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**CONNECTING WELLBEING IN NORTH AND SOUTH: THE IMPACTS OF  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON RELATIVES IN LIMA.**

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## **WeD - Wellbeing in Developing Countries ESRC Research Group**

WeD is a multidisciplinary research group funded by the ESRC, dedicated to the study of poverty, inequality and the quality of life in poor countries. The research group is based at the University of Bath and draws on the knowledge and expertise from three different departments (Economics and International Development, Social and Policy Sciences and Psychology) as well as an extensive network of overseas contacts and specific partnerships with institutes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Thailand. The purpose of the research programme is to develop conceptual and methodological tools for investigating and understanding the social and cultural construction of wellbeing in specific countries.

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# **CONNECTING WELLBEING IN NORTH AND SOUTH: THE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON RELATIVES IN LIMA.**

## **Abstract**

Recent literature on migration and remittances has suggested the relatives of migrants in the global economy have net gains in their economic wellbeing. This paper argues the reality is far more complex. The paper applies the emerging 'wellbeing' conceptual framework that emphasises people's subjective experiences and feelings as well as what they can do and be using the case of Peruvian migrants in London, Madrid and Lima. Whilst many studies focus on how the migrants feel themselves here the focus is on the relatives and close friends of migrants. Such an analysis is driven by broader arguments that focus on the interconnectedness of North and South since it focuses on linkages of wellbeing outcomes across spatial boundaries.

## **Keywords**

Wellbeing, Migration, Peru, London, Madrid.

## **Related Readings**

Copestake, J. (editor) (Forthcoming Nov 2008) *Wellbeing and Development in Peru*. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The notion that international migration - to the North - is good not only for migrants but for their relatives - in the South - has become a dominant in discourses (see for example, OECD, 2008; World Bank, 2008). This paper challenges this assertion drawing on fieldwork with Peruvian migrants in London, Madrid and Lima.

This study applies a wellbeing conceptual framework. A wellbeing approach is premised on the belief that people cannot be wholly defined by their wealth or their poverty and that even the very poorest are active in constructing their wellbeing.

Such a perspective is missing in the broader international migration literature which has assessed migration from many different perspectives including economic, social, cultural and psychosocial aspects (e.g. Castles et al, 2006; Vertovec, 2006; Nyberg Sorensen, 2002). The concept of wellbeing that focuses on the perspectives of migrants and their relatives themselves, examining how their own subjective assessments of their situation correlate with more objective factors, has been largely absent from the more dominant integrationist international migration literature. To overcome this gap, this study sought to understand this migration by adopting a wellbeing approach and applying it to international migration. Taking a wellbeing perspective explores not only what migrants and their relatives have and do, but what they think and feel about the process.

The literature on the interconnectedness of wellbeing outcomes between North and South is a relatively recent in development studies. The importance of analysing these connections has only relatively recently come to light. Though Development Studies has historically been concerned with the 'Third World', the case for exploring social change or 'development' in the North or comparative North-South research would seem strong with "the concerns of development studies extending beyond developing countries" (Sumner and Tribe, 2008: 17).

More broadly, within the international migration studies, though some conceptual work on international migration and wellbeing outcomes already exists (Berry, 1996), empirical evidence is seriously lacking on how the construction of wellbeing of migrants from developing countries impacts on the behaviours and practices of those that remain in the ‘home country’.

Section 2 presents the wellbeing conceptual framework whilst sections 3 and 4 present the construction of narratives based on the findings of this research. Section 5 concludes and discusses future research in this area.

## **2. THE WELLBEING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **What is a ‘well-being’ conceptual framework?**

According to Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000) what human beings most value is not, as was previously imagined utility or consumption measured by a proxy for income – GDP per capita, because this does not incorporate the condition of the individual. Income is thus simply an instrumental freedom – it helps to achieve other constitutive freedoms. Poverty represents a lack of freedom or opportunity to achieve the ‘beings’ and ‘doings’ that are of value to individuals. Kingdon and Knight have maintained that, ‘an approach which examines the individual’s own perception of well-being is less imperfect... than are the other potential approaches (2004:1). Such psychological dimensions have expanded discussion from relying solely on the objective condition of people to subjective well-being and from physiological conditions (i.e. an individual’s objective physical condition) to happiness and psychological experience. In short, “what a person has, what a person can do with what they have, and how they think about what they have and can do” (McGregor, 2006:4).

Wellbeing is still a relatively new category in social science and no uniform definition yet exists. The concept is being applied to this research, which runs parallel with the Wellbeing and Developing Countries Research (at Bath University):

“We argue for a conception of wellbeing that takes account of the objective circumstances of the person and their subjective evaluation of these. But

both the objective circumstances and perceptions of them are located in society and also in the frames of meaning with which we live. Thus, wellbeing is also and necessarily a relational and dynamic concept. States of wellbeing/illbeing are continually produced in the interplay within the social, political, economic and cultural processes of human social being. It cannot be conceived just as an outcome, but must be understood also as a process” (Gough and McGregor, 2007:5).

The wellbeing approach is premised on the belief that people cannot be wholly defined by their wealth or their poverty and that even the very poorest are active in constructing their wellbeing. The most recent work in this field demonstrating part of the growing interest in wellbeing has been the Wellbeing in Development Programme (WeD) at Bath University, which is conceptually based upon three main frameworks – (i) the resource profiles approach (Kebede and McGregor, 2003); (ii) a theory of human need developed by Doyal and Gough (1991) and (iii) Quality of Life Research. This literature postulates that people transform resources available to them into satisfiers and that a combination of satisfiers can result in the meeting of universal needs. Social scientists working on the umbrella concept of wellbeing have examined it from a range of different angles including research into the economics of happiness (Frey and Stutzer, 2002; Di Tella et al, 1997; Layard 2005); health-related quality of life (e.g. Skevington et al, 2004) and in the discipline of cross-cultural psychology (Berry and Sam, 1996).

### **So, in sum, what is new about a wellbeing approach?**

The wellbeing approach is distinctive in addressing what people feel (their subjective assessment of their condition) as well as what they can do and be. Second it is premised not on what people lack (or deficits) but rather, on what they can do and be with what they have. Further, it expands discussion beyond the body and physiology to include the mind and psychology. It is also based on present experience rather than intended or projected outcomes (i.e. traditional poverty studies lend towards future outcomes ie. Educaiton to literacy etc).. A wellbeing conceptual approach is also grounded in local and contextually specific experience. It also emphasises areas that are ‘new’ such that of autonomy or enjoyment. Wellbeing is also a social concept. Wellbeing is constructed through shared meanings and understandings and as such is socially constructed. It is also

based on lived experience rather than being imposed on others by external actors. Finally, it incorporates the subjective whilst balancing this with more objective factors that constitute wellbeing.

Thus a well-being approach is particularly appropriate for researching migration because exploring migrants' perceptions of wellbeing provides a vehicle through which the social processes that lead to particular wellbeing outcomes in different societal contexts can be investigated. Migration is especially conducive to this kind of analysis given the contrasting social, cultural and economic circumstances that migrants necessarily negotiate between. Indeed, Berry's framework (1996) is thus closely linked to the 'identity, meaning and culture' pillar of the new theories of wellbeing developed by Gough and McGregor (2007). Berry argues that when moving from one social context to another, individuals adopt different strategies, namely those of integration (whereby some degree of cultural integrity is maintained), assimilation (when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily contact with others), separation (when the non-dominant culture places a value on holding on to their original culture and wants to avoid interaction with others) and marginalisation (with little interest in having relations with others and where there is much cultural loss). The strategies adopted may be a combination of an individual's pursuit of wellbeing but may also be enhanced or constrained by the broader national context in the host country. Adaptation in accordance with the migrant's position and perspective in this context both refers to the achievement of wellbeing in terms of psychological outcomes (such as good mental health) and also in terms of socio-cultural adaptation. Moderating factors in the acculturation process relate to factors existing in the individual's experience prior to acculturation (age, class, language, religion, values etc) and moderating factors arising during acculturation relating to features of the dominant society (e.g. immigration policy and attitudes to immigrants).

### **3. THE CONSTRUCTION OF MIGRANTS NARRATIVES**

**The construction of narratives of happiness as self-sacrifice for a greater good.**

Prior to interviewing relatives and close friends of those who had migrated to London and Madrid, in phase one of this study, 99 surveys were conducted with the migrants themselves.<sup>1</sup> A post-hoc classification of a “set of blockages” or barriers to achieving wellbeing was identified by the respondents. The wellbeing literature maintains that fundamental to psychological wellbeing are three components: autonomy or personal control over one’s actions; social status and relatedness to others. Through their own assessment, the price paid by migrants across the London and Madrid samples (in terms of loss of these principal components of wellbeing) appears to be extremely high (Wright-Revollo, 2007).

In phase two of this study, the focus of this paper, 10 case studies were conducted with relatives and close friends of these migrants that remained in Lima.<sup>2</sup> Results from these interviews strongly corroborated the evidence gained from phase one. Interestingly, relatives and close friends had relatively accurate information about the barriers to constructing wellbeing through the strategy of international migration to London and Madrid. This information had been obtained via the migrants themselves or from other sources such as from neighbours whose relatives had also migrated. These findings corroborated findings about the barriers to achieving wellbeing through international migration expressed by the migrants themselves. Areas of loss of wellbeing presented by the relatives and close friends living in Lima fell into three domains: loss of status, loss of enjoyment and loss of relatedness.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surveys were conducted with 49 migrants in London and 50 in Madrid with entry points through informal sporting events and snowballing techniques. The survey comprised closed questions on objective states of wellbeing and more open questions about subjective states and life satisfaction

<sup>2</sup> All of the respondents resided in Lima except one based in Jauja in the central Highlands. The informants were aged between 16 and 56. Eight lived in poorer neighbourhoods of Lima including: Villa El Salvador, Canto Grande, Lima Centro, Los Olivos, Zárata, whilst two lived in the richer neighbourhood of San Borja. One only had primary education, whilst four had secondary education, one had college education, three had university education, and one was educated to postgraduate level. Eight had known the migrant over their whole life time whilst one friend had known the migrant for five years and the other friend for three.

<sup>3</sup> One domain of loss of wellbeing –loss of autonomy- mentioned by the migrants themselves in phase 1 of this study did not feature as strongly in phase 2.

Relatives were acutely aware of the loss of status experienced in the host country due to their migrant status but only one of ten suggested that this would prevent them from migrating. Knowledge of the loss of status experienced in the host country was firstly manifested in terms of the treatment received. In particular relatives and friends alluded to the lack of respect and racism experienced as part of being Latin American migrants in Spain: "People do not talk to you normally"; "Europeans are very racist". Interestingly, relatives in Lima that were planning to migrate to join their relatives in Madrid spoke of the need to develop internal resources prior to the migration that would allow them to counteract the negative associations and hostility that migrant populations routinely suffer on arrival. The daughter of one migrant (based in Madrid) explained: "You have to compensate for the bad name Peruvians have & show that it doesn't matter where you're from & that everyone's equal". This fits with wellbeing theory proposed by Berry (1996) that the strategies that migrants adopt may be a combination of an individual's pursuit of wellbeing but that this may be enhanced or constrained by factors in the host country, such as an attitude of hostility towards migrants. Thus one cultural resource that migrants deploy prior to migration is the need to develop self esteem to counter the negative stereotyping and pejorative associations associated with being a Latin American in the host country.

Loss of status also played out in other ways that relate to wellbeing theory on competency. Wellbeing theory contends that the actualisation of intrinsic potentials or 'competency' is an essential component of human wellbeing (Ryan & Deci 2001). Relatives in Lima suggested that one barrier to achieving wellbeing in the host country was having to work in areas that are unrelated to one's professional experience and deskilling was common. Typical responses included: "You have to start in a bar until you can get into something you have studied". Another commented: "You live well but you are not happy because you don't work in your area of specialisation". This was reinforced by others who suggested that migrants have limited ability to exercise control over the nature of the work that they undertake nor other aspects associated with it: "You can't always get a job with the timetable you want, sometimes you have to work all night long, it is very tiring &

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Relatives were aware of losses in this domain but they chose to focus on the three other domains: loss of status, enjoyment and relatedness.

stressful”. Relatives were also conscious that this lack of control also made them vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

Lack of competency or control as a hindrance to achieving wellbeing was also manifested in the limited kinds of work available and how this reinforces lower status than the same individuals would have enjoyed at home in Peru. Lack of choice relegates migrants to work that is for those of less professional standing than they typically enjoy in their home country. The husband of a migrant based in Madrid suggested: “The work you get is for those that have not studied...as domestics, caring for the elderly and children”. Being inserted into labour markets associated with lower status than they would enjoy in Peru thus generates lack of recognition and acknowledgement: “She lacks acknowledgement – she does not work in her area and has no opportunity for this”. Lack of status in the host country is also reflected by inability to buy-in support in the domestic sphere in a way that was taken for granted in Peru: “In Madrid my mother has no house of her own, no car and no domestic servant, though we always had one here”.

The lack of enjoyment, suffering and self-sacrifice implied by living as a migrant in London and Madrid was an important theme to emerge: “I understand how hard it is there and the personal sacrifice involved”; “The reality for Peruvians is very sad”. The exploitation involved in working to earn remittances to send home also leads to lack of enjoyment. One informant asked whether her friend had been able to visit the Coliseum in Rome. She asked her: “Do you know the Roman coliseum?” The response was: “Would you believe I don’t! I am too tired, I only want to sleep”. Another commented: “I know the suffering involved and would not go”. Lack of enjoyment of the food due to expense and little time to enjoy it: “They eat only frozen food and have no time to prepare it”. The stressful nature of work and isolation was also highlighted: “Everything there is work, work, work, there is no family to visit...you work, go back home, and nothing else”. Informants also spoke of overcrowding: “There are up to three or four Peruvians sharing a small space”. Lack of enjoyment of physical environment was coupled with lack of access to enjoyment of the natural world: “They have no access to the countryside or diversity of landscapes”. The high costs of living also prevented enjoyment and was thus also seen

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<sup>4</sup> Vulnerability to being exploited by employers took the form of threatening to lay off the employee at any time.

by relatives as a hindrance to achieving wellbeing. One child cited that her mother could no longer spend money on herself: “My mother can’t maintain her good image there as she could in Peru...its all sacrifice for her son”. Other material losses were also cited: “she has no house, no car, and no domestic servant though we always had one here”. Financial hardship was often cited: “She lacks things to make her life more comfortable, as all she has she earns she sends as remittances”. The emotional impacts of this were also acute: “She feels anguish and self-sacrifices for her daughters and son”.

Relatives spoke of missing their families and of arriving in London and Madrid without friends: “You don’t know anyone other than your family”. Having to get on with relatives you know very little was also cited as difficult: “In Peru you have the happiness of being with those that have shared things with you. You go there to family members you haven’t been in touch with for ages”. They also spoke of migrants losing contact with friends or relatives based in Peru and the social networks for those that remain deteriorating in their absence. For those that leave their children in Peru, lack of physical closeness to their children and those of the extended family was also mentioned as a negative trade-off. One informant commented: “Not to be able to see your children growing up is not worth all the gold in the world”. Another stated: “He is losing the best years of his daughter’s life...it hurts him”. Indifference of Europeans to the plight of migrants themselves was often cited: “You absorb other peoples’ coldness”. Relatives also spoke of lack of support in the host country. One commented: “She lacks support, love and attention – she is often overwhelmed by all she has to do alone”. Many informants spoke of individualism in Europe as a barrier: “each one is dedicated to their own life....people won’t help with the baby, very few friends will do a favour...there is less solidarity than in Peru”. Another suggested: “There are differences in customs. Spaniards are more centred on work and less on social relationships than Peruvians; people only think about work”.

Despite being well informed about the difficulties of constructing wellbeing through the strategy of international migration 9 of the 10 informants explained that they would still migrate if offered the opportunity. This presents a paradox. On the one hand relatives and friends of those that have migrated still living in Peru have a well-formed and deep understanding of the barriers to achieving wellbeing through international

migration. Yet, despite this knowledge, 90% would still migrate if offered the option. What might be useful explanations for this and how might a wellbeing conceptual framework enhance our understanding of this phenomenon?

Through their own responses it became clear that relatives are aware that the material benefits of migration do not outweigh the costs in terms of other domains of wellbeing (such as the relational or status domains). Though rationally relatives and friends knew the hardship that migration would entail, the informants repeatedly framed migration in terms of personal sacrifice for the greater good. Typical responses by women in the sample included: “If I go, to sacrifice myself there, and I will suffer, the person who this helps is the family who will be happy for what they will stand to receive. It’s the fact of being able to send something back. Happiness resides in the knowledge that other people will be happy. One sacrifices one’s own happiness but the knowledge that one can help others gratifies one. Your children are the support of your life. It is self sacrifice for a greater good”. This fits with Rojas’s observation that there are different conceptions of happiness (2005:3) and that stoicism is one conceptual referent for some peoples’ happiness. He argues: “This state implies renunciation, austerity, acceptance, and resignation” (2005:269). Thus, there is heterogeneity in people’s referent of what a happy life is and that the concept of what a happy life is does have an influence in a person’s appraisal of her happiness. (2005:286). Thus wellbeing theory suggests that social context is likely to play an important role in the determination of a person’s conceptual referent for happiness and that conceptual referents may vary across countries.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the relatives based in Peru, migration fitted within this worldview that short-term sacrifice would be compensated by the prospect of longer-term benefits. This included for example getting a better education for their children. This conception of suffering as being part of the seeking of a good life also fits with cultural constructions such as that of the cult of

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<sup>5</sup> The issue of sacrifice for the greater good also emerges in the literature on eudaimonic versus hedonic wellbeing, with the former focusing on ‘flourishing’ in the long term and the latter about pleasure and pain avoidance in the short-term. It also relates to how wellbeing plays out across different time horizons and how this is also strongly affected by class.

'*Marianismo*' that teaches, in particular women to endure the suffering that motherhood requires. From this is derived the idea that an ideal female migrant should be, amongst other things, eternally giving. Women are thus to model their behaviour after that of the Virgin Mary and like Mary, they should accept the fate that is handed to them. Marianismo demands that mothers suffer like Mary suffered and love as Mary did for Jesus. In short, women are expected to be good wives and mothers, which typically includes self-sacrifice and putting one's family and its survival above all else.<sup>6</sup> Thus adopting a wellbeing conceptual approach enables us to understand how people think and feel about migrating in a way that goes beyond material considerations and fits within a broader social narrative about achievement of happiness through resignation and acceptance of personal suffering.

This section has showed that despite acute awareness of the barriers to achieving wellbeing through international migration, this strategy fits with a broader social construct of happiness that views sacrifice as contributing to the long-term good.

#### **4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF RELATIVES (OF MIGRANTS) NARRATIVES**

This section analyses the impacts of this migration on the daily lives of relatives and close friends based in Lima. The impacts related both to changes in practices and in the values of these informants. The impacts were classified into those that were broadly negative and those that affected their daily lives in positive ways.

Neglect felt by children came out strongly as a negative impact of this migration. Girls whose mothers had migrated had been forced to assume responsibility for other siblings. When these children were asked what had changed in their daily lives since their relatives had been living in Madrid, one replied that she felt more anxious<sup>7</sup> given the that the responsibilities for

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<sup>6</sup> <http://web.grinnell.edu/LatinAmericanStudies/this.html>

<sup>7</sup> Anxiety generated as a result of migration was also expressed by others: Another stated (in relation to the Madrid bombings of 2006): "Last hear my mother cried about the train accident that happened in Spain, we had to call him because my

domestic life had shifted to her: “I have more worries now...wondering about how they are doing over there. As I don't have much contact with my mother, as we are separated, the priorities start shifting. Before I was more concerned with my studies and now I am more preoccupied with my family”. Some children fall into delinquency during the duration of the migrant's absence: “My cousin became a gang member whilst her mother was in Madrid. By the time my aunt could afford to take her to Madrid she did not recognise her”.

Extended family was also under pressure to bring up these children or to handle other responsibilities left to them, generating resentment: “it's a real effort”; “I alone have to see to everything...why did my brothers have to go so far away? There is no one to look after my parents”. The experience of loss and pain felt by family members and close friends was also signalled: “We start losing all our friends”. Other negative impacts included strain on and deterioration of family relationships: “the family is no longer as numerous or united as it was”; “Time goes by and they don't return to Peru, you start to lose the affection”.

Stability of marriage is good for happiness and trust (Layard, 2003: 28). Yet, separation from family members for prolonged periods due to migration often threatens this stability: “Some people sacrifice themselves in return for something good. But for others it's not like that – they form another family; abandon the home; its all kisses at the airport and from there they forget. They don't even want to speak by phone. If they come back, they return cold and indifferent”.

Those left in Lima often felt jealousy and resentment: “She's come back so full of himself... She makes us feel that she is achieving lots of things and that we are not, that things have not changed for us”. Others are quite critical of those that migrate and see it as both humiliating and hold migrants responsible for the consequences and fallout on family members based in Peru: “They see it as a way of getting ahead doing things there that it would embarrass me to do here. And what about your husband? Your daughter is growing up without a father. They sacrifice their family to be able to make

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mother was so desperate”. They also worry for the migrant's safety: “He works in construction and on those electricity pylons something could happen to him”.

\$400 monthly!” Other informants suggested that they receive very few benefits when the migrant visits: “Those that return are very few in number, they only return to sort out their papers, very few come back”.

Notwithstanding the negative impacts, it is taken as a family triumph when one family member manages to migrate and this creates positive expectation that this will “prepare the way” for their relatives. Bringing relatives to Europe is seen as a characteristic of the “good” migrant: “The good ones send their family members over”. This is contrasted with “bad” migrants who create new families or those return to Peru without having achieved anything. Irrespective of the real reason for failure (such as the difficulties of survival as migrants in Europe), this is invariably put down to character flaws such as being spoilt (and unable to fend for themselves) or lazy..

One informant in her description of ‘failed migrants’ slipped between explaining the real reasons for this and explaining this failure through character flaws: “I would return with the image that it had gone really well for me out there. A friend of mine went out very proud, but he was very spoilt by his mother, he’s been there three times but he has returned with an ulcer. That’s what people say. He’s gay. You also expose yourself to that kind of thing, there’s lots of sexual freedom there, he’s ill. He has not let anyone see him. No-one knew that he had come back. No-one wants to say ‘it went badly’ because...we look at overseas as if it were a special world...a magical place and we are not going to come back worse off than before, we want to bring something better back. People say: ‘did you think you were going there to enjoy yourself?’ They think that being over there is to reach happiness. They know the suffering that goes on but act as if its not like that. They go with the pressure of ‘you’re going to bring me over’. Sometimes they pawn their things, get loans from the bank, remortgage their home. I have a friend whose father did not know how to work over there. He returned without a penny in his pocket, worse off than when he left – they lost the house! They had to move to a shanty town.” Preserving a discourse of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrant serves as one way of perpetuating the belief that those back home may also achieve their dream of enhancing the wellbeing of their families through international migration. According to one migrant interviewed in phase 1 of the study in London, to burst this bubble by revealing the truth would be utterly irresponsible. The findings

from phase 2 suggest that relatives know the barriers to constructing wellbeing but do not want to believe it.

Beyond preparing the way for other family members the receipt of remittances is also seen as a direct positive impact. This brought about feelings of relief and pleasure: “The family feels more tranquil as it’s a help”; “ My mother says: ‘We don’t have a house to live in’. I say ‘don’t be sad, your son always returns.’” Another commented: “Yes, its had a positive effect – my brother lends me money for the business and lately also. They robbed me and wanted to throw me off the bridge – they didn’t find the money. I told them ‘don’t throw me off’. They let go of me when I showed them the money – 3 packets full. From there I went home, crying. I could not get the business running again until he sent me the money. I say ‘thank God that my brothers are there’. When I got ill, they supported me so that I could go to the hospital”. In some cases, remittances were also used to support the wider community: “At Christmas, he says: ‘Go and see such and such family and give them a panatone’”.

Beyond remittances, having, for example, a sister in Europe and learning about the Spanish economy and society also has social benefits: “I can also say: ‘I also have a sister in Europe’, that gives me greater self-esteem”. Another suggested: “It is very agreeable to comment to others that I know someone who lives in Europe. I tell others ‘my brother bought a flat in Madrid’... It is pleasant to be able to enter into that kind of conversation”. Information flows from migrants on Spanish culture also allow relatives to participate in conversations from a privileged vantage point which bolsters their status in Lima and sense of social importance.

Migrants may also return with new ideas and practices and promote these amongst their friends and relatives (Tamagno, 2002). These include attention to protecting the environment in Peru, not dropping litter, attention to traffic laws, developing a savings culture and not shouting in the street. As one close friend suggested: “They internalise urban rules and one can learn from that also”. Relatives back in Lima also learn new practices, fashions and behaviours which they adopt and imitate: “In my restaurant she tells me to fold the napkins in a special way and I imitate that and try to change things...She sends us wine which are low in alcohol. There they don’t drink much beer but rather , wine, and they don’t drink until they are drunk. And that’s what I practice here. She tells me that the neighbours

there are mortified by the noise migrants make. I now respect my neighbours greatly, put my rubbish only in the designated space and try to inculcate this in my children also”.

When asked how their values have changed as a result of having relatives abroad, it became evident that the values acquired in Madrid were being transmitted to relatives in Lima. This points strongly to the importance of analysing the interconnectedness of North-South wellbeing outcomes which are inter-related. For example, one husband whose wife had migrated stated, ‘I started to propose to myself lots of life goals, I am no longer so conformist, when she came back to visit she commented that I could do much more, I started to assume new challenges here – to continue my studies in education, offer more services in the three photocopying shops that I now manage. Before, I spent the afternoon playing sport, there was no parameter, now I don’t give that a second. I dedicate myself to working, as my business has expanded”.

Others commented that their concept of the good life had also changed and that these values were becoming reflected in daily practices: “I have started to get new things for the house. Before it was the bed only in the bedroom, but she commented that there should also be curtains, a clock and a wardrobe. It’s no longer just one thing but various. She brought that custom from over there. With respect to food preparation, we now cover food with aluminium foil so that it doesn’t smell. We also now maximise use of the artefacts in the home – so as not to use up the gas for the frying pan, you serve yourself from the microwave. She demanded this because it’s more practical. The family relationship has also changed a lot – we are much more attentive about improving our relationship as a couple; focused on the children, work. Each of us has assumed our role and are more conscious of family life and the importance of living in harmony. We think about how happy my daughters could be”. Others also spoke of being motivated to achieve more as a direct result of contact with relatives: “As she is a performer in London she also disseminates my music. I am now taking my work more seriously, being careful to respond to the level of musicians with a more professional vision, to increase the level so as to gain a higher level of acceptance amongst the public. It’s helpful to interchange ideas. It generates knowledge and the interest to continue”.

Positive impacts in the values and behaviours of migrants on return to Peru were also noted: “The Peruvians that return from there value Peru more. They conserve the environment, return with new education, cross only when the light is green. They have adopted the savings culture. They come with another idea, and in some way by bringing this, they are building opportunities for the society itself to improve”. Finally, some relatives were so acutely aware of the suffering that the migrants had experienced in the host country that it had made them attach more value to their own lives in Peru. Typical responses included: “It has made me value what I have here – the enjoyment, you arrive home and your mother is waiting for you with hot food; acknowledgement at work; to be able to develop in your own profession”. Another suggested: “It makes me see that my opportunities are right here, related to what I currently do. The comments you hear from those living outside our country are that our qualifications are not worth anything when we go there”.

## **5. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

Adopting a wellbeing approach to the concept of international migration offers greater insight not only into what migrants have and do but how they think and feel about the process (McGregor, 2007). This paper reveals that this can be further enhanced by investigating the inter-connectedness of wellbeing outcomes across North and South. Such an analysis thus fits with broader arguments that focus on the interconnectedness of North and South since it focuses on linkages of wellbeing outcomes across spatial boundaries. Adopting a wellbeing perspective reveals that when a relative or close friend migrates, the concept of the ‘wellbeing’ for those that remain in the ‘home’ country also changes. By adopting a wellbeing lens to the case of international migration, the linkages between the wellbeing of migrants in the host countries of UK and Spain and the relatives and close friends still remaining in Peru can be identified.

The findings suggest that though relatives are well informed of the barriers to achieving wellbeing through the strategy of international migration, particularly in terms of losses in the wellbeing domains of status, enjoyment and relatedness. At the same time, social narratives, such as the belief that long-term wellbeing is achieved precisely at the cost of personal sacrifice (propagated by for example, the cult of Marianismo) serves to create a

justification for the heavy personal costs identified in other domains of wellbeing. Within this social discourse, “you are not going there to enjoy yourself” but rather out of moral obligation to respond to the needs of those that remain. This understanding is played out through promoting a narrative of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrant which places the blame for failure of the migration strategies on the migrant themselves (rather than on structural constraints). Such characterization also perpetuates the moral and societal imperative that migrants should accept the suffering implied in order to further the interests of relatives back home, no matter the personal cost. As to how far in reality the benefits of this migration are translated into enhanced wellbeing of relatives and close friends, the evidence is more mixed. On one hand relatives and friends may acquire material benefits as well as knowledge and greater sophistication in their behaviours and practices, and increased social status that enhances their wellbeing. Yet at the same time neglect of children, the pain of losing relatives, and family break-up generate great suffering as well as anger and resentment.

Researchers interested in the challenges of understanding international migration outcomes can learn from a closer engagement with wellbeing conceptual frameworks. The advantages include: (i) capturing the inter-relatedness of wellbeing outcomes across spatial boundaries (ii) revealing the kinds of tradeoffs that exist across both material and psycho-social domains of wellbeing; and (iii) shedding light onto how social and cultural beliefs and value systems shape the conceptual referents for happiness and how this in turn affects the meaning attributed to different wellbeing outcomes.

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