single number cannot be ends in themselves but provide an important starting point for monitoring social progress.

Dr Mahbud ul Haq, project director of the initial UN Human Development Index, argued that while the HDI might be seen as overly-simple, it would motivate people to explore the wealth of information included in its report. Also referring to the HDI, Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate in economics, stated that while he was initially sceptical of the index, "which is inescapably crude," he came to recognise its value as "an introductory move in getting people interested in the rich collection of information" on which it is built.

An additional value of an index is that in its summation it reflects the real world. When people are asked to describe their lives they generally think in terms of an overall impression, not as a series of indicators; for instance, most people have no problem responding to a survey question about their level of happiness.

While there is thus clear value in an index, it needs to be approached with an understanding of both its advantages and limitations.

One problem is the ranking of nations in an international index. Where the ranking distinguishes between countries ranked at the top, middle and bottom (for example between developed, developing and under-develop economies), there may only be marginal differences between countries ranked in one segment of the index. The difference in numerical scores may be so small that they may (in some cases) rest as much of data variability and error as real difference.

In the United Nations HDI Australia is ranked equal eighth, with a score of 0.944 in 2019. Yet those ranked between 7 and 4, immediately above Australia, obtained scores in the range of 0.945-0.949, a difference of just 0.005 from Australia's score. The top ranked nation—Norway—obtained a score of 0.957, a difference of 0.013 from Australia.

The World Bank Human Capital Index (HCI) is presented in an index score, but without ranking of nations. This approach is based on the argument that:

> Rankings also artificially inflate small differences in scores, while suppressing information on the absolute gains and losses countries have made on the HCI. For example, there are eight countries clustered between HCI scores of 0.60 and 0.61, so if one of those countries at 0.60 improves by just 0.01, it would move up eight places in the ranking. By contrast, there are just two countries between 0.70 and 0.71, and so if one of those two countries were to improve its score by 0.01, it would only move up one rank. (World Bank, Human Capital Project FAQs, 13: Does the Human Capital Index report country rankings)

There is a further complication when individual indicators are considered: typically national averages are used and averages mask significant disparities in the population. Hence it is important to consider variation alongside the population average, as recognised in the data reported by the OECD Better Life initiative. Key variations include the differences between population groups (such as men and women, old and young), those at the top and bottom (for example, the income of the top 10% of individuals and bottom 10%), and the proportion of the population below minimum thresholds, such as health, income and educational attainment.

International Indexes

There are more than 30 international indexes that aim to track quality of life and wellbeing, or specific aspects of life, such as personal freedom and participation in politics. The next section indicates 22 of these indexes, in addition to the international approaches discussed above. The largest indexes cover close to 200 countries, others less than 40.

International indexes have been compiled by a number of major international and region agencies, including the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the European Union (EU); government agencies such as the UK Office of National Statistics; and academic centres, think tanks and corporate consultancies. Resources allocated to their development and upkeep vary considerably, as does their value as an indication of social progress. One index, the World Happiness Report, employs just one indicator—happiness—while others employ more than 50. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing Index, one of the more detailed, is comprised of 64 indicators.

As the quality of indexes vary, they need to be critically evaluated. The conceptualisation which informs index construction is open to contestation, in some cases more than others, and potential political influence needs recognition. Some data sources used in indexes may be of limited reliability. There are also limitations imposed by uneven availability of statistical data, given that some are not collected annually and employ difference modes of collection and categorisation. While recognising the limitations of indexes, the aim of the following analysis was to identify approaches to index construction which informed the construction of the Australian Cohesion Index.

SUMMARY LISTING, SELECTED INDEXES

Corruption Perception Index

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is produced by Transparency International, an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation that works with like-minded partners to stop corruption and promote transparency. It was launched in 1995. The Index aggregates data from a number of different sources that provide perceptions from business people and country experts of the level of corruption in the public sector. The CPI 2019 is calculated using 13 different data sources that capture perceptions of corruption within the past two years. Sources include the World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, the World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey and the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index Expert Survey.

Democracy Index

The Democracy Index is produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit, a group within The Economist, a quality London-based international weekly newspaper, which in 2019 had a print circulation of over 900,000 and digital readership of over 700,000.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, first published in 2006, with annual updates since 2010, is based on the ratings for 60 indicators grouped in five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall index of democracy is the simple average of the five category indexes. Adjustments to the category scores are made if countries do not score a 1 (indicating yes) in the following areas

critical for democracy: 1) whether national elections are free and fair; 2) the security of voters; 3) the influence of foreign powers on government; and 4) the civil service's capability to implement policies. In addition to experts' assessments, the index uses, where available, public opinion surveys—mainly the World Values Survey but also Eurobarometer surveys, Gallup polls, and regional surveys— conducted in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Eudaimonic Wellbeing Index
(happiness achieved through a life of meaning and purpose)

The Eudaimonic Wellbeing Index was produced by South Korean academic Mohsen Joshanloo and published in the 2018 edition of the British Journal of Psychology. The Index aggregates data from nearly 1,800,000 respondents, recruited from 166 countries by the Gallup World Poll between 2005 and 2017 to construct an index of Eudaimonic Well-being (EWB). In the contemporary social sciences, EWB is understood as having optimal skills and qualities that contribute to success in facing life challenges. Key areas assessed include learning, social support, respect, efficacy, freedom, helping strangers and volunteering.

Global Gender Gap Index

The Global Gender Gap Index was developed by the World Economic Forum and is an annual report first published in 2006. It was designed as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities around the world and tracking their progress over time. The index benchmarks national gender gaps in the economic field, education, health and political criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups. The index is designed to "measure gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in countries rather than the actual level of the available resources and opportunities in those countries."

Global Human Capital Index

The Global Human Capital Index is published in the reports of the World Economic Forum, prepared in conjunction with leading consultancy firm Mercer. The 2017 index ranks 130 countries on how well they have developed their human capital on a scale from 0 (worst) to 100 (best) across four dimensions, five age groups and gender, with the aim of capturing a profile of full human potential in a country. The index contains 51 indicators across four dimensions: education (12 indicators), health and wellness (14), workforce and employment (16) and enabling environment (9). Data is obtained from publicly available data sets produced by international organizations, qualitative survey data from the World Economic Forum's *Executive Opinion Survey* and Gallup's wellness perception survey data. The 2020 update covers 174 countries.

Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index

The Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index (GSCI) is produced by SolAbility, an independent sustainability think-tank and advisory group with presence in Korea and Switzerland. The 2020 Sustainable Competitiveness Report is the 9th edition. Its focus is on sustainable competitiveness: the ability to generate and sustain inclusive wealth without diminishing future capability to sustain and increase current wealth. The GSCI measures the competitiveness of nations based on 127 quantitative indicators

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grouped into five domains that are derived from recognised global data sources, most notably the World Bank, UN agencies and the International Monetary Fund. The five domains, of equal importance, are: natural capital, resource efficiency, social capital, intellectual and innovation capital and governance performance.

Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index is a product of the New Economics Foundation, claimed to be the UK's leading think tank promoting social, economic and environmental justice. NEF's mission is described as aiming "to kick-start the move to a new economy through big ideas and fresh thinking." It does this, in part, through "high quality, ground-breaking research that shows what is wrong with the current economy." The index is designed to measure sustainable wellbeing. It combines four elements: **wellbeing:** how satisfied the residents of each country say they feel with life overall, based on data collected as part of the Gallup World Poll; **life expectancy**: the average number of years a person is expected to live in each country based on data collected by the United Nations; **inequality of outcomes**: the inequalities between people within a country in terms of how long they live and how happy they feel, based on the distribution in each country's life expectancy and wellbeing data; **ecological footprint**: the average impact that each resident of a country places on the environment, based on data prepared by the Global Footprint Network. Ecological Footprint is expressed using a standardized unit: global hectares (gha) per person.

Human Capital Index

The Human Capital Index (HCI), produced by the World Bank Group, is an international metric that benchmarks key components of human capital across economies. The HCI was launched in 2018, with its second edition in 2020, and is part of the Human Capital Project, a global effort to accelerate progress toward a world where all children can achieve their full potential. Measuring the human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by her 18th birthday, the HCI highlights how current health and education outcomes shape the productivity of the next generation of workers. In this way it underscores for governments and societies the importance of investing in the human capital of their citizens.

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Human Freedom Index

The Human Freedom Index is co-published by the Cato Institute, the Fraser Institute, and formerly the Liberales Institut at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. The 2020 Index is the sixth annual publication. The index is a broad measure that encompasses economic, civil, and personal freedom. The report is claimed to be the most comprehensive freedom index created, using 76 indicators of freedom to measure liberty in 162 countries using the most recent year for which sufficient data is available.

Inclusiveness Index

The Inclusiveness Index is produced by the Othering and Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, with the fifth annual report published in 2020. The objective of the report is to track how marginalised populations fare relative to dominant groups. The report argues that multifactor indicators "paint a more vivid portrait of underlying structure conditions than any single indicator, such as poverty or GDP." In selecting data there is focus on race/ethnicity, religion, gender, LGBTQ status and disability in the six domains that comprise the index: political representation, out-group violence, antidiscrimination laws, income inequality, rates of incarceration and immigration and refugee policies. Rankings are not presented as definitive; rather, they are intended to spark a conversation and generate further inquiry into how some nations are more inclusive than others.

Liberal Democracy Index

The Liberal Democracy Index is produced by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, University of Gothenburg. It is produced by a large team of researchers comprising 46 staff, 33 regional managers, 134 country co-ordinators and 3,500 country experts. The v11 dataset comprises almost 30 million datapoints for 202 countries and its dataset has been downloaded by users in 176 countries, a total of 182,000 downloads between 2016 and 2020.

The Liberal Democracy Index is made up of one of the most detailed datasets for an index. It has five dimensions, 16 categories, and 73 indicators: Electoral (5 categories; 25 indicators, such as the right to vote, clean elections, freedom of association), Liberal (3; 23, such as equality before the law and judicial constraints on the executive), Egalitarian (3;10, such as equal protection and equal access), Participatory (4; 10, such as elections and local and regional governments) and Deliberative

(1; 5, such as range of consultations and societal engagement). Objective indicators are supplemented by the assessment of country experts—typically five per country—to capture features of democracy that are not directly measurable; to determine, for example, not simply whether the legislature has a specific legal right, but the extent to which the legislature exercises that right.

MIPEX – Migrant Integration Index

The Migrant Integration Index is produced by the Centre for International Affairs, Barcelona, and the Migrant Policy Group, with funding from the European Union and the Centre for Global Development, Europe. The Australian National University College of Law is also a project partner. The MIPEX measures three dimensions of a country's integration policy: Basic Rights: can immigrants enjoy comparable rights with nationals, such as the rights to work and access to health services; Equal Opportunities: for example in education and political participation; and Secure Future: the right of immigrants to permanent residence and citizenship and to family re-union. Countries are grouped into four categories, with Australia among the top ten countries (termed Comprehensive Integration) of the 52 countries assessed. These countries are characterised by a comprehensive approach to integration that guarantees equal rights and opportunities and security for immigrants.

Quality of Life Index (Numbeo)

The Numbeo Quality of Life Index is a collaborative online database that enables users to share and compare information about the cost of living between countries and cities. Developed by the Numbeo organisation, it claims to be the world's largest crowd-sourced cost of living database, with more than 7.2 million datapoints from 10,332 cities.

Quality of Life Index (Economist)

The Economist newspaper's Intelligence Unit (EIU) published the Quality of Life Index in 2005. Although there have been no updates to the index since its first publication. The EIU Quality of Life Index identified nine factors that were presented as best predicting quality of life: material wellbeing (measured by GDP per capita), health (life expectancy), political stability (a rating developed by EIU), family life (divorce rate), community life (church attendance and union membership), climate and geography, job security (unemployment rate), political freedom (Freedom of the World Index), gender equality (ratio between female and male average earnings).

Social Capital Index

The Social Capital Index is produced by the SolAbility Think Tank (see the Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index (GSCI), above). The social capital of a nation is defined as "the sum of social stability and the well-being (perceived or real) of the entire population. Social Capital generates social cohesion and a certain level of consensus, which in turn delivers a stable environment for the economy and prevents natural resources from being over-exploited." Thirty-one indicators are used to calculate the Social Capital score of a country, including health and health care factors (availability, child mortality, family planning), equality (income, assets and gender equality), freedom indicators (press freedom, human rights, presence of violent conflict), crime (theft, violence, size of prison population) and satisfaction (individual happiness, suicide rate, public service satisfaction).

Social Progress Index

Produced by the Latin American-based Social Progress Imperative organisation, the production of the index was a major undertaking with funding from a range of corporate sources and foundations, including Cisco, Deloitte, The Rockefeller Foundation and the Skoll Foundation. The beta version of the index was launched in 2013, followed by reports in 2014, 2018 and 2020, with the 2020 index ranking 163 countries. Social progress is defined as "the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential." The index comprises 3 dimensions, 12 categories and 50 indicators. The dimensions are: Basic Human Needs (four components: nutrition and basic medical care, water and sanitation, shelter and personal safety); Foundations of Wellbeing (access to basic knowledge, information and communication, health and wellness and environmental quality) and Opportunity (personal rights, personal freedom and choice, inclusiveness and advanced education). An excellent project website enables users to specify a country and obtain its scorecard for each of the 50 indicators, highlighting the country's relative strengths and weaknesses compared to 15 peer countries with a similar GDP per capita.

UN Gender Inequality Index (GII)

The United Nations Gender Equality Index is a composite measure of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. The reproductive health indicators are maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate. The empowerment indicators are the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women and the percentage of the population with at least some secondary education by gender. The labour market indicator is participation in the labour force by gender. A low GII value indicates low inequality between women and men, and vice-versa.

UN Inequality Adjusted HDI (IHDI)

The United Nations Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) combines a country's averaged achievements in health, education and income with how those achievements are distributed among a country's population. It discounts each dimension's average value according to its level of inequality. Thus, the IHDI produces a distribution-sensitive average level of human development. Under perfect equality the IHDI is equal to the HDI, but falls below the HDI when inequality rises. The difference between the IHDI and HDI is the human development cost of inequality, also termed 'overall loss to human development due to inequality.'

UN Planetary Pressures Adjusted HDI (PHDI)

The United Nations Planetary Pressures Adjusted Human Development Index (PHDI) is an experimental index that adjusts the Human Development Index (HDI) for planetary pressures in the Anthropocene. The PHDI discounts the HDI for pressures on the planet to reflect a concern for intergenerational inequality, similar to the inequality-adjusted HDI adjustment, which is motivated by a concern for intragenerational inequality. The PHDI is the level of human development adjusted by carbon dioxide

emissions per person (production-based) and material footprint per capita to account for excessive human pressure on the planet.

World Giving Index

The World Giving Index is produced by the Charities Aid Foundation, a UK registered charity that provides fund-raising and consultancy services internationally. It has been published annually since 2009. The index is based upon data from Gallup's World View World Poll, which includes the questions: "Have you done any of the following in the past month? Helped a stranger, or someone you didn't know who needed help? Donated money to a charity? Volunteered your time to an organisation?" In order to establish a measure of giving behaviour across the world, the World Giving Index relies on a simple averaging of the responses from the three key questions asked in each country. Each country is given a percentage score and countries are ranked on the basis of these scores.

World Happiness Report

The World Happiness Report is a publication of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Its rankings of national happiness are based on respondent ratings of their own lives, correlated with other factors. The report primarily uses the main life evaluation question in the Gallup World Poll, which asks respondents to rank their current lives (using the Cantril ladder) on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being their worst possible life and 10 the best possible life. The population mean for each country is its happiness (life evaluation) score. The extent to which happiness is indicated in each country is considered with reference to six country factors: levels of GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom and corruption, although these factors have no impact on the score reported for each country.

World Press Freedom Index

Published annually since 2002 by Reporters Without Borders, the World Press Freedom Index is an important advocacy tool and a point of reference quoted by media throughout the world. It is used by international entities such as the United Nations and the World Bank. The index ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists. This is determined by pooling the responses of experts to a questionnaire devised by the organisation. This qualitative analysis is combined with quantitative data on the abuses and acts of violence against journalists during the period evaluated. The criteria used in the questionnaire are: pluralism, media independence, media environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency and the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information.

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