

CHAPTER 7

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The heart of this book is that being-well is constituted by non-instrumental goodness along the necessary dimensions of our way of being. These define living well. Well-being is understood in terms of four artificially distinguished levels or dimensions along which we live.

First, we live through our outer activities, which aren't merely discrete experiences and actions; they are also complex webs of activities nested within wider engagement and life's broader processes. The value of these activities consists in the extent to which they accord with the *deslogo* interests defined as patterns of desirability in our desirings. The term 'deslogo' indicates that we are referring to the *logos* or account of our basic non-instrumental desires.

Second, we also simultaneously live through or in our awareness. For the value of our activities to count towards our being or living well, we must be aware of them as valuable in relevant ways. In other words, I live well (in part) by being connected appropriately to the valuable nature of the activities that I engage in. Because of this, the quality of our lives is partly constituted by the quality of our awareness, a concept consisting of three elements. The first is that awareness shouldn't be fragmented, for example, by being distracted by anxieties, desires and thoughts. Second, it is a function of our general capacity to be aware. The more one is conscious, the greater one's capacity to appreciate. A person whose awareness is vivid lives in a different phenomenological world from someone whose awareness is dull. These first two parts are independent because a person might be attentive but dull, or might have a vivid awareness that is directed elsewhere, away from the valuable features of her living processes. The last element is that awareness is also a function of our capacity to feel emotions. Appreciation typically requires that one feels emotions, and therefore, a person who does feel emotions appropriately *ipso facto* will not be appreciating with high-quality awareness. An incapacity to feel emotions counts as a form of ill-being.

Third, we live in relationships, which typically involve doing things *for* other people and being *with* others. Concerning the former, *as means*, activities such as helping others can have an intrinsic value when we connect appropriately to them as conscious beings, and this value can be part of our well-being. Regarding the latter, it is part of our well-being to be with others. Minimally, other people are part of my life simply insofar as I relate to them as people. However, this doesn't require relationships with them; people are part of my life in a fuller sense insofar as I have good quality relationships with them such that I no longer regard and feel them as others but rather as constituting an 'us'. The quality of one's relationship depends directly on how the other person treats one, as well as vice versa. It is reciprocal. Insofar as I am appropriately connected to other people, my life is better in ways that are constitutive of my well-being.

Fourth, our lives are also constituted by our self-consciousness. It is part of my life that I am aware of myself in local and global ways. Locally, I am aware of myself in my daily actions and experiences as I live them. I also have a general sense of my past and of my future. Together these aspects form the self-perceptions and the self-relations or the sense of oneself that we typically call 'identity' but which is better thought of as how we self-identify.

The distinctions between these four levels or aspects are artificial in the sense that they all are present in any moment of living. They are abstractions. Part of the work of this chapter is to reunite them. This is the theme of section I of this chapter.

However, let us return briefly to the basic aim of this work. We are fashioning a conception of well-being that serves social as well as individualistic evaluations. We aren't only interested in the question 'How can a person A improve her life given the conditions she lives in?'. We are also interested in the question 'What might count as an improvement in those conditions?' This means that we need to characterise the dimensions of well-being in a way that permits such cross-social comparisons. This is the theme of sections II and III of this chapter. It takes us right to the heart of questions concerning well-being indices and measurement, which is the concern of the remainder of the chapter.

I. TOWARDS A DEFINITION

To define the concept 'well-being', we must reunite these components of well-being as delineated by the necessary dimensions of human living. This task is complicated because they are interlaced. We will do this in five stages; the first two introduce the core, and the last two, the entwined complications. The fifth injects a meta-constraint.

a) There are two core components of well-being: first, the valuable activities, experiences and processes that *inter alia* make up a life; second, the person's appreciation of them. Given these two components, we can provisionally define 'well-being' as follows: a person lives well insofar as she undertakes activities and undergoes experiences and processes that are non-instrumentally valuable, and which she appropriately appreciates with a high-quality consciousness. We have defined non-instrumentally valuable activities etc. in terms of their having desirability features that accord with the person's *deslogo* interests, and we have defined 'appropriately appreciates' in terms of the person's experiential awareness tracking the desirability characteristics of the activities. (We resolved 'high-quality consciousness' into three sub-components. First, one's awareness will tend to be focused on the relevant desirable characteristics, and not distracted and fragmented. Second, well-being is a function of our general capacity to be aware: the more conscious one is, the greater can be one's appreciation. Finally, awareness is also a function of our emotional state.)

b) To this core, we can add self-consciousness as elaborated in Chapter 6. Given this, we can now *provisionally* define 'well-being' as follows: a person lives well when she undertakes activities and undergoes experiences and processes that are non-instrumentally valuable, and which she appropriately appreciates with a high-quality consciousness and with good self-awareness. By 'good self-awareness', we mean that the person's sense of themselves integrates the following elements: a spontaneous and immediate joyful feeling of one's own present moment experience of being an I; a peaceful or accepting relationship to one's past; and a realistically open and hopeful

relationship with one's future. This integration requires that a person engages in self-identifications that don't instrumentalise herself and which are consistent with the equal reality of other people. This is how Chapter 6 fits with Chapters 3 and 4.

c) The fourth component is relationships. To introduce this, we need to step back and raise a problem: Chapters 3 and 5 appear to be in contradiction. The first tells us that non-instrumental value of activities is defined in terms of *deslogo* interests, which includes relationships and belonging. In contrast, Chapter 5 indicates that relationships have a different kind of value insofar as other people become a part of one's life and insofar as one becomes part of the life of a community. If all activities have non-instrumental value in relation to *deslogo* interests, then isn't this how we should conceive of the value of relationships as well? In short, Chapter 3 claims that all activities have non-instrumental value in relation to *deslogo* interests, but Chapter 5 apparently contradicts this by asserting that relationships have a different kind of value (insofar as other people become a part of one's life).

The reply has three parts. First, we pinpoint a common root. In Chapter 2, we saw that the principle bearers of value are conscious beings. Because of this, their lives matter, and because of this, the quality of their lives matter, and because of this, *that* their lives accord with their motivational natures (or their *deslogo* interests) matters. The desirability of living a life that dovetails one's *deslogo* interests is an expression of the value of the conscious being who lives that life. The value of the person is manifest (in part) as the desirability of the fact that her way of life matches her *deslogo* interests.

This reminder of the relation between Chapters 2 and 3 shows how the value of relationships has a similar axiological root. This is because in a relationship one is directly connecting to the value of another person. *That* it is valuable that my life accords with my *deslogo* interests is an expression of the value that *I* have as a person or conscious being, as we just explained. In contrast, that it is valuable that another person is a part of my life is a manifestation or expression of the value that *she* has as a person or conscious being. In sum, the value pertaining to *deslogo* interests and to relationships are axiologically similar in that both pertain to the value of a conscious being. In conclusion, Chapter 5 on relationships does not contradict Chapter 3 on interests because the thesis of Chapter 3 about the value of *deslogo* interests is subsidiary to that of Chapter 2 regarding the primary value of conscious beings.

Yet this same point also explains how the two are radically different. The value of a relationship lies along a different value-dimension to that of *deslogo* interests because the 'source' of the relevant value is distinct. As we have just seen, in the first, the value comes from me, and in the second from the other person. The value pertaining to *deslogo* interests and to relationships are profoundly different because the latter involves connecting to another conscious being such that the value of the other person has become part of one's life. In a sense, I become more than one insofar as others become a part of my life. It is more like an insertion than an attunement. In this manner, the value of a relationship is orthogonal to that pertaining to the relevant *deslogo* interests. It is a different kind of well-being-relevant non-instrumental value.

This highlights another aspect of this difference, namely, while the object of value arising from *deslogo* interests is general, the object of value in a relationship is particular, i.e. a person. The *deslogo* interest is to love, which is general, but the person

who becomes part of my life when I love is a particular. I need to love, but I love *her*: she is part of my life. As such, she is *not* an instrumental means for the satisfaction of my *deslogo* interests.

Thirdly, despite all this, it remains true that if (*per impossible*) there were solitary beings who had no social *deslogo* interests (or needs to be with others) at all then for such a being, the whole range of relevant activities would not be intrinsically valuable. Indeed, the whole idea of others entering one's life would have no meaning. We can only describe a life as solitary insofar as the being in question has social *deslogo* interests.

We haven't quite finished. There is an extra complexity which, however, makes perfect sense when one thinks about it: this relational value can only compose part of the well-person insofar as it too enters the awareness and self-consciousness of the person herself. In this sense, Chapter 5 modulates both Chapters 4 and 6. Since we are dealing with complexities, it is apt to remind the reader that a more complete conceptual account of well-being than we have provided would include all the relevant relationship kinds inherent in our activities, as mentioned at the start of the fifth chapter.

Given that we are right to insist that the relational is a distinct dimension, we can *provisionally* define 'well-being' as follows: a person lives well when she undertakes activities and undergoes experiences and processes that are non-instrumentally valuable, which involve good relations, and which she appropriately appreciates with a high-quality consciousness and with good self-awareness. Of course, we have endeavoured to provide criteria for the uses of 'good', 'appropriately' and 'high quality' in this definition.

d) Now we need to discuss a potential fifth component: instrumentalisation. In the course of this book, we have seen how not-instrumentalising is fundamental to each dimension of well-being. To avoid repetition *ad nauseam*, we won't rehearse those points. However, this intertwining indicates that not-instrumentalising shouldn't be considered as a distinct fifth facet of well-being but rather as a quality integral to each of the four already-defined dimensions.

In addition to the four dimensions, there is a super or meta-dimension, consisting in the harmonious and synergetic functioning of the dimensions (Hooker 2015). This is a dynamic meta-requirement with respect to the causes of well-being. For example, the activities, experiences and processes that constitute well-being in the first dimension should also facilitate well-being with respect to the other dimensions (awareness, relations and self-consciousness). Likewise for each dimension. Although this is a requirement with respect to the nature of well-being, whether it is causally satisfied or not is an empirical question (Bishop 2015: 8-12). To previous definition, we can now add 'in a synergetic manner' at the end.

Note that we have only established a conceptual framework for an empirical theory of well-being. Empirical study is needed not only to discover what causes well-being but also to understand better what constitutes it. The theory has implications about the variety of causes of well-being: different approaches and types of causes might be required for the various dimensions and for their elements. So, for instance, perhaps we shouldn't contrast meditation with psychotherapies or relational approaches with those

that improve one's relationship with one's past as if they were rivals because they apply principally to distinct dimensions. And none of these would touch the restricting effects of poverty along the first dimension (Henry 2008: 121) and its scars along the fourth. Indeed, we might be wary of referring to *the* causes of well-being when we should be talking about the causes of well-being along this or that dimension.

One of the most important investigative need regarding the constitution of well-being is the empirical specifications of the *deslogo* interests of persons or groups. The rest of this chapter supplements the conclusions of Chapter 3.

II. INESCAPABLE INTERESTS ACROSS SOCIETIES

1) We started this book by drawing attention to the need to re-envision the variety of possible human ways of living. One tends to take for granted the idea that people will live in societies like the ones we live in now. One tends to assume as a given the social institutions that we live in and that shape our lives. We ignore their contingency; we overlook the vast unexplored space of value possibilities of human life, including those of the past. In the language of Chapter 1, in everyday life, we make value judgments with a narrow scope.

One of the purposes of this book is to provide a framework for the concept of living well that allows us to widen this scope so that we can evaluate our social institutions and ways of life with respect to well-being. This would provide the criteria for statements of the form 'It is better to live in society of kind Z than society of kind Y'. In this endeavour, we want to avoid the kind of subjectivism that affirms that different societies will be simply different and ultimately cannot be compared. We also we want to avoid the kind of absolutism that requires that certain things are good independent of anything else. We need a kind of non-absolute non-subjectivism, or in other words, a relational objective theory (McDowell 1998; Thomson 2002b). A key to this kind of third alternative is to characterize the limits to the variety of human ways of living.

We need a conception of well-being that is apt for social critique but has sufficient empirical clarity that it could in principle be measured. However, these demands are in conflict. On the one hand, if we want to quantify the well-being of different groups within a society, we must take for granted the ways in which activities, desires and practices are typically shaped by that society (Dolan and White, 2007). On the other hand, insofar as we demand of a conception of well-being that it can be employed to evaluate the ways in which societies sculpt desires and practices, we cannot take for granted that moulding or shaping. We will need a conception that bridges different societies, and this precludes taking specific mouldings for granted.

Consider friendship. On the one hand, measuring requires judgments like the following: 'given that friendship typically consists in the following kinds of interactions, then people in group A tend to have higher levels of friendship than people in group B.'¹ On the other hand, if we were concerned about, how consumerism shapes friendship, one might not be able to make the required socially specific assumptions about friendship. One would not be able to make the cultural assumption that friendship will tend consist in specific behaviours and feelings if the critique were that these are precisely the ways in which consumerism tends to engender in us superficial understandings and shallow forms of friendship. Measurement requires cultural specificity, and critique requires

that we transcend it. One mustn't take for granted desires and understandings are shaped by a society when we employ the concept of well-being to critique society or to envisage alternative societies. Critiques require inter-societal comparisons.

2) How are such comparisons concerning well-being possible? The notion of *deslogo* interests has an indispensable role in this regard because it doesn't require similarity in terms of *what* is wanted; rather it requires likeness in terms of *why* what is wanted is wanted.² In that sense, it is deeper and because of this, under certain conditions, such interests can be used to cross social boundaries (or so we shall argue).

Let us briefly revisit the argument of Chapter 3 that introduced the need for this concept. *Inter alia*, life consists in nestings of experiences, activities and processes, and we need to understand what comprises the non-instrumental value of these activities etc. We cannot do so in terms of object-individuated desires or in terms of an objective list. We need the idea that basic desires are grouped together in kinds according to their motivational nature in ways that reveal the desirability features of the activities. We coined the term '*deslogo* interest' for this idea partly to avoid the misleading suggestions of other words such as 'fundamental needs' and 'basic drives' (Thomson 1987: chapter 4; Hamilton 2003).³ However, we employed this term of art with the cautionary note that it denotes a non-instrumental value and is not like the terms 'self-interest' and 'in one's interests' which indicate instrumental values. As we saw in Chapter 3 Section II, one benefit of this account is that it shows how what counts as a non-instrumentally desirable activity is contingent for any being, but without appealing to a vague concept such as that of human nature.

3) Let us return to the question 'How are inter-cultural comparisons concerning well-being possible?' How does the notion of *deslogo* interests help? As we have seen, it helps because it provides a deeper basis for evaluative comparison than desire, and a less inflexible one than objective lists.

Nevertheless, even granted this, there may be significant differences between people in different societies in terms of their *deslogo* interests. Such interests are partly socially determined. For this reason, the question remains 'What could be the bases for such inter-cultural comparisons?' The answer requires introducing a new element. In Chapter 3 (Section VI), we provided some empirical conditions for identifying *deslogo* interests, except for one; the missing component was relative inescapability. We now need this element.

To introduce it, we begin by noting that there are facts about a person that she cannot do anything to escape, such as the dependence on food. This doesn't mean that such facts can't change; consider, for example, the amount of food one needs as one's body grows in childhood. Rather it means that the changes are something that one has limited control over (Thomson 1987: 25).

Some of the inalterable features of a person pertain to her motivational nature and as such, they may be directly relevant to the constitution of her well-being.⁴ For instance, as we grow older, among other things, the nature of our desires change. Sexually motivated desires and the desires for achievement become more prominent during certain stages of life (in certain societies). Insofar as these changes are inalterable, and

insofar as they pertain to what kinds of activities count as non-instrumentally good for the person, they will be directly relevant to the constitution of well-being.

The central point is that inescapability is important because, with respect to inescapable features, the question of whether a person ought to alter them just does not arise (Thomson 1987: chapters 2 and 4). For instance, concerning inescapable needs, there is no question whether we should change them because we just cannot. In this manner, inescapable features can be treated as a given in thinking about practical concerns.⁵ If a person has a *deslogo* interest that is inescapable then there is no point in questioning whether she ought to have it. Such an interest thereby gains a certain kind of practical immunity.⁶

This is important because prudence can require us to transform ourselves and our social conditions, and thereby what has primary value for us. This means that we might reshape our natures (by changing social conditions, perhaps over the course of several generations) so that we no longer have desires motivated by certain interests.⁷ To evaluate whether we *should* do so, we need to appeal to relatively inescapable features of our motivational make-up.⁸ These features form an aspect of the concept of well-being that can be used for critical evaluation of different cultures or societies.

This is a bit abstract; so, before we proceed, let us examine some examples.

- a) In contemporary society, people have a huge range of desires pertaining to the consumption of material goods that people didn't have in medieval times. This constitutes a shift in our desire patterns or *deslogo* interests. Is it merely different? How could it be regarded as a deterioration or as an improvement?
- b) Some religious groups believe that desires pertaining to friendship are an obstacle to union with the divine, and they are best reduced or eliminated. In a society without such interests, friendship would no longer even be a good that one would forgo for the sake of the divine. It would be more like shedding an addiction. This hermit view is (at least in part) an empirical claim about the nature of motivation and well-being.
- c) The claim that work would be less alienated in production conditions X (say of cooperative ownership) than it is currently requires a concept of the interests that aren't altered through the relevant social changes. In this way, inescapable *deslogo* interests are significant because they set limits to how radically and deeply we can change; they help to determine primary goods that must be taken as given in prudential deliberation and life evaluation.
- d) A person who is aggressive might come to think that his life would be better off if he lessened or rid himself of his aggression. However, he recognizes that it is too late for him personally to change, but he claims that people would be less aggressive and more peaceful if they lived in a society that was less competitive. His interlocutor challenges his reasoning by arguing that we are collectively better off with the more aggressive sides of our natures intact so long as the aggressive *deslogo* interest is expressed in certain ways.

- e) In Plato's *Republic*, Cephalus reports that when someone asked Sophocles whether he could still make love, the old poet replied, "I am very glad to have escaped from all that, like a slave who has escaped from a savage and tyrannical master." Cephalus agrees with Sophocles, claiming that when the appetites relax, 'we escape from many mad masters' but adds that this is not a question of old age but rather 'the way people live'. (329b-d). Is Cephalus right about sexual desires? Do the same points apply to other *deslogo* interests?

4) The examples illustrate how the inescapability of *deslogo* interests is necessary for making evaluative judgments across cultures. It defines the limits to which we can change our motivational nature. Such an idea is necessary for comparing radically different social arrangements with respect to (this dimension of) well-being (without appealing to a reductive conception of well-being).

We can make judgements about whether person A would be better off in society Z rather than society Y (*inter alia*) in terms of the *deslogo* interests that she would have in both Z and Y. Those interests allow us to claim that it would be better for A to be in society Z rather than Y (or not) relative to those interests. When a person would have a set of *deslogo* interests in almost any social conditions then we can call those interests 'inescapable' because there is nothing the person could do to alter or escape them. In this manner, inescapable interests allow us to compare different social contexts: we can appeal to the interests that the person would have in a wide range of social conditions.

The argument for this conclusion is as follows. Evaluations must proceed from criteria of relevance and selection. Any sentence of the form 'X is better than Y' is relative to a criterion or set of criteria C. But any such set of putative criteria will themselves be subject to evaluation: 'is criterion C good? If it fails this kind of meta-evaluation, then it will not count as criteria for other evaluations. If C passes then this must be in virtue of further criteria, which themselves must be subject to evaluation. This threatening regress is halted by criteria that are not subject to further evaluation, and this requires that some are (relatively) inescapable.⁹

Without an idea like inescapability, we could not make sense of claims such as 'friendship tends to be degraded in consumer societies'. Without relevant inescapable *deslogo* interests in common, we could only affirm that friendship is different in these societies. We might describe those differences, but ultimately there could be no basis for ever claiming that one situation is better or worse than the other. It would be like comparing pack animals such as wolves with more solitary animals such as jaguars.

In short, motivational inescapability is required for prudential evaluation; any piece of practical evaluation requires that some things of primary values are treated as given, which determines what is relevant in deliberation. Without some given, evaluation cannot begin; it has no criteria of relevance and of selection.¹⁰ The relative inescapability of *deslogo* interests provides something akin to a naturalized framework for evaluations. Without such a framework, evaluation would be impossible.

Relative inescapability partly determines which primary goods *must* be treated as a given. The more inescapable a primary value or *deslogo* interest is, the more redundant it becomes to ask whether we ought to have it. At the limit, we neither ought nor ought not to have an interest that is inescapable. Inescapable *deslogo* interests themselves are

beyond good or bad.¹¹ Thus, we are justified in treating primary goods defined by such inescapable interests as given. Because of this, inescapable ends can form a resting place for evaluative justification.

In summary, we need a concept of well-being that allows us to critically evaluate different societies with regard to well-being. We make demands of the concept of well-being that are in potential conflict. On the one hand, we need it to be culturally specific in part to enable it to be a measurable concept. On the other hand, to enable it as social critique, we need it to transcend the culturally specific. One ingredient necessary to resolve this dilemma is the relative inescapability of desire-patterns. The difficulty that this appeal solves is that people may have different *deslogo* interests in such societies: *deslogo* interests are constitutive of well-being but they are partly socially determined.¹² If well-being is differently constituted in different societies then how can we compare those societies' well-being?¹³ Non-instrumentally, the answer is that we can do so by appeal to the *deslogo* interests that are inescapable in both societies. Those can be taken as an immune given, and from them, we can include escapable interests (see below).

Qualifications

The main claim that the inescapability of *deslogo* interests is necessary for inter-societal evaluations needs several qualifications.

First, here we are only referring to the first dimension of well-being, and this is not the only way in which inter-societal evaluations can be made. We can also make inter-societal comparisons along the other dimensions of well-being such as awareness, the relational and self-consciousness. For instance, a social arrangement that makes us less conscious would be *ipso facto* less desirable.

Second, we need to distinguish the claim that a desire pattern is inalterable for a specific person given her specific history and the social conditions that she happens to be in from a broader claim about what is inescapable for her. For example, a person might be addicted such that she cannot alter her dependency. Given this, she must treat her addiction as a given. But this doesn't mean this addiction is a given in general for her and for others like her. Indeed, her addiction *was* avoidable earlier, and she would have been better off without it. This is part of why we call it 'an addiction' as opposed to 'a need' (Thomson 1987: Chapter 2). Thus, we require a broad notion of inescapability, as opposed to the more specific notion of inalterability, to be able to affirm that an addiction is escapable even if it is inalterable for a specific person at a given time.

Third, the inescapability of interests is not an all-or-nothing affair. What counts as inescapable might be dependent on social conditions that themselves are escapable. For a person brought up in a specific society, certain desire patterns might be inescapable. However, in contrast, for the purposes of social critique, it might be the case that those patterns should not be treated as a given. Although an individual may not be able to change her social conditions, nevertheless, the collective *could* do so. From a wider perspective, social conditions are contingent and can be changed, and so can the broad features of well-being that depend on them. Thus, from the wider perspective, these cannot be treated as givens: they are changeable or escapable, and they need to be evaluated.¹⁴ Thus, from this perspective, the question 'Is it better for us to be living within a consumer society?' makes sense.¹⁵ In answering the question, we cannot take

for granted the ways in which consumerism tends to mold our subjectivities and the patterns of our desires. These themselves need to be evaluated.

Fourth, we need to relativize the notion of inescapability: a feature F is inescapable for a being B for a range of conditions C1 to Cn if there is nothing non-discountable B can do to rid herself of F in any of those conditions. ‘Non-discountable’: a way of escaping having feature F is discountable if it involves B’s being harmed more seriously than not escaping F. For example, an addict *can* escape his affliction by killing himself, but this escape route is discountable because it harms him more than the addiction! The ultimate point is that, insofar as an interest is non-discountably inescapable, it can be treated as a given. (From now on, we will not employ the term ‘non-discountable’ before the word ‘inescapable’ and the phrase ‘relatively inescapable’. We shall assume it.)

Fifth, from these relatively inescapable ends, we can assess whether we ought to change the more optional sides of our motivational nature or not. The conception of given primary value needn’t be restricted to inescapable *deslogo* interests. It can include optional *deslogo* interests, so long as well-being does not require us to change them. Thus, starting from inescapable interests, we can build a more full-bodied picture of the types of primary values relevant to our well-being.

To see this, contrast three possibilities. First, suppose aggressiveness is an inescapable part of our natures, as some writers such as Konrad Lorenz have advocated. In which case, we must live with those kinds of motivations as best we can, and our well-being will include activities that meet or express such *deslogo* interests (Lorenz 1974). Second, in contrast, suppose that aggression is an escapable side of our nature. If this were the case, and also given that our lives are worse because of such aggressive interests then, ideally, we should either train ourselves to live without aggression or construct social conditions that don’t encourage aggression. There is also a third more complicated possibility: aggression is escapable, but ineluctably tied to other facets of our nature. For instance, suppose that losing aggression would cost us our creativity or would make us passive. In such a case, it would be better to channel our aggressive aspects of our natures into less harmful forms rather than train ourselves out of it. The interest would not be strictly inescapable, yet there would be nothing non-discountable to evade it.¹⁶

The digression regarding aggression shows that we needn’t suppose that an interest can be treated as a given only if it is inescapable. Even if it is escapable, it could enter as a given when it is not detrimental to well-being defined in terms of inescapable interests (or defined recursively in terms of other escapable interests that are non-detrimental)¹⁷. In contrast, it would not enter as a given if it were escapable only in ways that are detrimental to well-being.

Sixth, in asserting the thesis about comparisons of well-being between societies, we are not denying that there might be incommensurable evaluative differences between societies (i.e. when there are no relevant inescapable *deslogo* interests in common) (Gray 1995).¹⁸ Furthermore, we are not denying that the concepts employed to pick out and describe the relevant *deslogo* interests will differ between societies. We are affirming that evaluative judgments regarding well-being across cultures are possible, and when they are possible, they are so in virtue of the relative inescapability of *deslogo* interests (among other things).

Seventh, note that we have been careful not to utilize a vague notion of human nature (Gerwirth 1998: 11-13). This is important partly because we haven't appealed directly to what is shared or common between humans, but instead to what is inescapable for a specific being. The fact that most humans might share a specific characteristic doesn't mean that it is relevant for a particular person. This is one of the root errors we attributed to perfectionist theories and to Foot (Chapter 3 Appendix I).

Furthermore, we have deliberately avoided appealing to some idea of an innate human nature as opposed to social features.¹⁹ We have not fallen into a natural/social dichotomy. For example, we have *not* claimed that inescapable *deslogo* interests are natural. Instead, we have employed the idea of the relative inescapability of features *given* different social contexts. In other words, inescapability is always relative to a set of social conditions and thus it cuts across the nature versus nurture debate. As we said in Chapter 3, human nature shouldn't be conceived as having a determinate content independent of social conditions. Rather it defines the limits to a field of possibilities, set by what is inescapable. There is no human nature independent of social conditions. For example, when someone claims that human beings are by nature linguistic creatures, this means that raised in appropriate social conditions, a human baby will acquire linguistic capacities.

Indeed, in terms of practical reasons, what is important about the nature versus nurture debate is precisely its relevance to inescapability (Thomson 1987: chapters 2 and 4). On the one hand, there isn't a fixed (socially-neutral) content to the concept of human nature that we could appeal to. On the other hand, we don't want to be stuck in the idea that inter-societal comparisons are impossible or necessarily indeterminate because what counts as good in one society won't count as such in another.

III MEASUREMENT: AN ANTINOMY

We have provided a provisional framework for well-being. Those whose profession is to quantify well-being and define indices for policy purposes may not be sympathetic to the general approach adopted in this book for several reasons, and they may not yet see its relevance to their own work. Their main objection would be that measurement requires clear empirical specifications, and there are too many normative or non-empirical concepts in our framework, and that these render it immeasurable. For example, we argued that well-being requires *appropriate* appreciation of the value of the activities. But, contends the objection, this cannot be measured because the notion of appropriate is normative, and hasn't been empirically specified.

We shall reply to this objection in a couple of ways: first theoretically and second practically. We shall begin with the theoretical by outlining an antinomy that haunts the social sciences. On the one side of the antinomy: social phenomena are usually both intentional and normative, and this suggests that they are not amenable to quantitative methods. On the other side, it is preferable to employ concepts and methodologies that in principle can be quantified. (Later, we shall discuss the more practical answer to the objection.)

The first side of the antinomy: insofar as social practices have content, they are intentional, and they are described as such with intensional sentences.²⁰ This means that they cannot be counted. To see this, consider the question 'How many beliefs do you

have?’ The difficulty in answering isn’t merely epistemological; it isn’t merely that one doesn’t know how to count beliefs. It is much more deep-seated. It is that a person’s beliefs depend on how the content is described. For instance, is the belief that ‘ $1+2=3$ ’ different from the belief that $2+2-1=3$? Is the belief that water is liquid at room temperature distinct from the belief that H_2O is? These questions show us how the notion of what counts as *one* belief depends ineluctably on the content of the belief, which depends on how it is described. Without simplifying assumptions, this puts the very notion of counting in doubt. Additionally, the notion of well-being is thoroughly normative, and this cannot be reduced to what people happen to value: the normative claim that something is good cannot be reduced to the empirical statement that someone regards it as good.²¹ This too suggests that any hope that it might be measurable is forlorn.

From the other side of the antinomy, one might argue that if a concept isn’t in principle measurable then there is a concern that the concept doesn’t have a definite empirical content. According to such a view, any concept with empirical content is measurable; if something cannot be measured then it isn’t real. Thus, this view contends that, at best, if well-being as explicated in this work is not measurable, then we haven’t completed our job of specifying its empirical conditions. At worst, the outlined conception doesn’t indicate a real feature of human life.

The antinomy marks a basic conflict in the social sciences generally and in well-being studies specifically. We need an evaluatively full-bodied conception of well-being that can serve as a basis for social critique and re-envisioning. We also need a conception that does justice to the rich and varied experiential nature of our lived lives. These points indicate the need to pull away from a reductive account well-being in order to account for the fullness of the concept. However, we also feel draw of currents tugging in the opposite direction: normative concepts must have some empirical ground, and likewise, the subjectivity of our experience must be ontologically rooted in the public world. Thus, there is reason to insist that the concept of well-being is empirically specifiable and hence measurable.

To resolve this antinomy, we need to free ourselves of some illusions. First, to measure a person’s well-being, we need to distinguish cause and constituent, however difficult this might be in practice. What causes well-being is distinct from what constitutes it. Once we have a working account of the concept of well-being, we can give it empirical specifications for people of different ages and in different social conditions. Given this, we can then identify how to best measure it for any given set of purposes. Once we have some ways of measuring well-being then we can begin to correlate that to a variety of causal factors along the different dimensions. The crucial point is that, for clarity, these four steps need to be methodologically separated: definition, empirical specification, measurement and correlation (see below).²²

Second, the discussion so far masks a fundamental question: what counts as empirical? One might insist on strict definitions of ‘empirical’ that require mathematical specifiable or extensional criteria of identity, as in the basic natural sciences.²³ This insistence might apply, for instance, to ‘particle collision’. However, as we describe the world in increasingly rich terms, the required concepts will involve intentional and normative elements. For example, we want numerical data about traffic accidents or ‘vehicle collision’. In this request, we do not lay down as a requirement that the notion

of a traffic accident should be definable in a purely extensional manner. We accommodate the need for mathematical data to the everyday concept as best we can. For instance, if we are interested in fatalities and serious injuries to persons then we operationalise the concept in that way. However, if we are interested in property insurance claims then there are other ways to operationalise the concept. The idea that we can measure social phenomena doesn't entail the ludicrous idea that all social phenomena can be characterised in purely extensional terms. 'Traffic accident' can't. It is an error to identify the empirical with the extensional, even though we may do so in some of the natural sciences. Let us put this another way: it is not a requirement of empirical investigation or of the concept 'empirically specifiable' that it should be extensionally stated. In this manner, we liberate the social sciences from inappropriate constraints that apply only to the natural sciences.

Third, from the outset, we have insisted that a definition of well-being should be sharply distinguished from the measurement of well-being because such a distinction is logically necessary for any judgement as to whether the approach to measurement is well or badly specified (Gasper, Des 2004: 1). Operational definitions fail this simple criterion because they identify definition and measurement. Once we free ourselves of the myth of operationalist definitions, we can argue that anything can be measured. Disabused of the idea that the measurements *are* the things we are measuring (i.e. that the indices are well-being), the issue of how to measure becomes liberated from the requirement that it be a definition. Measures presupposes definitions; they don't provide them.

This simple point unfetters us from the alleged need for universally applicable measures. We don't need to seek a standardized measurement that can be equated with a definition. And once so unshackled, one can make numerical representations of something that isn't itself numerical. We don't need to assume that only the numerical can be measured. Thus, we can avoid the dichotomy that leads us to affirm either one, that because well-being isn't numerical, it cannot be measured, or two, that because it is measurable, it must be numerical. Emancipated from the myth that identifies measurement and definition, we can affirm both that 'well-being' isn't a numerical concept and yet that well-being can be measured.

In short, a measurement can be a numerical representation of a state of affairs that isn't itself numerical. Such a view allows for the idea that some numerical representations might serve some purposes better than others. It destroys the idea of *the* representation or *the* measurement. While, of course, for some purposes, standardized forms of measurement will be useful, the demolition of the myth implies that there isn't such a thing as *the* standardized measure. Seeking a standardized measure or set of indices may be a useful representation in some contexts, but in others, quite misleading.

IV MEASURING: A BRIEF OUTLINE

Now for the second reply to the antinomy. We will sketch a method for constructing a measurement of well-being in accordance with the conception argued for in this book. Doubtless the outline will be telegraphic and compact. There will be some hand-waving. Nevertheless, it will show that such measurement is possible in principle, and this is an important result. Our aim is to try to characterize a complex evaluative concept in ways that are empirically specifiable but without being reductive. We are trying to respect both the evaluative and the empirical nature of the concept. If we can show how

to measure well-being, at least in principle, then the empirical nature of the concept is to that extent clear.

We won't try to address the difficulties that *any* account of the measurement of well-being would face, such as the fact that objective measures tend to track GDP (McGillivray and Clarke 2007: 4) and that subjective measures make interpersonal comparisons difficult (Elster, and Roemer 1993). The main task before us is how to include everything that is significant without double counting. This requires specifying what is to be measured at the right level of generality. To complete this task, we shall construct a broad frame in five steps. The first specifies the core variables, and the second shows how to combine them. The third step introduces self-consciousness into this core. The fourth step introduces more complex factors, and shows how to integrate those into the core. The fifth measures the synergetic factor: the extent to which the other factors are causally mutually supportive.

a) First, we build the basic framework. We identify the *deslogo* interests of a person or group. We make a list of genuinely independent interests. Let us assume that we have ten interests and each has a maximum score of ten. For any person or group, we assign a value that measures the degree to which their life meets their *deslogo* interests within a specific time frame. In this way, we construct a list that will become a matrix (Krueger 2009: 14-15).

There is also an appreciation variable, which consists in the sum of three values. The first is the appropriate appreciation factor: the capacity to connect appropriately to the desirable features of the experiences, activities and processes that a person engages in. A factor of 1 would be full or perfect appreciation; zero, null. We assign a value to this variable for each of the *deslogo* interests identified in step 1. How do we do this? It requires finding out how to measure the extent to which a person pays attention to what she is doing in ways that permit her to be directly aware of the non-instrumentally valuable nature of her activities. So, for example, we might test for instrumentalisation, since this is a primary block. The second awareness factor is a measure of the intensity or vividness of the person's awareness: to what degree is a person conscious. This might be treated as a general measure or as variable specific to each of the *deslogo* interests identified in step 1. The latter is more accurate because one might be more intensely aware when engaged in some activities rather than others. The intensity of awareness may have neurophysiological markers. The third is the person's emotional capacity to appreciate emotionally the valuable features of the activities, experiences and processes that she engages in. Again, this can be measured in terms of the person's general emotional capacities.

b) For the second step: How do these disparate measures relate to each other as a composite? A person's life consists in the experiences, activities and processes she undertakes and undergoes. And insofar as these are desirable, they partly constitute her well-being. However, this assumes that the person appreciates fully the value of the activities. Without any appreciation, it would be as if the desirability of the activities were inoperative. Therefore, we should multiply the scores in the activity list by the summation of the awareness factor. So, for example, if a person engages in very desirable activities during a period, but has very little appreciation of their desirability because she is anxious then her score will be low. In contrast, a person who has a very strong appreciation will score high, even if her activity score is low on many of the

counts. For example, suppose that playing is a *deslogo* interest: within a specific time-period a person needs to play. Of course, this doesn't mean that the person need have a time specifically set aside exclusively for playing; the playfulness might be intermingled with other activities. Setting this complication aside, let us say that we can reasonably assign the numeral 8 to characterize to degree to which the person has satisfied this *deslogo* interest within that time-period. Suppose that the person has a low capacity to appreciate the activities that involve playing during the time-period. Let us assign this the value 3. So, the sub-total score would be $8 \times 3 = 24$.

c) We assign values to the various variables concerning self-awareness. Once we have assigned a composite value for the person's self-awareness and the procedure would be to take this as an additive value on the awareness multiplier. A composite self-consciousness variable would be an addition to this multiplier effect.²⁴ Following the previous example, suppose the person has a low self-consciousness score, say of 4 out of 10, then their new sub-total score will be: $8 \times (3+4) = 56$. Please remember that the variables are supposed to capture the non-instrumental value of the relevant components or aspects of well-being. For example, the issue of how self-confidence causally affects a person's well-being is *not* in play at this stage.

d) The fourth step involves integrating two complex factors: relationships and non-instrumentalisation. These are complex because in part they may be already included in the core, but in some regards, they may be genuinely independent. We don't want to double count nor leave them out. Instrumentalisation or the lack of it should already be included in the measurement of appreciative awareness and self-awareness. If this is the case, it should not figure as a distinct variable.

Concerning relationships, in Chapter 5, we defined three categories as follows. The first is doing for others. The second is the capacity for the person to be with others as persons. The third is being-in, one's capacity to be part of a community group. Some aspects of these relationship-categories are already included in the core measurement framework outlined above. For instance, the list of *deslogo* interests already includes some aspects of relationships as desirable activity kinds (see Chapter 3). Additionally, some will be included at the level of awareness. For example, in terms of being-with, insofar as one is perceiving a person instrumentally, one cannot properly appreciate their company as a friend (see Chapter 4). In these regards, one's relationships with others are already included in the core measurement framework for well-being. Nevertheless, there is an aspect of our relationships that is not included. This is the idea that other persons become or are part of one's life. Therefore, this would be assigned a value.

e) Finally there is the synergetic aspect of well-being, the mutual causal reinforcement or positive feedback loops. This requires specifying the relevant coefficients. The idea is that increasing well-being along one dimension will not involve diminishing it along another, or positively, would facilitate its increase along the other dimensions.

V BEYOND NUMBERS

Hopefully, we have answered the objection that the conception of well-being outlined here isn't sufficiently clear to be *in principle* measurable. There is still more to be done because, now, we must face the protestations from the opposite side of the antinomy, namely that well-being isn't measurable at all.

One argument to this effect is that being well is pluralistic; it consists in living various irreducible non-instrumental goods. This pluralism will entail that such goods are incommensurate, and thus well-being would be immeasurable (Raz 1988 and Gray 1997). In short, measurability requires monism (that there is only one thing of non-instrumental value), and monism is false (Chan 1997).

Indeed, we have argued in favour of the claim that being well is pluralistic, that it is composed of irreducible non-instrumental goods. Moreover, we have advocated irreducible plurality in at least two ways. There are four dimensions along which we live, and with respect to the first of these, we have desirability characterizations defined in relation to non-substitutable *deslogo* interests that can't be reduced to a set of preferences or rankings. So, there is plurality concerning both the four dimensions and the *deslogo* interests. So, given this double pluralism, how can we also maintain that well-being can be measured?

A second argument against the possibility of measuring well-being (from this side of the antinomy) is that measurement requires the comparison of like with like, and that this condition is irredeemably violated in the case of well-being measures. For example, when we measure the distance between two objects, we do so with something fundamentally alike, such as the length of a measuring rod. Likewise, with durations and clock-events.

More abstractly, measurement requires the comparison of like with like in the sense that quantitative methods require treating the domain to be measured as consisting in data that is describable in extensional or referentially transparent terms. To be able to count, there must be units that can be counted independently of how they are described or such that equivalents can be substituted.

However, contends the antithesis, well-being measures are not like this. Well-being is through and through intentional because it pertains to activities, awareness, feelings, relationships and self-consciousness, all of which are marked by uneliminable intentionality. Psychologically, our lives consist in intentional actions, states and processes that are not describable *as such* with the purely extensional language that is necessary for quantitative treatment.²⁵ Intentional states or facts *as such* resist being counted because their identity requires mental content or propositions, neither of which should be regarded as countable entities (or even as entities at all; see Chapter 4). Because it is permeated with intentionality, well-being can't be thought of as consisting in numerically treatable units and therefore, contends the argument, it violates the requirement that measurement consist in comparing like with like. Consequently, measuring well-being isn't possible.

A more intuitive and less technical way to make this point on behalf of this side of the antinomy might be as follows: mental content is essentially qualitative and subjective, and therefore it is not quantitative and objective. But measurement must be quantitative and objective. Therefore, argues the objection, trying to measure intentional states is like trying to box the wind. Given that well-being is infused with intentionality, how can we maintain that well-being is measurable?

The answer to both challenges is to be crystal clear about the difference between measurement and the thing measured. The map isn't the territory; the indices aren't the valuable. Therefore, we can have quantitative measures of the incommensurable. Likewise, we can make numerical representations of the non-numerical. Likewise, we can make extensional statements about intentional states. But in each of these cases, we are not characterising the relevant phenomena *as* incommensurable, non-numerical or intentional. The distinction allows that even pluralistic, incommensurate goods can be measured. Clearly they can't be measured *insofar* they are incommensurate, intentional or non-numerical. We can devise ways to apply quantitative measures to intentional states, even if they can't be measured *with respect* to or *qua* their intentionality. As we saw in Chapter 3, we can measure a certain kind of desirability with relevantly sanitised preferences.²⁶

For this reason, clarity on the difference between the measurement and the thing measured allows for measurement of well-being, but it will diminish the expectations that we should have of any such measurement system. As we have already seen, the issue of how to measure should be released from the requirement that it be a definition. Measures presuppose definitions and don't provide them. Thus, we can't have a standardised measurement that can be equated with a definition.

Nevertheless, if we want to measure intentional and normative facts in other regards, we can do so. The issue isn't whether we can do it but rather what this amounts to. For instance, we can measure the value of things in terms of how much people would be prepared to pay for them under certain conditions. We can measure the value of activities and experiences in terms of the relevant preferences. Whether we can do this or not isn't the issue: we can do it. Rather the concern is to realize how little we have accomplished once we have done this. We haven't provided a definition of the values or even a standardized measure appropriate for all occasions.

More to the point, we haven't provided a criterion on which practical decisions should be based. By definition, the relevant decisions should be based on the pluralistic values that *constitute* the criteria rather than on their measurement. Because of this point often overlooked in decision theory, measurement doesn't provide an automatic decision-procedure. Decisions should be based on what is valuable. Measurements are only a guide to the valuable. What counts isn't necessarily what we count. Thus, for example, it is a definite decision to base one's policies on cost-benefit analyses insofar as these are merely measurements of the underlying pluralistic incommensurate values. Standard cost-benefit analyses form a measurement of the relevant well-being values; they don't *constitute* a definition of those pluralistic values. In a similar manner, economic development isn't constituted by growth in GDP. Good decision-making is defined in terms of those values and not in terms of their measurement. These points amount to a cautionary note, which we will now amplify.

The cautionary note doesn't consist only in the claim that measurements don't always track what they are supposed to measure. There is a potentially more alarming set of points: standardized measures seductively invite us to shoot ourselves in the foot in two ways. Suppose we were to construct a standard WB unit, WBU. Suppose that some people and groups would manage their lives and activities by trying to achieve higher WBU scores within specific time periods. This appears to be rational strategy: a higher WBU score is better than a lower one, and we can achieve higher scores by managing

our lives and institutions scientifically. Yes: it *appears* logical. The problem is that it isn't. Management by such performance scores renders higher measurements the aim or goal of the activities in question. Potentially, this is a double whammy. First, it instrumentalises all the activities. This means that we regard the actions as valuable only because (or insofar as) they increase some end-state, namely in this case, well-being. As we saw in Chapter 2, this claim leads to absurd implications. Among other things, it implies that none of the activities we engage in and experiences we undergo are constitutive of well-being, because their value is purely instrumental. It thereby strips the concept of any such content. Insofar as management by performance scores instrumentalises, it makes our lives instrumental to some goal in a way that renders the goal emasculated, leaning towards the vacuous.

The second curse is that the aimed-at-result is only a measurement of the value; it isn't what is valuable *per se*. WBUs are only a measure of well-being, and cannot be identified with the value measured. Therefore, insofar as management by performance scores makes increased scores its goal, it connects only to signs or to ghostly shadows of well-being. This point isn't simply the claim that measurements needn't track well what they are supposed to measure (albeit that this is an important point). It is rather also the additional point that, either institutionally or psychologically, we have made our goal what is only a sign.

We can intuit the absurdity of making these identifications by reflecting on the practice of teaching to the test.²⁷ First, teaching to the test instrumentalises learning. On this conception, students will regard learning as valuable only for the sake of some result, and thereby the activity becomes something that one would wish away, as a cost to be minimised in the name of efficiency. This destroys the possibility of appreciating learning about anything as a non-instrumentally valuable process, and it disables attending to the interesting aspects of what one is learning. This is a logical consequence of the argument of Chapter 2. Second, teaching to the test makes the aimed result a mere score. But the score is only a measure of learning: a measurement (such as a grade) acts like a sign of the values that it is supposed to measure, and so, teaching to the test makes the goal of learning a mere sign – not the real thing. The net effect of these two errors combined is that educational activities become drained of value. A set of activities that could be appreciated for themselves becomes performed for the sake of getting the numbers right.

If we devise a measurement and make that our goal, then *ipso facto* we are no longer responsive and connected to the original valuable activities and experiences, but rather to some measurement targets. We can sense the absurdity of this by imagining a person worried that his instrumentalising score is too high and saying to himself: "I need to live differently and stop instrumentalising, so that I can get my I-score down." To make the absurdity appear logical, we only need to reward him financially for having lower instrumentalising scores.

These cautionary notes don't mean that we cannot aim to improve our lives. Of course, our actions will include those whose goal is such improvements. What the above warnings mean is that we must eschew the automatic habit of adopting an instrumental conception of rationality or of thinking that the valuable nature of any action or activity resides in its goal. Once we free ourselves of the fetters of instrumental rationality, we can distinguish between means/ends and instrumentally/non-instrumentally valuable,

and thereby liberate ourselves from goal-tyranny and from the instrumentalisation of our lives. As explained in Chapter 2, we thereby learn a new relationship to goals. As an implication, well-being is not defined as a goal but as a way of being.

For social policy, none of the above means that we shouldn't measure well-being. Nor does it mean that we shouldn't use the empirical information contained in studies that employ such measures. That would be foolish indeed! Policies need to be well-informed. And data about what is causally conducive to people living well will require quantitative studies. What it does mean, however, at the policy level, for institutions, is that we must eschew the lazy habit of making the better score the aim. It means that we shouldn't be thinking that the policy aim is to raise WB scores. Well-being measures shouldn't be our policy goals or targets.

It also implies that the policy aim shouldn't even be to increase well-being. Rather the aim is to provide socio-economic conditions that permit people to live in better ways with respect to certain well-being relevant criteria. Perhaps this is a subtle point. But when it is thought through, it undermines much policy discourse on well-being. We can only increase quantities. Thus, an improvement isn't necessarily an increase. Of course, improvements in well-being would be reflected in increased well-being scores, hopefully. But the scores aren't the improvement, and the improvement *per se* isn't an increase in some quantity, namely the amount of well-being. Well-being consists in people living better with respect to certain criteria. As we have seen, such a notion is normatively pluralistic and intentional. It isn't quantitative, even though its measures are. Better social conditions help improve the ways in which people live; in so doing, they *increase* well-being scores. But the improvement *per se* isn't an increase in some quantity. In short, numerical language applies only to well-being measures or scores and not to how people live *per se*. Or, quantitative verbs such as 'increase' and 'maximise' apply to people's being well only insofar as these are measurable. We now have closure with respect to the antinomy with which we begun.

We can draw some methodological conclusions from the resolution of the antinomy. First, as alluded to earlier, one needs to distinguish four different processes in the investigation of well-being. First, there is the conceptual work required to explicate the framework for the notion. Second, we require empirical studies to characterise what *empirically constitutes* well-being for different age and social groups. Third, we specify the relevant markers, construct the indices and measure well-being in different social contexts. Fourth, given this, we can establish significant correlations between levels of well-being as measured and social-economic and personal conditions with the aim of identifying causal relationships relevant for policy. The second third and fourth processes could be dimension-specific.

Concerning causality in the last of the last phase, please note the import of Chapters 3 and 4. When we refer to 'causal relationships' in this context, we are not indicating the kind of mechanical causation pervasive in the natural sciences. Rather we are denoting some type of intentional causation. One might explain the difference as follows. When one billiard ball hits another, or when water molecules collide, or when an electrical current runs through a wire, the causality is content-independent. It doesn't depend on content; it is purely mechanical. In contrast, when a person's wanting something causes her to perform an action, the causal relationship depends on the content of the desire and of her action. In this way, we explain the action as an action. We make sense of the

action with regard to its content in terms of the content of the relevant beliefs and desires of the agent. The action of grabbing the umbrella is defined by its content (namely grabbing the umbrella) and the causes of this action (i.e. the relevant desires and beliefs of the agent) are causally effective in virtue of their content (Davidson 2001). Intentional action-causation isn't mechanical billiard-ball causation.

Why is this relevant for the causes of well-being? It is tempting to think of the way socio-economic conditions affect the well-being of persons on the mechanical model. This is especially seductive when we are considering extensionally-defined or quantitative measures of well-being. And it is even more so, if we fail to distinguish measurement and value. Succumbing to these temptations amounts to ignoring the intentionality of the causation in question, which this amounts to ignoring the people affected. This difference can be hugely important.

Consider the claim 'raises in the minimum wage increase well-being levels in poor communities more than increased levels of policing.' Expressed in this manner, the claim sounds like Boyle's law: raises in the volume of a given mass of a gas at a given temperature will decrease the pressure of the gas. The causation behind Boyle's law is purely mechanical. However, how economic and social conditions affect people's well-being is not like that. Changes in such conditions affect what people can do, how they perceive their activities, how they feel, how they relate to others and how they perceive themselves and their relationships. Abstracting away from the intentionality of such changes depersonalises the people involved. 'Lowering the minimum wage will cause a decrease in well-being' fosters the illusion that what is at issue is simply how diminishing one quantity causes a decrease in another. Clearly the core issue at hand is very different from this: it concerns what it is like for the people involved. It concerns the subjectivity of their lived experience: how they will suffer; how they become anxious; how their family relationships will become strained; how they will tend to perceive themselves as worthless. This point was made originally back in Chapter 1 when we discussed the fourth misconception.

These reflections indicate the indispensable need for qualitative investigations of people's lives concerning their well-being in order to supplement quantitative studies. How so? What the deliberations show us is that quantitative correlations specify relations between *measures* of non-numerical phenomena (in the case of well-being). The correlations are between measures only. As such, they abstract away from the intentional and hence the personal aspects of what is actually going on. The numbers are only important insofar as they reflect relevant truths about peoples' lives as lived. But the numbers only pinpoint one aspect of this. Thus, a second methodological conclusion from the resolution of the initial antinomy is that we need qualitative investigations of well-being to complement quantitative studies. It is for this reason that we advocate an important role for narrative studies of well-being in the appendix to this chapter, where we shall also describe the methodology employed for our own empirical study.

¹ See Chapter 2 page XXX

² But only for specific types of desiring: those that are non-derivative and directed towards activities.

³ Lawrence Hamilton 2003 tries to develop a Marxian notion of need based on human functioning (especially page 53-54). He claims that such a conception is in part non-instrumental. In which case, it should be constituted by activities etc. that embody desirability-patterns.

⁴ Note that inalterability isn't absolute but rather relative: X is inalterable only given certain conditions. Under some conditions, I can't speak across the Atlantic; under others, I can.

⁵ Given, but only in some respects.

⁶ in a parallel way, we need this concept for the interpretation of desire, (see chapter 3). When we interpret a group of non-instrumental desires, we look for relevant similarities and differences (in terms of content) that have explanatory power. However, to have such power, these interests must be relatively inalterable. To see this, consider the natural sciences: we explain a pattern P1 by citing a more enduring and inescapable pattern P2. In effect, this condition partly defines what counts as a relevant pattern. The fundamental laws of nature, by definition, are features of physical reality that a person cannot change. For example, I can alter the velocity of a light beam by passing it through a medium, but I cannot change its velocity in a vacuum. That is a physical constant. Likewise, one can change the kinetic energy of an object but to do one must change its mass or velocity in accordance with the equation $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$. This is part of what makes the latter a physical law. In scientific explanation, the *explanans* should be more inescapable than the *explanandum*. This requirement is parallel to those in the natural sciences. Physical laws should have both explanatory power and also they should be inescapable. This guideline regarding the nature of explanation directs us towards the relevant *deslogo* interests cf. Harre 1975.

⁷ Even hypothetical desires

⁸ The evaluation of such changes would be instrumental but instrumental considerations depend on non-instrumental evaluative claims. In other words, should we change our nature with respect to *deslogo* interests of kind K? The answer that having such a K interest (or K motivated non-derivative desires) causes us harm assumes a specification of harm in terms of other interests.

⁹ One might argue that such a regress is halted conceptually by the fact that an activity characterized by (say) aesthetic desirability characterizations (such as 'enchanted') will automatically be not subject to further evaluation, by the meaning of the term itself. But this alternative was already ruled out in Chapter 3. So was the alternative that merely citing the fact that a person desires

¹⁰ In this discussion, we are making an important simplifying assumption, namely that translations between cultures are possible (though not necessarily on an individual word to word basis). Different societies will have varying concepts to characterize their interests and what is valuable. We shouldn't assume of any culture that it has developed the appropriate concepts for this purpose.

¹¹ Good or bad as well-being relevant in a non-instrumental sense.

¹² This is a simplification

¹³ Of course, we can always appeal to purely instrumental considerations in our cross-societal evaluations, and although these may be practically important and even decisive, they don't get to the nub of the issue.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1 on scope

¹⁵ The answer depends on what the contrast is (i.e. better than what?)

¹⁶ In exploring these points, we can separate two claims: one, that aggression *morally* needs to be channeled, and second, it needs to be channeled for the sake of an individual's well-being. The concept of well-being isn't hostage to morality: an organism's well-being could in principle

conflict with moral demands. For a being that *needs* to eat human flesh, moral concerns about cannibalism wouldn't be directly relevant to the definition of his well-being.

¹⁷ This needs explanation.

¹⁸ We are not committed to transitivity of 'better' and 'worse' all the way down. However, for purposes of measurement incommensurability would be treated as indifference.

¹⁹ See Soren Reader (2005) who attributes this error to Garrett Thomson. But, in reply, please see Chapter 2 of Thomson, 1987, especially page 32.

²⁰ or referentially opaque

²¹ Yet, despite this, one cannot regard normative concepts as free-floating. We need to characterize them in clear empirical terms insofar as this is possible. As we saw in chapter 1, these two claims produce a tension. The two claims are that the normative cannot be reduced to the empirical and that we need to provide empirical specifications of normative concepts.

²² For example, McGillivray and Noorbakhsh 2004 (page 3) recount that the UNDP has tried to provide a solid basis for the Human Development Index (HDI) through Sen's capabilities approach. They note the difficulties in finding universal claims about "basic capabilities required to lead a worthwhile life." However, they don't note that this approach involves a circularity because it fails to specify non-instrumental values. Defining well-being in terms of capabilities required for a worthwhile life postpones the question of what constitutes the relevant non-instrumental values.

²³ Extensional sentences are referentially transparent. This means that co-extensive or co-referential terms can be substituted in such sentences without altering the truth-value of the sentence as a whole. For example, '2+3=5' is extensional because any numeral that refers to the number 5 can be substituted after the = sign and the sentence will remain true. While claims in the natural sciences are extensional, psychological assertions are not. 'A believes that p' and 'p=q' doesn't entail 'A believes that q'. Such intensional sentences are referentially opaque. Fundamentally this is because such sentences are about semantic content.

²⁴ This is insofar as it is a non-instrumental valuable aspect of well-being. Of course, self-consciousness will affect awareness or appreciation. In this regard, it has instrumental value and thus it is already included in the appreciation variable

²⁵ To measure X, or to give it a numerical representation, requires that it doesn't matter how X is described. Therefore, quantitative methods require that the domain and data points in question are described extensionally. Psychological states are intentional; they have meaning or content. This implies that they cannot be described *as such* with extensional sentences.

²⁶ Suppose utility is a measure of substantive preferences (or a subset thereof) (Bermudez 2009 44-47). We are claiming that such preferences are a measure of the non-instrumental desirability of activities (or an aspect of well-being), fundamentally because they don't constitute well-being. So, utility is the measure of a measure. This shouldn't be surprising because constructing preference functions is a way to de-intentionalise the valuable features of the activities in question, in order to make it measurable. This is why the interpretation of desires to find the underlying patterns of desirability (or *deslogo* interests) as explained in Chapter 3 is a way to avoid this de-intentionalising in the definition of the valuable features of the activities in question. The de-intentionalising is necessary for the measurement but not for the definition.

²⁷ Or by watching the Black Mirror episode 'Nosedive' Series 3 Episode 1, Oct. 2016