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ASKING PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT OR TELLING THEM WHAT THEY 'NEED'? CONTRASTING *A THEORY OF HUMAN NEED* WITH LOCAL EXPRESSIONS OF GOALS

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SUMMARY

This paper uses the Quality of Life research carried out by the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) Research Group to examine the importance respondents have attributed to a variety of goals in two rural communities in Ethiopia. The results are analysed at the community, household and individual levels to expose the contestation involved in expressions of goal preference at different levels, and the power relations that underlie and contribute to the formation of these goal preferences. In this way, taking communities or households as homogenous units is shown to be inaccurate and potentially misleading. Analysis of individual case studies also provides insight into the complex decision-making process where people with access to limited resources are forced to give certain goals priority depending on current exigencies. The fact that the ordering of priorities can change with time highlights the dangers of any one-off measure being considered as a time-independent picture of individuals' goals.

By relating the results of the research to Doyal and Gough's Theory of Human Need, the paper considers to what extent 'universal' human needs correspond to the most important goals as expressed by respondents in the Ethiopian research. Whilst considerable support is found for needs such as health, food and shelter, several respondents in the two research sites consider needs such as education to be unnecessary. This incongruence between the priority of people's goals and theories of need leads us to question what the aim of development should be: to assist beneficiaries in the pursuit of what they want, or provide the things that they are thought to need.

KEYWORDS: quality of life, needs, universal, local, Ethiopia.

RELATED READING:

Alkire, S. (2002). 'Dimensions of Human Development' in *World Development* 30(2): 181-205.

Clark, D.A. and Gough, I.R. (2005). 'Capabilities, Needs and Well-Being: Relating the Universal and the Local' in Manderson, L. (Ed.) Rethinking Wellbeing. Perth, Australia: API Network.

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1. INTRODUCTION

> A remote community in the Peruvian Andes received financial compensation from the regional government for the negative effects of mining activities that had begun nearby. At a meeting to decide how the community should use the money, the mayor, who had travelled to other areas of the country and recognised the benefits of 'modernisation', suggested that the money would be best spent providing clean drinking water or building a school or paving the road from the nearest town. In contrast, the community members clearly expressed their preference for the purchase of musical instruments for a band to play at community *fiestas*. The mayor, incredulous, told the people that they were ignorant *campesinos*, unaware of the possibilities that improved infrastructure could bring and that they should follow his recommendations, as he knew more about the world than they. The mayor has since been thrown out of the area, and the community now has a band to play at their fiestas.
>
> (Story recounted whilst carrying out research in Peru, 2004)

This example, whilst taken from a very different cultural setting to that of rural Ethiopia, demonstrates two points that this paper attempts to illustrate. Firstly, people's preferences differ, underlining that there is no one vision of modernity or advancement. What, in the view of outsiders, is unquestionably of high priority, may not figure in the goals of residents of a particular community, and indeed may be subservient to what may seem trivial or irrelevant to an outsider. Secondly, that in circumstances in which people make decisions contrary to their best interests – in the above example, if the year after the decision was taken to purchase musical instruments rather than providing clean drinking water for the community, one of the children died as a result of an infection contracted from impure drinking water, it could reasonably be argued that, despite the importance of *fiesta* in Andean cultural life, the community had made the wrong decision – to what extent outsiders have the right to intervene in their 'best interests'. Thus, the argument of this paper is not whether the community in this example was right or wrong in the decision that it made, but that the preferences of individuals affected by development interventions are nonetheless essential considerations.

This paper uses data from research carried out by the Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) in particular the WeD-QoL, a Quality of Life instrument developed by the WeD programme which, amongst other things, asked respondents about the goals that they require to be happy (Appendix A). The results of this survey are also supported by other data gathered as part of the WeD research, including: the QoL phase 1; the Resources And Needs Questionnaire (RANQ); and qualitative research on lives, and household and individual diaries. This analysis is then compared with 'universal' human needs to examine the extent of overlap between individuals' goals and their needs

The paper begins with a methodology detailing the reference framework of the study, including an overview of Doyal and Gough's *A Theory of Human Need* (THN: 1991), its selection as a universal theory and the suitability of use of the WeD-QoL data and potential errors of the study. Section three then considers the community level, using average responses in research sites to approximate community 'norms' and considering outliers that differ from these 'norms'. The fourth section takes one household from each of the two research sites that are the focus of this paper as case studies, contrasting the importance of goals expressed by individuals in these households with the 'norms' expressed by the community as a whole. The fifth section then compares the views expressed by the communities, households and individuals with the needs identified by THN. The final sections of the paper draw together some of the main themes revealed by this analysis, and discuss the implications for further research and policy.

2. METHODOLOGY

The WeD-QoL

This paper primarily draws on data from the WeD-QoL. This was tested across the four WeD research countries [1], and consisted of a suite of measures:

- Positive And Negative Affect Scales[2] (PANAS; see Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988);
- the goals that the respondent needs to be happy;

[1] Bangladesh, Peru and Thailand in addition to Ethiopia.
[2] An instrument which asks the extent to which respondents have experienced 20 feelings and emotions in the last year, allowing calculation of a score for an individual's positive and negative affect, and mood.

- satisfaction with goal attainment;
- the resources the respondent has to pursue her/his goals;
- the values of people in the community;
- the values of the respondent; and
- the Satisfaction with Life Scale[3] (SWLS; see Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985).

The WeD-QoL results therefore enable the exploration of the interaction between goals, resources, values and life satisfaction for different individuals in different sites across the four WeD countries. Further details of the development of the WeD-QoL are given in Appendix C.

In Ethiopia, approximately sixty respondents in each of the six DEEP[4] research sites completed the WeD-QoL survey. However, for the purposes of this paper, the two sites with which the author was most familiar were selected for detailed analysis. These sites are the two most remote sites covered by the WeD research and offer a contrast in terms of the religion and ethnicity of the populations. The two sites are:

- Dessu, three small villages in North Shewa, Amhara. The population is comprised of approximately sixty percent Argoba Muslims and forty percent Amhara Christians. The local economy is heavily reliant on agriculture with the expansion of irrigated cash-crop farming in recent years supplementing precarious rain-fed agriculture in a drought prone area. Many people also weave in order to supplement their household's income.

- Kedada, several small villages in Arssi, Oromia. The population is approximately ninety-nine percent Oromo Muslim, with a few Amhara Christian migrant workers. The economy is very dependent on agriculture with irrigated cash-crop farming of increasing importance. There is some employment of daily farm labourers on irrigated land, and many supplement household incomes with firewood collection.

(Bevan, Pankhurst & Lavers, 2006)

Given the enormous diversity in Ethiopia, with more than 85 ethnic groups present, clearly neither the results drawn from the two sites studied here, nor the six sites covered by the WeD-Ethiopia research can be considered

[3] A five-item scale which explores people's satisfaction with their life as a whole.
[4] in-Depth Exploration of Ethiopian Poverty

to be representative at the national level. However, analysis conducted on the WeD data from the other four research sites gives no indication that the two sites selected here are particularly exceptional.

The questionnaires were translated into Amharic and Oromiffa and respondents completed the questionnaire in the relevant language; Amharic in Dessu and Oromiffa in Kedada. This paper uses analysis of the results of the goals section of the questionnaire, in which respondents were asked to say to what extent they felt that approximately forty-five goals were needed for them to be happy. The goals selected for the questionnaire were based on those used in the Peruvian pilot. However, the research officers conducting the WeD research in each of the Ethiopian sites, who had amassed considerable knowledge of the local attitudes and circumstances, then reduced this list, removing those items which were not applicable to the Ethiopian context and that of the particular site. The research officers also made suggestions regarding additional goals which they thought were important in the site but which were not included in the Peruvian questionnaire. Finally, the site-specific questionnaires were reviewed to ensure consistency between the sites, where relevant (Tekola, 2005). The goals section of the questionnaire, in English, is included in Appendix A.

A Theory of Human Need

This paper draws on the idea of a set of universal basic needs, and for this purpose it considers Doyal and Gough's *A Theory of Human Need*. THN is developed using a hierarchical approach, 'moving from universal goals, through basic needs to intermediate needs' (Gough, 2003: 8). *Needs* are defined as a particular category of universal goals relevant to all human beings in order to avoid harm,[5] distinct from *wants* which are derived 'from an individual's particular preferences and cultural environment' (*ibid*: 8). As such they argue for two basic needs, those of health and personal autonomy. Doyal and Gough define autonomy as '*cognitive and emotional capacity*', 'the level of *cultural understanding* a person has about herself, her culture and what is expected of her as an individual within it', and '*critical autonomy* … the capacity to compare cultural rules, to reflect upon the rules of one's own culture, to work with others to change them and, *in extremis*, to move to another culture' (*ibid*: 10, emphasis in original). THN goes on to state that there are need satisfiers, which, although culturally variable in the way in which they may be satisfied, have 'universal satisfier characteristics'

[5] Gough defines harm as 'fundamental disablement in the pursuit of one's vision of the good' or 'an impediment to successful social *participation*' (2003: 8, emphasis in original).

(*ibid*: 10). For example, although there are many different types of cuisine in different cultures that can satisfy the requirement for nutritional daily food, there is a universal satisfier characteristic of a minimum number of calories a day for a specified group of people required to avoid detrimental effects to an individual's health. These universal satisfier characteristics can be used to define a list of intermediate needs, which must be fulfilled in order that the two basic needs, health and autonomy, may be satisfied. THN groups these intermediate needs into eleven categories: nutritional food and clean water; protective housing; a non-hazardous work environment; a non-hazardous physical environment; safe birth control and child-bearing; appropriate health care; a secure childhood; significant primary relationships; physical security; economic security; and appropriate education.

THN as a universal theory

THN is just one of the many universal theories put forward in the social sciences,[6] and several of these theories were also considered for inclusion in this paper. For example, from the field of psychology, Ryan and Deci's *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT; see Ryan & Sapp, 2006) argues that there are three basic psychological needs, of which the restriction of any one will result in psychological harm. The three needs are: competence, 'being able to effectively act on, and have an impact within, one's environment'; relatedness, 'feelings of belonging and connection'; and autonomy, 'the experience of volition, ownership and initiative in one's own behaviour' (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Whilst these arguments are convincingly made, it was found that SDT did not provide sufficient comparability with the goals section of the WeD-QoL survey to permit inclusion in this paper. SDT focuses on purely psychological needs, whereas the QoL survey focuses on many physical resources, as well as social and communal ones, some of which are more closely related to the psychological needs identified in SDT.

Other notable examples include the *capability approach* pioneered by Sen and Nussbaum (see for example, Sen, 1999; 2002, Nussbaum 2000), based on what *capabilities* and *functionings* people have – to do and be the things that they have reason to value. Sen has repeatedly declined to put forward a list or hierarchy of human capabilities or functionings, and, as such, his 'thin' version of human capabilities provides little guidance on the components of wellbeing with which to conduct analysis for the purposes of this paper. Nussbaum's 'thick' notion of capabilities does just this by

[6] For example Alkire (2002) compares several lists of universal needs and goals.

identifying a list of ten central human functional capabilities, which she claims to be relevant for all human beings (Nussbaum, 2003). However, there is little evidence of a cross-cultural consensus regarding this list (Gough, 2003; 2004), and, indeed, potential for achieving it (Clark, 2002).

Thus, it has been argued that THN can mediate between the 'thin' and 'thick' approaches to capabilities of Sen and Nussbaum, respectively, combining the merits of a wide range of human capabilities and a broad vision of human flourishing, evident in Nussbaum's work, and the greater potential for underpinning international and inter-cultural consensus of Sen's (Gough, 2003).

Comparing THN with local expressions of goals

This paper aims to compare the needs identified in THN with the importance attached to goals by respondents to the WeD-QoL questionnaire. In this context, it is therefore necessary to assess the suitability of the data produced for this purpose.

The WeD-QoL explicitly asks respondents about the things they require to be happy. However, without a process of cognitive debriefing following the WeD-QoL, we cannot be sure how the questions were interpreted by respondents: whether a goal is important just for happiness, as is the literal meaning; or more generally interpreted as the things that the respondent feels are necessary to their lives, not just for their happiness. Assuming the first of these interpretations, the WeD-QoL would focus on the attainment of *hedonic* wellbeing – the view that wellbeing is derived from pleasure maximisation – rather than *eudaimonic* wellbeing – which involves the fulfilment of one's *daimon* or true nature; 'doing what is worth doing' not just what is pleasure inducing (Ryan & Deci, 2001).[7]

This is an interesting point that warrants further investigation. However, the distinction between happiness and a broader interpretation of eudaimonic wellbeing is a subtle one that is not necessarily immediately evident outside debates in the social sciences. Indeed, it would seem unlikely that the respondents would have made such distinctions during the brief period allowed for administration of the WeD-QoL. As such, for the purposes of this

[7] Whilst these approaches to studying wellbeing undoubtedly overlap, they also differ. As such, happiness is a suitable focus of investigation from a hedonic perspective, however, from a eudaimonic point of view, to consider what a person needs to be happy, will reveal an incomplete set of goals required to achieve wellbeing.

paper, the author has made the assumption that the questions were interpreted more generally; that respondents answered the questions according to the goals that they felt were important to their lives, not just to the achievement of narrowly defined happiness.

In this paper, THN is used to mediate between Sen's thin and Nussbaum's thick versions of capability theory. It is proposed therefore that, taking into account Sen's focus on capabilities as doing and being the things that people have reason to value, the WeD-QoL data, reflecting the goals that respondents feel are important to their lives, can reasonably be used as the basis of comparison with THN in the context of capabilities.

Taking the first six intermediate needs to broadly relate to physical health and the other five to relate to autonomy (Gough, 2003), we can then map the goals covered in the WeD-QoL to the needs identified in THN. This shows that health is included in the WeD-QoL and is also identified as a basic need. In addition, daily food in the WeD-QoL relates closely to the intermediate need of nutritional food, though the WeD-QoL does not consider the requirement of clean water. A place to live also closely fits the concept of protective housing in THN. The other intermediate needs relating to health do not however relate sufficiently to any of the goals covered by the WeD-QoL to merit further comparison: access to wage and family labour partially relate to a non-hazardous work environment, yet in economies dominated by subsistence agriculture, they are only a small part of the picture; equally government and NGO services partially relate to appropriate healthcare, yet these services will also include agricultural interventions and education, and as such the results tell us little about how respondents value healthcare itself; none of the goals sufficiently relate to the intermediate needs of a non-hazardous physical environment or safe birth control and child-bearing.

The WeD-QoL does not directly consider the concept of autonomy, as defined by THN, however some goals do closely relate to several of the intermediate needs that underpin autonomy. Several of the WeD-QoL goals such as good family relationships, good relationships with people, friends and marriage match the intermediate need of significant primary relationships. The need of economic security is also covered in the WeD-QoL by economic independence, and to some extent wealth. Finally education, and to a lesser extent education for children and knowledge, relate to appropriate education in THN. As with health, there are several intermediate needs supporting autonomy that do not adequately match

goals in the WeD-QoL. In particular, the survey tells us little about the importance respondents give to a secure childhood or physical security.

Therefore, although the nature of the WeD-QoL does not allow validation or contradiction of THN, it does provide some evidence with which to examine to what extent the goals of respondents and their 'needs' overlap.

Potential errors of the study

Whilst care has been taken in piloting the WeD-QoL to ensure that the questions are clear and understandable, it is possible that the questions may be interpreted in a variety of ways. One particular example of this is the goal of education. In Ethiopia education can take a number of forms in addition to formal academic education. Religious education, both for Muslims and Christians, is common in many parts of the country, and additionally, it is possible that respondents could interpret education as including informal means such as learning by accompanying parents on daily duties on the farm or in the household.

All research for WeD-Ethiopia was carried out by two research officers, a male interviewing male respondents and a female interviewing female respondents, in each of the research sites. As with all research the answers given by respondents will depend to some extent on the rapport developed between researcher and respondent. As such, despite the standardisation of the QoL questionnaire and training given to researchers in an attempt to standardise their approach to the survey, there may be some error as a result.

Any questionnaire which asks people about their goals is also likely to be subject to the perceptions of the respondents regarding the motivations of the researchers and what they might be able to deliver. Especially in communities that have received regular support from government and NGOs, and in the case of Dessu, has been referred to as aid dependent (Bevan *et al*, 2006), it is possible that respondents may have altered their responses according to what they believe that the researchers may be able to supply. However, this effect is likely to be limited as a result of the considerable time that researchers had already spent in the study communities by the time the QoL research was carried out, and the relationships which they had developed with their respondents.
The format of the questionnaire itself requires respondents to consider their goals and the importance of these aspirations. For many respondents this

may be the first time that they have been explicitly asked such questions and perhaps the first time that they have fully considered them and responses should be viewed in this light.

Despite these qualifications, which require that the results of the WeD-QoL be considered cautiously, the data, when examined alongside other parts of the WeD research, both qualitative and quantitative, does provide valuable insights into the importance that respondents in the two communities attach to a range of material, cultural, social, human, collective and spiritual goals.

3. GOALS: COMMUNITY 'NORMS' AND 'DEVIATORS'

Even a cursory glance at the results of the WeD-QoL (see table B1, appendix B) reveals that although basic needs items such as daily food and shelter are very important to residents of both sites, these are not the exclusive focus of the communities' goals. In Kedada such things as being of good character (1.9, community average on a scale of 0: not necessary to 2: very necessary, see appendix A for further details), peace of mind (1.8), and clean and beautiful surroundings (1.8) are rated as marginally more important than daily food (1.7) and as important as a place to live (1.8), and in Dessu, communication with God (1.7) and being of good character (1.7) are rated only slightly less important than daily food (1.8) and more important than a place to live (1.5). Whilst these differences are not large enough to confirm that, for example, peace of mind is considered to be more important than daily food, the results do show that daily food is not the sole priority of the community members. Indeed, in Kedada, daily food is only the twenty-fourth most important goal and a place to live is twenty-first, and in Dessu daily food is the sixth most important goal and a place to live twelfth. As such it is hard to justify any claims that asking people in Ethiopia what goals they have reason to value does not relate to the local reality as their sole focus is on day-to-day survival. Clearly there are significant problems with food insecurity in many areas of the country, and Kedada and Dessu are two examples of food insecure areas (Bevan *et al*, 2006). Yet, food insecurity is not equally experienced by all members of a community, as some are better equipped to cope with such shocks, and it is seasonality and annuality dependent. At the very least, periods of relative food availability do afford people opportunities to formulate goals beyond the requirement of day-to-day survival.

Clearly this is not to deny that such basic needs are very important, as in both sites the scores received are extremely high. In addition, there is only one person in Dessu and none in Kedada that thinks that daily food is ‘not necessary’. The survey also shows that health is the most prized goal, with men and women in Kedada and men in Dessu all rating it as the most important. Only women in Dessu do not consider it to be the most important, although they still rate it very highly. Indeed, there is very little contestation regarding health, with only one person in Dessu believing it to be ‘not necessary’, and fifty-eight of sixty-two respondents in Dessu and sixty of sixty-one respondents in Kedada stating that it is ‘very necessary’.

People in Kedada view education both for themselves (1.5) and their children (1.9) to be far more important than residents of Dessu do (with both scoring 1.1). Although a score of 1 or more represents ‘necessary’ on the scale used in this survey, there is considerable contestation regarding the importance of education in both Dessu, where fourteen respondents believe that it is ‘not necessary’, and in Kedada where eight do. In Kedada only one person replied that education for children was ‘not necessary’, however there is considerable contestation in Dessu with ten people stating that it is ‘not necessary’. The greater importance of education in Kedada is perhaps a sign that the community is more outward looking in their goals, with education, especially for the younger generation, prized for the opportunities that it opens up beyond subsistence agriculture. Further evidence of the prioritisation of goals related to links outside the community in Kedada is given by the fact that a bridge (1.9), road (1.7) and public transport (1.7) are given very high priority. This is unsurprising given the inaccessibility of the site despite its relative proximity to nearby towns such as Dera and Nazret, due to the lack of a bridge over the Awash River. In contrast, residents of Dessu rate the importance of all these goals much lower – bridge (0.9), road (0.9) and public transport (1.0). This is despite the equally, if not more, remote location of the community, poor quality of roads to the nearest town, lack of any public transportation and the potential usefulness of a bridge especially during the wet season. For example, many children are prevented from regularly attending school at this time of year, as they are unable to cross the river (Bevan *et al*, 2006).

Interestingly in both sites, men (Dessu 1.2, Kedada 1.9) believe education for their children to be slightly more important than women do (Dessu 1.0, Kedada 1.8). Additionally, women in Kedada (1.2) place substantially less emphasis on their own education than men (1.8). These two results suggest internalisation of the society’s perception of women as housewives and

mothers (Nussbaum, 2000), for whom formal education is of little or no use. With women traditionally given far less access to education than men (Tassew, Alemu, Jones, Bekele, Seager, Tekie & Getachew, 2005), in many cases women may also fail to recognise the potential opportunities that education opens up, as they themselves have never had access to them.

In Dessu, whilst fourteen people believe that education is not important, only one person denied the importance of knowledge.[8] This suggests that other forms of acquiring knowledge are perceived to be very important and in some cases more important than knowledge gained through formal education. A particular example of this would be religious education, with Quranic and to a lesser extent church education considered by some to be far more important than attending formal education. This also underlines the importance of ensuring that education provided in schools is appropriate, and meets the needs of the community the school serves and the opportunities open to students completing education. As such, with parents unconvinced of the relevance and importance of education compared to other methods of acquiring knowledge, such as learning skills from the parents themselves, enrolment in education is unlikely to increase.

During recent years, there has been a shift in emphasis from large numbers of livestock and large amounts of land as sources of income and wealth to irrigated farming in both Kedada and Dessu (Bevan *et al*, 2006). This is as a result of increasing irregularity of rainfall, with both the short *belg*[9] rains and the longer *meher*[10] rainy season affected, shortage of land for grazing and agriculture, and the increasing availability of private and community pumps which allow those with land near rivers in both sites to invest in cash-crop, irrigated farming. However, the results of the WeD-QoL do not show that irrigation is considered to be any more important than livestock or land, with an insignificant difference in scores between the three variables: land (Dessu 1.9, Kedada 1.8); irrigation (Dessu 1.7, Kedada 1.8); and livestock (Dessu 1.8, Kedada 1.7). Indeed, irrigation is ranked as only the ninth most important goal in Dessu and only seventeenth in Kedada. As such, the results would seem to suggest that whilst the importance of irrigated farming may have increased in recent years, livestock have also retained considerable importance. This may be partly due to non-economic factors such as the status with which owning large numbers of animals is still

[8] The research officers working in Kedada did not suggest knowledge as an important goal in the site and, as such, it was not included in the Kedada questionnaire (Tekola, 2005).
[9] This usually occurs in February/March/April.
[10] In most parts of the country this takes place from June to mid-September.

associated. Additionally, livestock do continue to have significant economic value, for example, oxen are essential for ploughing on irrigated land and other types of livestock, such as camels, which are more suited to dry conditions, have become increasingly common in recent years. However, the changing importance of irrigation in comparison with land and livestock has been experienced differently for men and women in Kedada. Men rate irrigation as 'very necessary' (2.0) and more important than any goal except health, whilst women (1.6) rate irrigation as less important than both land and livestock. This is perhaps a reflection of the division of labour in the community, with male roles almost exclusively focussed on farming, and female roles still primarily considered to be domestic work and the collection of water and firewood, although there are some women working as daily labourers on irrigated farms. As a result, men will, on the whole, have received more exposure to the benefits of irrigated farming than women.

In both sites, material goals are prioritised in comparison with social, collective and cultural goals. In Dessu, seven of the top ten are material, the only non-material goals being health, communication with God and being of good character. In Kedada, the top goals are not so dominated by the material; health, being of good character and communication with God are also very important here, and collective goals, such as improvement of the community and peace in the community feature highly as well. In both sites, social relations are regarded to be of secondary importance to agricultural inputs such as land, irrigation and livestock. This is especially so in Dessu.

There are many possible explanations for this result. Notably, many of the respondents are seriously deficient in many of the material resources covered by the WeD-QoL, which results in significant deprivation for respondents and their families. In comparison, for many respondents social relations with family and neighbours are relatively strong. This may therefore be an example of social relationships being taken for granted whereas material goals, which have not been achieved, are prioritised. Another partial explanation could lie in the nature of social relations themselves. For example, it is perhaps not surprising that marriages which can involve a combination of abduction, rape, forced migration or little or no choice of partner (Bevan *et al.*, 2006; Wolde, 2002; and WeD Adult Lives research) are considered 'not necessary' by many respondents. Nonetheless, it is clear that while the results suggest that social relations are relatively unimportant compared with material goals, this must be interpreted cautiously. As there are a number of possible explanations, simplistic generalisations have the potential to mask contestation within the

community and further investigation is required to understand the underlying causes.

Additionally, it is notable that male respondents consistently place greater emphasis on social relationships than women do. This is true for non-familial relationships in both sites: friends (Dessu: men 1.4, women 1.2; and Kedada: men 1.2, women 1.0) and good relationships with people (Dessu: men 1.4, women 0.9; and Kedada: men 1.8, women 1.7); and good family relationships in Dessu (men 1.7, women 1.3). One partial explanation for this could be the large proportion of women migrating for marriage, with thirty-one percent of women in Dessu and just twelve percent in Kedada having been born in the community in which they now live (source: RANQ, 2004). Gebre-Egzbiabher and White (2004) propose that this causes women to be disconnected from their social networks and that cultural barriers make them less likely to integrate into their new community. However, one might expect familial ties to be far more affected than friendships and relations with other members of the community, which, with time, can be rebuilt in a new location. As such, another possible explanation may be the nature of social relationships which men and women have, with women tending to be involved in relatively small domestic circles, whereas men go out more and have a greater involvement in community activities.

In both sites, men place more emphasis than women on marriage (Dessu: men 1.4, women 1.1; Kedada: men 1.4, women 1.3) and having children (Dessu: men 1.4, women 1.0; Kedada: men 1.5, women 0.7). Indeed, ten people in Dessu (two male and eight female) and eight in Kedada (five male and three female) stated that marriage was ‘not necessary’. This is in contrast to the social unacceptability of women remaining unmarried, and despite the key part that having children plays in the identity of women in rural communities and the fact that infertility is always perceived to be the fault of the woman, leading to stigmatisation. Surprisingly given the large family sizes in Kedada, having children is given relatively low importance, rated as the second least important goal overall. These results would suggest that despite strong cultural norms, which encourage marriage and having children, there is considerable contestation with respect to whether these goals are important for personal life satisfaction. Indeed, given the traumatic circumstances of some marriages, in particular for women as previously noted, marriage may even be detrimental to life satisfaction.
It has been claimed elsewhere that religion is a significant factor influencing norms and behaviour in Ethiopia (e.g. Ellis & Tassew, 2005). The two sites considered here offer a contrast between one religiously homogenous site,

Kedada,[11] and a mixed site, Dessu.[12] As such, the WeD-QoL data presents an opportunity to investigate the effect religion has on the construction of individuals' goal preferences. The influence of religion may be evident in many ways. For example, some goals may have reduced significance for followers of a religion, or a subgroup of followers, for example based on gender, because these do not fit with the principles of the religion. In some societies, reduced importance of education for women might be an example of this. In contrast, some goals, for example marriage, may be assigned added importance as a result of the emphasis the religion places on them.

Analysis of the average responses of respondents from the religious groupings does not show many differences in terms of goal preferences. The few exceptions are that in Dessu, Orthodox Christian respondents (1.3) placed a slightly greater emphasis on education than Muslims respondents did (1.0). Also, Christian respondents reported the greater importance of good family relationships (Christians 1.6; Muslims 1.3). However, this difference is not consistent for other social goals such as friends or good relationships with people. Calculation of the standard deviation of responses in Dessu does not show any greater consensus within religious groups as to the importance of goals. Equally, comparing the standard deviation of responses in Kedada and Dessu does not show any greater consensus of opinion in Kedada, where respondents are from one religion, than Dessu, where both Christians and Muslims are represented.[13]

Whilst the results must be viewed cautiously due to the small sizes of the samples and the particularities of the communities, the WeD-QoL indicates that factors such as gender and geographical location are more important in the construction of goals than religion. Whilst religion may be highly significant in terms of how goals are satisfied, for example marriage customs and social relations (Bevan *et al.*, 2006; Ellis & Tassew, 2005), it does not appear to be an overriding factor that affects the importance of goals to which individuals aspire.

[11] In Kedada 53 of the respondents stated that they were Muslim and 8 did not state any religion or did not answer.
[12] In Dessu there were 28 Orthodox Christian respondents and 29 Muslim ones. 5 respondents did not state any religion or did not answer.
[13] The only exception to this is for the goal of a bridge (1.9 in Kedada with a standard deviation of 0.3 compared with 0.9 in Dessu with a standard deviation of 0.6). However, this level of consensus is hardly surprising given the overwhelming need for a bridge in Kedada, as previously discussed.

4. INDIVIDUALS' GOALS AND INTRA-HOUSEHOLD COMPARISONS

Case study 1 – Dessu (See table B2, appendix B)

This Amhara, Orthodox Christian household comprises eight people; a married couple and their six children. Their eldest child, a daughter, has married out but lives in the village. The WeD-QoL was completed by four household members; the household head, GM, his wife, BM, and the two eldest children still living at home; AG, male, 14 years old and YG, male, 12 years old.

Education is a key theme for each of the four respondents. GH is literate as a result of a literacy programme, and this ability was vital in gaining employment in the seedling station in Dessu. Through this employment, in addition to his wages, he was able to learn about irrigated farming techniques and with access to irrigated land has greatly prospered in recent years, making his one of the richest households in the community. Education of parents has been shown to be a strong predictor of children's education in Ethiopia (Cockburn, 2001; Tietjen, 1998) and given his experience, GH unsurprisingly rates education and education for children as 'necessary', and stated in the QoL phase 1 that, 'I aspire … to educate all my children'. Yet this wish for his children has come into conflict with farm labour requirements. Several years ago, with young children to support, the household faced a severe labour shortage and as a result neither the eldest son, AG, nor the eldest daughter (now married and no longer in the household) received any education but were required to work to help support the household. GH, indeed, has expressed concerns regarding his son and the opportunities open to him as a result of his illiteracy. GM's choice is interesting in that it differs from the findings of other research in Ethiopia which concludes that there is bias towards the first-born child in a household, with subsequent children less likely to go to school (Cockburn, 2001; Tassew *et al.*, 2005).

YG and his younger brother and sister (neither of whom are included in the QoL) are however receiving education as the labour shortage has eased, with AG farming full time and YG and his siblings able to assist in farming and household activities as secondary activities to education (source: RANQ, 2004). This, however, is likely to be a particular source of dissatisfaction for AG, as he places great importance on education, rating it

as ‘very necessary’, yet can see his siblings attending education when he was unable to do so.

These examples highlight the particular stresses placed on a household at certain points in the household lifecycle. High dependency ratios (productive members of the household versus dependents) are one factor that can result in a focus on short-term survival rather than striving for long-term goals. In this case study high dependency ratios are a result of a very young family, however, it is equally plausible that old-age dependents could cause a household head to make similar trade-offs regarding his/her goal preferences.

In contrast to the rest of her household, BM feels that ‘education’ is ‘not necessary’ perhaps reflecting the perception of the changing importance of education between generations, as she does feel that education is ‘necessary’ for her children, and indeed the household is sending both sons and daughters to school and the parents intend to send the youngest children to school once old enough. BM’s main occupations are housework, and fetching firewood and water (source: RANQ, 2004), activities that require no formal education. In contrast, it appears that there are now increasing opportunities in and outside Dessu for the younger generations if they are educated and this may be an explanation for the relative importance given to her own education and that of her children.

BM views having children as ‘necessary’ and her husband views it to be ‘very necessary’, yet she expressed concern in the QoL phase 1 regarding the number of children that they have and the effect that this has on their standard of living and on her health, with the demands of looking after them all. ‘The large number of my children is worrying me how I could send all of them to school and how I could bring up them well, not to starve them … I am now taking contraceptive not to give birth.’ (Source: QoL Phase 1).

The household does appear to be looking outside the community in pursuit of their goals in spite of the seemingly inward-looking nature of the community, as discussed in the previous section. Not only is education for the children ‘up to the end’ (BM, Source: QoL Phase 1) a priority, but all four members of the household believe a road, bridge and public transport to be ‘necessary’. This may well be a reflection of the household’s success in cash-crop agriculture and the benefits that improved market access would bring. Additionally, faced with a shortage of land especially for grazing his animals, despite his relative success with irrigated farming, GM stated in the

QoL Phase 1 that he aspired to buy urban land, and indeed is now in the process of building a house in an urban area. For those that have sufficient resources, this is a relatively common strategy in rural areas, as it allows parents to send their children to urban areas to continue their education beyond the limits of the local schools. For example, whilst the nearest primary school to Dessu is a thirty-minute walk, the nearest secondary school is a two and a half hour walk to Chibite.

The household members agree with the views of the community that health is 'very necessary', with BM emphasising the threat of malaria as a major part of their thinking (Source: QoL Phase 1, 2004). Indeed, GM and YM both reported that they have had malaria in the last year (Source: RANQ, 2004). Losing the household head, the main source of food and income, from the workforce represents a significant shock to a household, even in circumstances such as these in which the illness did not last more than a few weeks. The prevalence of malaria in the region in the months following the two rainy seasons is likely to be a significant factor in the great importance that the community as a whole and this family in particular attaches to health.

Case study 2 – Kedada (See table B3, appendix B)

This Muslim family comprises three households living within one compound. The head of the family, GH, has three wives, living in the three houses and he splits his time between them. GH has had a total of eighteen children, though eight of those have since died, the first wife bore fourteen children, the second five and the third one. Several children have married and have now set up their own households nearby. The unmarried children continue to live with their mothers. The WeD-QoL was completed by GH, his second wife, ZK, their son YG and GH's third wife, AD.

GH is notable in considering that both marriage and having children are 'not necessary', despite the great cultural importance that is placed on family and children in Kedada, and despite the fact the he himself has three wives and has had a total of eighteen children. In this regard, GH represents the ideal for a man in his sixties in Kedada – he rotates his time with his three wives, living with his children and grandchildren – yet he does not believe that these goals are important. Equally, he also states that friends are 'not necessary', which, as discussed, represents the views of a substantial number of respondents in Kedada.

Interestingly, neither ZK, who has five children, nor AD, who has one, believe that having children is 'necessary'. Viewed in the context of the community norms examined in the previous section, this is not entirely surprisingly as the average response for women in Kedada is only 0.7. However, as previously discussed, this is unexpected given the great importance of children in the community expectations of women, and the great stigmatisation attached to infertile women.[14] Given that both of these women do themselves have children, their responses, and those of other women in the community, may indicate a situation in which there is only a problem if the person is unable to have children and that women who do have several children do not always recognise their necessity.

There are a range of different opinions in the household regarding education: GH believes that for both himself and his children, education is 'very necessary' despite having no formal education himself and being unable to write; ZK, as with BM in the previous case study, believes that education for herself is unimportant, yet recognises that education for her children is 'very necessary'; in contrast AD, GH's third wife believes education for herself to be 'necessary' and that of her children 'very necessary'; equally, YG also views education as 'very necessary'. The explanation for BM's professed lack of need for education in the previous case study could equally apply to ZK, whose main roles involve housework. However, it is interesting that GH, who has never attended formal education but has been to Quranic school, does feel that education is very important. This may be a reflection of his religious beliefs – he also stated that communication with God is 'very necessary' – in that his religious education has been very important in his religious life, or perhaps an indication that he regrets not having had formal education himself and that the kind of opportunities that GM in Dessu has taken advantage of were not open to GH due to his illiteracy.

5. CONTRASTING THE UNIVERSAL WITH THE LOCAL

This section compares the basic and intermediate needs identified by THN with the preceding analysis of the WeD-QoL goals. It then considers the policy implications that derive from attempts to operationalise THN.

[14] As previously discussed, infertility is considered to be an exclusively female problem.

Health

The results of the WeD-QoL, at both the community level and individual case studies, show that health is viewed as extremely important. Both men and women in Dessu and Kedada feel that it is ‘very necessary’, with all but women in Dessu rating health as the most important goal, and they still rate it very highly. Indeed, there are very few deviators from this norm, with no one in Kedada and just one person in Dessu rating health as ‘not necessary’.

Regarding the intermediate needs that relate to health, the goal of daily food, equivalent to the intermediate need of nutritional food, is largely undisputed in its importance in both communities. Equally the importance attributed to a place to live in both Dessu and Kedada overlaps with the intermediate need of protective housing.

As such, analysis of the WeD-QoL shows that, of the needs identified in THN that match goals covered in the WeD-QoL, there is relatively little contestation in the two communities. Health, daily food and protective housing are, all considered to be ‘very necessary’ by the majority of respondents.

Autonomy

As discussed in the methodology, the concept of autonomy is not considered explicitly by the WeD-QoL. As such, comparison must be based on those WeD-QoL goals that relate sufficiently to autonomy-related intermediate needs in THN. Significant primary relationships relate to a number of goals in the WeD-QoL such as marriage, friends, good relationships with people and good family relationships. As previously discussed, the results show that these tend to be given lower priority than many material goals and are considered to be relatively unimportant overall. The necessity of these relationships is contested, with a significant number of respondents believing that marriage, friends, and to a lesser extent good relationships with people and good family relationships are ‘not necessary’. As such, whilst significant primary relationships are included as an intermediate need in THN, based on the results of the WeD-QoL, they cannot be claimed to be a universal goal.

The goals of wealth and economic independence broadly relate to economic security, and their necessity in both communities overlaps with THN’s

classification of economic security as an intermediate need. Only one person in Kedada disputes the necessity of economic independence and no one states that wealth is unimportant, whilst the majority of respondents believe both to be ‘very necessary’.

As we have seen, education is by no means a universal goal, with many people, especially in Dessu, disputing its importance both for themselves and for their children. Interestingly, knowledge is considered to be far more important in Dessu, perhaps underlining the distinction made in THN of *appropriate* education. However, the results of the WeD-QoL demonstrate that education, at least *formal* education as the residents of Dessu and Kedada perceive it to be, is not a universal goal. There is clearly a large proportion of respondents that believe education to be ‘necessary’ or ‘very necessary’, and an even greater proportion which believe education for children to be so, reflecting a growing relevance for formal education within the communities. However, there are undoubtedly a substantial number of exceptions, particularly in Dessu, who do not currently see the benefits of formal education.

As such, although we have no means of examining the importance of autonomy, as defined by THN, to respondents, we can see that a number of the intermediate needs that Doyal and Gough identify do not match the aspirations of the two communities examined in this paper, whilst others such as appropriate education and significant primary relationships are contested.

The goals that are not ‘needs’

There are several goals that people in Dessu and Kedada value highly which are not included in THN’s list of intermediate needs. Examples arising from the WeD-QoL include: to be of good character (Dessu 1.7, tenth most important, Kedada 1.9, fourth most important); communication with God (Dessu 1.7, eighth most important, Kedada 1.8, tenth most important); and peace of mind (Dessu 1.7, eleventh most important, Kedada 1.8, eleventh most important). Clearly the WeD-QoL does not provide sufficient evidence to be able to draw conclusions that any of these goals are universal needs, as Gough asserts, ‘[i]f something is not universally necessary for enhanced basic need satisfaction, then it is not so classified, however widespread the commodity/activity/relationship may be’ (2003: 11). Indeed, there is not even a consensus in Dessu and Kedada regarding the necessity of the three examples given here, with one person in Kedada believing that peace of

mind is ‘not necessary’. However, it is important to recognise that not all needs, as defined by social science theory, are universally desired. Similarly, there are also goals, widely viewed as being very important, which are not needs according to universal theories. As will be discussed in section six, if a goal to which a community aspires is shown not to be a universal need, the question remains as to whether it should necessarily be subservient to those things that are considered to be.

Policy implications of THN

Even if one were to accept that THN’s list of basic and intermediate needs was universal, there remain significant problems in translating this knowledge into meaningful policy recommendations. Taking ‘appropriate education’ as an example, this section will now examine some of the problems involved in the policy recommendation for universal education, which follows from the inclusion of appropriate education as an intermediate need.

In cases where a family recognises the benefits that education may be able to bring, and making the significant assumption that the substantial investment required to provide adequately equipped schools throughout remote areas of rural Ethiopia were available, the decision of whether to send a child to school, and for how long, is a complex one for a household. As illustrated in case study 1, above, there may be competing demands in a household. Children may be needed for farm and domestic labour, which may prevent even willing parents from sending their children to school. Indeed, it has been shown elsewhere that such economic factors dominate parents’ decisions regarding their children’s education (for example Befekadu, Berhanu & Getahun, 2002; Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati, 2006; Tietjen, 1998).

Additionally, the choice of whether or not children are educated needs to be considered as part of a wider debate on family size. Factors to be considered include the need for farm labour, the expectation that some children may die before reaching adulthood, religious beliefs, for example forbidding contraceptive use, cultural factors such as the social status associated with multiple marriages, a cultural ‘norm’ in Kedada, and large numbers of children and the importance of male offspring. Importantly, family planning and education must be viewed in the light of the inter-generational contract between parents and children (Malhotra & Kabeer, 2002), with children in Ethiopia expected to support their parents in old age

(Cockburn, 2001; Tietjen, 1998). As such, parents with limited resources have a choice; to elect for quantity of children – with resources invested thinly between many uneducated children – or quality – a smaller number of educated children (Kabeer, 2000). This choice was, to some extent, alluded to in case study 1 in the previous section, in which BM expressed concern about the household's ability to send all their children to school. In limiting the number of children they have, she intends to invest the family's resources in those they already have, rather than spreading the investment between an even larger number of children.

In expanding enrolment throughout the levels of education, it is essential to consider the opportunities that education brings (Tassew *et al.*, 2005), as perceived by the families making the decision whether or not to educate their children. It can be argued that appropriate education is necessary for critical autonomy and is an important challenge to the development of local culture that is beneficial to the community. However, it is important to recognise that people look for the direct benefits of their decisions and if there are no economic opportunities arising from a vital decision regarding their livelihoods and future security, then they will resist (Cockburn, 2001; Tietjen, 1998), by necessity looking for short-term benefits to the detriment of potential longer term advantages (Wood, 2003). In addition, to take advantage of the opportunities that education opens up will in many cases require migration to urban areas and this process of urbanisation itself involves a host of other factors and potential problems that are too numerous to consider here.

Gender inequalities in education persist in Ethiopia, though this pattern is not uniform throughout the country (Tassew *et al.*, 2005). This can be attributed to a number of factors, notably the religious and traditional values that discourage female education, particularly in rural areas, reported by Mulat (1997, cited in Tassew *et al.*, 2005) and Seyoum (1997). In addition, safety is a major consideration for girls deciding whether or not to continue in education, with abduction for marriage a relatively common occurrence (Tassew *et al.*, 2005; Wolde Giorgis, 2002). As a result, girls are less likely than boys to stay in education if they live far from the nearest school (Chaudury, Christiaensen & Asadullah, 2006). The lack of sanitary facilities in schools for girls is also a major factor in their dropout from education beyond the age of 12-13 when they begin menstruation (UNICEF, 2004). As previously discussed, women traditionally migrate to the village of their new husband when they marry. As a result, even parents that are convinced of the economic benefits that education can bring are likely to favour the

education of their sons over daughters as the son remains at home when he marries whereas the daughter leaves and investment in her education will be lost to the family (Tassew *et al.*, 2005). However, it is important to note the different roles that education plays in Ethiopia. In addition to acquiring knowledge and skills, education can be, for example, a determinant of social status and is a means of socialisation. Indeed Poluha (2004), in a study of a school in Addis Ababa, claims that Ethiopian children learn to reproduce hierarchical relations based on gender, age and social position at school.

One major factor in encouraging parents to send their children to school and raising the importance that a community places on education is that the education provided be suitable to the requirements of the community. In answering that, they do not believe that education is necessary, BM from case study 1 and ZK from case study 2 are most likely reflecting that they would not have much use for formal education in their roles as housewives whose main activities involve housework, such as cooking and cleaning, and fetching water and firewood. Doyal and Gough recognise this point to some extent by identifying *appropriate* education as an intermediate need, yet their emphasis is undoubtedly on formal education as a means to providing the capacity for critical autonomy. Whilst formal education for all may be an ultimately desirable goal, in circumstances in which people lack the ability to take advantage of the opportunities that education may bring, education is always likely to be given a lower priority than other more immediately pressing concerns.

6. THEMES ARISING

Contested goals – within all levels of analysis[15]

Just as needs at the theoretical level are contested, the results of the WeD-QoL discussed in this paper clearly demonstrate that goals at the community and household levels are contested. Neither unit can be taken as homogenous. Although there are community 'norms', there are people that deviate from these 'norms' in virtually every goal that the survey covered; indeed often involving contestation of these norms, perhaps as result of critical autonomy as proposed by THN. Within households there are also significant differences between the goals of different household members. Parents often have different priorities from their children,

[15] I am grateful to Pip Bevan regarding this point.

dependent on the stage of their life and resulting requirements. Men will also often have different priorities to women, as a result of the different roles that each is expected to have according to community norms, and the different opportunities and restrictions that men and women encounter. As such, taking communities or households to be homogenous units with a single view of the good is likely to over-represent powerful groups and lead to policies that build on and reinforce existing power relations. At the household level, the views of the (usually male) household head are likely to dominate, and at the community level, the opinions of elite, male respondents of particular age groups and majority ethnic groups will be given greater emphasis to the detriment of the minorities and less powerful.

This paper has also demonstrated certain instances of internal contestation within individuals. Goals compete with one another for priority and, in certain cases and at certain times, goals which an individual regards as very necessary come into direct conflict. This has been demonstrated in case study 1, where the father of the family values education for his children very highly. Yet, when faced with an extreme labour shortage within the family, he was not able to send his eldest two children to school, instead requiring them to work on the farm and in the home. Now that the labour shortage has eased as his children have been able to spread the work between them, he has sent his younger children to school. It is, therefore, also problematic to view an individual's goals as unchanging over time, and to take instances of choices made as evidence of the lack of importance attributed to goals that have not been selected. In the example of case study 1, such an assumption may have led to the erroneous conclusion that GM is indifferent to the benefits of education. As such, this highlights significant weaknesses in any one-off measure that does not allow for people's changing views.

Cultural norms driving choices and actions

It has been shown in this paper that respondents' answers relating to the importance of goals do not completely explain the motivating factors driving people's decision-making. Given the results discussed, it seems probable that cultural values also have a major role in the actions taken by respondents. Whilst the fulfilment of cultural norms and expectations may in many cases be sources of happiness in themselves, the analysis presented suggests that cultural norms are also a driving factor in decision-making, promoting goals which are not necessarily required for satisfaction. In particular, this paper has shown that marriage and having children was not considered necessary by many parents. Whilst to some extent this could be

attributed to a lack of sexual education or availability of contraception, the case of GH in case study 2, who has 18 children and 3 wives, cannot be so easily explained. Indeed with the great cultural significance attributed to marriage, family and large numbers of children in Kedada, it is probable that this cultural conformity and the status with which it is associated was a major motivating factor in his choices.

The problems of asking people what they want

There have been a number of other studies that have attempted to highlight the goals and views of poor people. In terms of size, the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* study (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher & Koch-Schulte, 2000) stands out. Though this work found general support for many of the items included in universal lists of needs, including THN, education and learning were not generally considered to be goods in themselves, though the importance of human capital was recognised (see also Gough, 2004). This fits closely with the findings of this paper, for example the greater importance of knowledge compared with education according to respondents in Dessu.

In another example, Clark (2002) used the foundations of Nussbaum's approach to investigate perceptions of wellbeing amongst the poor in one rural and one urban site in South Africa. He found considerable support amongst his respondents for the value of good health, avoiding hunger, shelter, happiness, knowledge and friendship. Nonetheless his respondents did dispute the importance of the capability to live a long life, opportunities for sexual satisfaction, and literary and scientific pursuits, goals which have been advanced by Nussbaum.

The formulation of universal models has often attracted criticism. Whilst they are presented as objective, the views they contain are not without perspective; 'a view is only possible from a viewpoint' (Myrdal, 1962). Indeed, writers such as Escobar (1995) have argued that universal models tend to be European or North America constructs serving those interests at the expense of those of developing countries (see also McGregor, 2004). However, whether or not THN represents a true and complete list of universal human needs, it may be agreed that the creation of such a list, long or short, is possible. The incongruence between 'community' and individual goals and universal social science theories of human needs, highlights the contrast between needs and wants. Analysis in this paper and the example from Peru contained in the introduction highlight cases in

which, many may feel, people make choices which are contrary to their own best interests – where their *wants* do not meet the requirements of their *needs*. This may be as a result of the internalisation of community values (Nussbaum 2000), which represent the power relations in the community relating to such factors as gender, age and wealth, or cases in which people consistently misjudge the benefits that certain goals will bring.[16] With respect to developmental organisations, whether they are government departments, intergovernmental organisations or non-governmental organisations, this leads us to the question: What is (or should be) the role of these organisations? To assist people in attaining what they *want*, or to assist them in the attainment of (or to give them) what they *need*?

It can be argued that if people are consistently making decisions that are contrary to their best interests and that they are suffering as a result, then outsiders have a right and perhaps even a duty to intervene on their behalf if this leads to an improvement in the 'beneficiary's' quality of life. However as Lukes (2005) points out, this argument of false consciousness, that people do not know what is the best thing for them and that their desires are the social construction of existing power relations, is equally a licence for tyrannical paternalistic intervention. As such, many, including the likes of Mill (1859) and Hayek (1949) have argued for the primacy of the individual's interests and against intervention in the 'liberty of action' (Mill, 1859: 13), as long as others are not harmed in their pursuit.

As such, pursuing a universal needs agenda- especially given the contestation that exists within the social sciences and at all levels of analysis, that has been alluded to in the previous section- in the face of individual and community *wants* represents an imposition of alien priorities. However, as a development worker in charge of a budget and accountable to superiors and funders, it is unrealistic to expect investment purely in a community's *wants* in the absence of theoretical support or empirical evidence that such policies will lead to the organisation's goals.
There is a potentially attractive third option of concentrating on the overlap of *needs* and *wants*; assisting communities to attain their goals when these overlap with universal needs, but not forcing external perceptions of universal needs on a community when these do not overlap with a community's own goals. However, one can also make the case that this is an example of what Bachrach and Baratz (1970; see also Lukes, 2005) call

[16] See for example, new economics foundation (2003), which demonstrates that people pursue the goal of increasing their income, to the detriment of other goals, despite the fact that this has been shown not to increase happiness or life satisfaction.

the second face of power, as many of the true goals that the community value are never allowed onto the agenda. The only options that a community really has are those based on a foreign conception of universal needs, and as such this is little different than the first option of pursuing a universal needs agenda regardless of a community's goals.

Returning to the capabilities approach to find a way out of this quandary, it is freedoms that are important. Whilst paternalistic intervention on behalf of falsely conscious 'beneficiaries' does have the potential to improve the quality of their lives, this is at the same time a clear restriction of their freedom to think and to choose for themselves, and if that means making choices which are not in their own best interests, then they also have the freedom to make mistakes (nef, 2003). Although, as discussed, an individual's goals are to some extent socially and culturally constructed and therefore a reflection of existing power relationships within the community in which the individual lives, using this as a justification for intervention in clear conflict with an individual's 'views' nonetheless can be a restriction of their freedom. Therefore, the ideal role of development must be to create spaces in which people are supported and have access to knowledge. In this way, they may be able to become critically autonomous, as THN proposes, and sufficiently empowered to challenge existing norms and power structures, so that they are free to make informed decisions, and to decide on the goals that they have reason to value, even to critique or reject 'development' itself.

Further research

This paper has considered the goals that people have reason to value in comparison with what one particular universal theory contends that they need. Whilst this has provided several insights into the debate regarding universal needs, the conclusions are to some extent limited by the size of the samples used in each site, which prevents detailed analysis in terms of age categories, and further research with larger sample sizes may be illuminating. In addition, this paper has considered just two of the six sites in which the WeD-QoL was carried out, and just eight individual case studies from the 123 available in the two sites in focus. There are, no doubt, many further insights to be gained from further analysis of the data available.

In addition to the importance of examining the goals that people have reason to value, it is also the capability of people to obtain these goals that is crucial (Sen, 1999). The WeD-QoL, in asking people not just about the goals that they value, but also their perception of their attainment of these

goals, affords the opportunity for further analysis regarding the community and individual's satisfaction with their attainment of their goals, and the power relations that inhibit or facilitate this attainment.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In contrasting Doyal and Gough's *Theory of Human Need* with the goals of respondents to the WeD-QoL in Dessu and Kedada, this paper has found that whilst THN professes to be a universal theory of need applicable to all human beings, there is considerable divergence with the goals to which people in the communities of Dessu and Kedada aspire. The results of the WeD-QoL do show considerable, though not unanimous, belief in the importance of health, defined by THN as a basic need, and daily food and a place to live, corresponding to two of THN's intermediate needs. However, the intermediate needs which, THN proposes, underpin autonomy, namely appropriate education and significant primary relationships, do not receive such consistent support in the two communities. Clearly the WeD-QoL does not provide sufficient evidence to prove or disprove THN. However, and equally importantly, it does reveal that what some consider to be universal human needs are not universally desired.

This paper has also found that goals are contested at all levels of analysis. As has been briefly discussed here, contestation within the social sciences regarding the nature of human needs is clear, yet we have also seen that considering communities or households to have homogenous views of goals would be equally fallacious. Although the example given in the introduction to this paper presents the views of the Peruvian community members as homogenous, this is unlikely to have been the case. The support for establishing a band for the community may well have been substantial, however, it is likely that there was at least token support for the plans outlined by the mayor, and the eventual outcome is likely to have reflected the interests of the more powerful members of the community, possibly at the expense of the weaker ones. Regarding the goals considered in the WeD-QoL, virtually every one is contested to a lesser or greater extent at the community level and as such there are no goals which the survey supports as being universally desired. As such, individuals' and communities' goals are deeply rooted in the cultural values of the community and will often reflect existing power relations based on gender, race and age.

Another important consideration is that at different times and in different circumstances, people have different priorities of what goals are important. There is contestation not just between different people in a community or household but also internal contestation within individuals. Goals which are highly valued can come into conflict with one another and which of these is given priority will depend on the opportunities and challenges that the individual faces at a particular time. Importantly, these circumstances can change over time, resulting in very different priorities being ascribed to valued goals. As such, examining only the actions of an individual may result in misleading conclusions being drawn regarding their goals, and assuming these goals to be consistent over time may be very inaccurate.

This paper has highlighted and explored the distinction between *wants* and *needs*. *Needs* constitute those goals that are universally required for all human beings in order to avoid harm. *Wants* in contrast are the goals of individuals which they believe are important, and which are rooted in cultural and social values and norms. In many cases there may be considerable overlap between *wants* and *needs*, but this paper has shown that there is also very clear divergence in many cases: there are *needs* that according to social science theories are universally required by all human beings in order to avoid harm but which a substantial number of individuals do not value, and there are many *wants* that individuals value far more highly than their supposed *needs*.

As a result, occasions will arise in which it is clear, or at least appears to be clear, that people are making choices which are contrary to their own best interests, as shown by universal theories. However, this paper draws on Sen's capability approach to make a clear case for an individual's right to make choices regarding their own lives, even if these choices are bad ones. As such it would be a restriction of their freedom to take a paternalistic attitude towards people who have goals which are considered not to be in their best interests. Instead, part of the work of developmental organisations must be to open dialogue with the communities in which they work, expounding the benefits of what they consider to be universal needs, thereby supplying individuals with the knowledge and opportunities to make informed choices regarding their own lives, rather than imposing alien ideas of what is important. In cases where this is ignored there can be dire and unexpected consequences, as the former mayor of one rural Peruvian community can no doubt testify.

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APPENDIX A: THE WED-QOL QUESTIONNAIRE

Goals

What things do you need to be happy?

GOALS SCALE

0 Not necessary
1 Necessary
2 Very necessary

	Dessu		**Kedada**
1.	Land (agricultural or land for living)	1.	Land (agricultural or land for living)
2.	Livestock	2.	Livestock
3.	Agricultural products	3.	Agricultural products
4.	Irrigation	4.	Irrigation
5.	To be involved in trade, petty trade, or have a shop	5.	To be involved in trade, petty trade, or have a shop
6.	Equipment/tools (Agricultural and non- agricultural)	6.	Equipment/tools (Agricultural and non- agricultural)
7.	Agricultural inputs (fertiliser, selected seed etc)	7.	Agricultural inputs (fertiliser, selected seed etc)
8.	Non-agricultural inputs (e.g. cotton for weaving)	8.	Non-agricultural inputs (e.g. cotton for weaving)
9.	Daily food	9.	Daily food
10.	Economic independence	10.	Economic independence
11.	Access to family or exchange labour	11.	Access to family or exchange labour
12.	Access to wage labour	12.	Access to wage labour
13.	Road	13.	Road
14.	Bridge	14.	Bridge
15.	Mill	15.	Mill
16.	Public transport	16.	Public transport
17.	Government services	17.	Government services
18.	NGO services	18.	NGO services

	Dessu		**Kedada**
19.	Wealth	19.	Wealth
20.	A place to live	20.	A place to live
21.	Household goods: furniture, pots etc	21.	Household goods: furniture, pots etc
22.	Clothes	22.	Clothes
23.	Health	23.	Health
24.	Knowledge	24.	Water for household use
25.	Education	25.	Education
26.	To be of good character	26.	To be of good character
27.	Peace of mind	27.	Peace of mind
28.	Marriage	28.	Marriage
29.	Friends	29.	Friends
30.	Good family relationships	30.	Good family relationships
31.	Having children	31.	Having children
32.	Well-behaved children	32.	Well-behaved children
33.	Education for children	33.	Education for children
34.	Teaching what you know to others	34.	Teaching what you know to others
35.	A position of authority	35.	Spaces for recreation and rest
36.	Good relationships with people	36.	Good relationships with people
37.	To participate in local organisations such as burial associations	37.	To participate in local organisations such as burial associations
38.	To participate in community activities	38.	To participate in community activities
39.	Status in the community	39.	Status in the community
40.	Peace in the community	40.	Peace in the community
41.	Improvement of the community	41.	Improvement of the community
42.	To celebrate holidays and festivals in the community	42.	To celebrate holidays and festivals in the community
43.	Clean and beautiful surroundings	43.	Clean and beautiful surroundings
44.	Communication with God/religious Activities	44.	Communication with God/religious Activities

	Dessu		**Kedada**
45.	Spaces for recreation and rest	45.	To be progressive/getting ahead
46.	To be progressive/getting ahead		

APPENDIX B: WED-QOL RESULTS: GOAL IMPORTANCE

Table B1: Average responses by site and gender (0: Not necessary … 2: Very necessary)

Site	Gender	Land	Livestock	Agricultural products	Irrigation	Trade, petty trade, or have a shop	Equipment/tools	Agricultural inputs	Non-agricultural inputs	Daily food	Economic independence	Access to family or exchange labour	Access to wage labour	Road	Bridge	Mill	Public transport	Government services	NGO services	Wealth	A place to live	Household goods: furniture	Clothes	Health	Knowledge
Dessu	Male	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.6	0.7	0.9	1.1	0.6	1.9	1.8	1.4	0.6	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.5	2.0	1.3	0.9	1.2	2.0	1.5
	Female	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.7
	Total	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.7	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.8	1.8	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.9	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.9	1.6
Kedada	Male	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.7	0.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.8	2.0	
	Female	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.6	0.4	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.4	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.0	
	Total	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.0	1.5	1.6	0.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.8	2.0	

Site	Gender	Education	To be of good character	Peace of mind	Marriage	Friends	Good family relationships	Having children	Well-behaved children	Education for children	Teaching what you know to others	A position of authority	Good relationships with people	Participate in local organizations	Participate in community activities	Status in the community	Peace in the community	Improvement of the community	To celebrate holidays and festivals	Clean and beautiful surroundings	Communication with God	Spaces for recreation and rest	To be progressive/ getting ahead	Water for household use
Dessu	Male	1.2	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.8	0.6	1.3	
	Female	1.1	1.5	1.6	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.6	
	Total	1.1	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.7	1.0	1.4	
Kedada	Male	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.2	1.8	1.2	1.9	1.9	1.7		1.8	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.8
	Female	1.2	1.9	1.9	1.3	1.0	1.7	0.7	1.7	1.8	1.5		1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.0	1.7	1.9
	Total	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.3	1.1	1.8	1.0	1.8	1.9	1.6		1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.3	1.8	1.8

Table B.2: Responses for case study 1

	GM	BM	AG	YG
Land (agricultural or land for living)	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary
Livestock	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Agricultural products	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Irrigation	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
To be involved in trade, petty trade, or have a shop	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Equipment/tools (Agricultural and non-agricultural)	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Agricultural inputs (fertiliser, selected seed etc)	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Non-agricultural inputs (e.g. cotton for weaving)	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary
Daily food	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Economic independence	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Access to family or exchange labour	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Access to wage labour	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary
Road	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Bridge	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Mill	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Public transport	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Government services	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
NGO services	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Wealth	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
A place to live	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Household goods: furniture, pots etc	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary
Clothes	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Health	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Knowledge	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Education	Necessary	Not necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
To be of good character	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary
Peace of mind	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Marriage	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary	Not necessary
Friends	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Good family relationships	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Having children	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary
Well-behaved children	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Education for children	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary	Necessary
Teaching what you know to others	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary

A position of authority	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary
Good relationships with people	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
To participate in local organisations such as burial associations	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Not necessary
To participate in community activities	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Status in the community	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Peace in the community	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Improvement of the community	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
To celebrate holidays and festivals in the community	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Clean and beautiful surroundings	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary
Communication with God/religious Activities	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Spaces for recreation and rest	Not necessary	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary
To be progressive/getting ahead	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary

Table B.3: Responses for case study 2

	GH	ZK	YG	AD
Land (agricultural or land for living)	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Livestock	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Agricultural products	Very necessary	Very necessary	[redacted]	Very necessary
Irrigation	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
To be involved in trade, petty trade, or have a shop	Not necessary	Necessary	Not necessary	Necessary
Equipment/tools (Agricultural and non-agricultural)	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary
Agricultural inputs (fertiliser, selected seed etc)	Very necessary	Very necessary	Not necessary	Very necessary
Non-agricultural inputs (e.g. cotton for weaving)	Not necessary	Not necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Daily food	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Economic independence	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Access to family or exchange labour	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Access to wage labour	Very necessary	Necessary	Not necessary	Very necessary
Road	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Bridge	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Mill	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Public transport	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Government services	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
NGO services	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Wealth	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
A place to live	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Household goods: furniture, pots etc	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Clothes	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Health	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Education	Very necessary	Not necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
To be of good character	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Peace of mind	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Marriage	Not necessary	[redacted]	Very necessary	Necessary
Friends	Not necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
Good family relationships	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Having children	Not necessary	Not necessary	Very necessary	Not necessary
Well-behaved children	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Education for children	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Teaching what you know to others	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Good relationships with people	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Necessary

To participate in local organisations such as burial associations	Very necessary	Necessary	Necessary	Very necessary
To participate in community activities	Very necessary	Very necessary	Not necessary	Necessary
Status in the community	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Peace in the community	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Improvement of the community	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
To celebrate holidays and festivals in the community	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Clean and beautiful surroundings	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Communication with God/religious Activities	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Spaces for recreation and rest	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Necessary
To be progressive/getting ahead	Very necessary	Necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary
Water for household use	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary	Very necessary

APPENDIX C: DEVELOPMENT OF THE WeD-QoL

The WeD Quality of Life research consisted of three phases (Camfield, McGregor & Yamamoto, 2005):

- The first, exploratory phase was carried out in the four WeD research countries, and triangulated locally appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods. These instruments included semi-structured interviews, focus groups, the Person Generated Index[17] (Ruta, Garratt, Leng, Russell & MacDonald, 1994; 1998), and the SWLS. The aim of this phase was to investigate: what goals and experiences contribute to people's quality of life in the context of their particular community, cultural grouping, and nation; what resources are considered necessary to achieve or maintain quality of life; and what role do values play in this process. This first phase also explored the extent to which a person's ability to achieve their goals and attain valued states matched their expectations and gave them satisfaction.

- The second, conceptual and integrative phase used the results of phase one of the research to adapt the WHOQOL (1995) definition of quality of life, to view quality of life as, 'the gap between people's goals and perceived resources, in the context of their environment, culture, values, and experiences' (McGregor, 2007). Analysis of the results of the QoL Phase 1 from the four countries revealed sufficient commonality to suggest that the construction of a common suite of measures was feasible.

- The third, applied and methodological phase (McGregor & Camfield, 2005) developed and tested a common suite of measures (the WeD-QoL) across the four countries, the results of which can be analysed alongside other WeD data. A minimum sample size of 350 was required for the psychometric analysis, and so 372 people were interviewed in Ethiopia, 62 in each site, to allow for incomplete returns. These respondents, where possible, were sampled from the RANQ households, and effort was made to select respondents who had also completed other parts of the DEEP research. Respondents were chosen to include people of different ages, wealth and occupation (Bethlehem, 2005).

[17] The PGI is an individualised QoL measure, which asks people to nominate aspects of life that contribute to their wellbeing and rate them according to how important they are and how satisfied they are with them (Ruta *et al.*, 1994; 1998).

List of WeD Working Papers

WeD 01 ‘Lists and Thresholds: Comparing the Doyal-Gough Theory of Human Need with Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach’ by Ian Gough (March 2003)
http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed01.pdf

WeD 02 ‘Research on Well-Being: Some Advice from Jeremy Bentham’ by David Collard (May 2003)
http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed02.pdf

WeD 03 ‘Theorising the Links between Social and Economic Development: The Sigma Economy Model of Adolfo Figueroa’ by James Copestake (September 2003)
http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed03.pdf

WeD 04 ‘Discursive Repertoires and the Negotiation of Well-being: Reflections on the WeD Frameworks’ by Hartley Dean (September 2003)
http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed04.pdf

WeD 05 ‘Poverty Studies in Peru: Towards a more Inclusive Study of Exclusion’ by Teofilo Altamirano, James Copestake, Adolfo Figueroa and Katie Wright (December 2003)
http://www.welldev.org.uk/research/workingpaperpdf/wed05.pdf

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