

Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview

Towards Ethical Democracy, Governance and Stewardship

1.1 Introduction: Being, Having, Doing and Interacting

The research project is based on previous research on social inclusion with First Australians (McIntyre-Mills 2010), in order to protect the global commons and the collective good (Eder 1996).¹ The philosophy underpinning the approach grew out of the research in Alice Springs and in the Southern Region with Aboriginal Australians who stressed that ‘we are the land’. Olive Veverbrants, an Arrernte Australian, stressed ‘the earth is our mother’ and we depend on it for our survival.

The weaving together of stories of what works and why shapes the approach. Participants are invited to reflect on their lives in terms of what they *already have* and what *they still need* in order to enhance their wellbeing. They are asked to consider what they would be prepared to add to their ‘in baskets’ and what they would be prepared to discard to their ‘out baskets’. These are metaphors for thinking that were used to design the software—not just in the sense of managing our lives—but more poetically, they are Murray River grasses woven into baskets that symbolize our connections to one another and to the land. River grasses remove the salinity from the soil. They symbolize a renewable resource and a source of renewing.

¹ Initially, the concept of global commons was narrowly defined as ‘assets outside the national frontiers such as oceans, space and the Antarctic’ OECD definition <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/search.asp>. Our area of concern is the extent to which resilience could be achieved through attitudinal and behavioural change fostered through participatory democracy and systemic governance that incorporates structured ‘if then considerations’ (Christakis and Bausch 2006, McIntyre-Mills and De Vries 2011) to develop clear priorities as to how to respond to contextual challenges (Ng 2011). The theme of global stewardship, democracy and governance frameworks to support wellbeing is addressed in this program of research by asking questions guided by a Design of Inquiring Systems (DIS; adapted from the work of West Churchman (1979, 1982) (McIntyre-Mills 2006a, b, c, 2010, McIntyre-Mills and De Vries 2011). The DIS refers to addressing an area of concern by ‘unfolding’ human values and ‘sweeping in’ contextual considerations and many domains of knowledge spanning logic, empiricism, idealism, the dialectic and pragmatism before making any decision.

The more we weave together strands of experience and respect the other—including the land—the more chance we have to achieve wellbeing.² This is the assumption of the project that builds on a previously funded ARC linkage project with the SA Dept. of Health and Noporendi to address complex needs by making better decisions to match services and to enhance wellbeing. It is also informed by the work of Thinker in Residence Susan Greenfield, a neuroscientist. The more we are able to ‘join up the dots’ by making more neural connections the more conscious or aware we become. The approach aims to make a contribution to the literature on ethics, kindness and a new architecture for governance and policymaking that is based on enhancing the capability of members of the public to think in terms of larger assemblages of ideas spanning many kinds of knowledge.

The plasticity of the brain is such that it shapes the environment and it in turn is shaped by the environment (Bateson 1972; Beer 1994; Greenfield 2000; Von Foerster 1995). The research addresses discourses, habits and a range of behaviours (Hogget 2010) shaping dualistic attitudes towards rights and responsibilities and the denial of responsibility for unsustainable consumerist culture.

The book makes a case for recognizing the need to contain capitalism. Our so-called containment anxiety cannot be addressed by living a schizophrenic existence where we see ourselves as benefitting at the expense of other people, the voiceless and future generations of life. Mamphela (2012) stresses the need for local conversations to weave together stories of forgiveness, resilience and hope that are based on what local people have to offer to one another, in order to develop their local communities.

Instead of assuming that people have nothing, each person should be asked to consider what they can offer. It may be a story of survival, time to help another with their household chores or some food that they are able to share with a neighbour. It may be sympathy, a greeting or encouragement. These local gifts of a material and non-material nature are the basis of building reciprocity.

Mamphela’s community project resonates with the findings of the research approach practiced at Noporendi in South Australia. It is this philosophy that underpins the approach to wellbeing. The findings also resonate with the work of Stiglitz et al. (2010) whose book: *Mismeasuring Our Lives* stresses the need to value a web of factors that together provide the basis for a life worth living. Learning to save by not wasting resources could help people to be more generous to one another, and to be more generous to themselves, by allowing them time to connect with their surroundings.

The risk to personal health and to future generations of life is ignored by politicians, but also by the majority of research projects that do not ‘join up the dots’,

² This is the assumption of the project that builds on a previously funded ARC linkage project with the SA Dept. of Health and Noporendi to address complex needs by making better decisions to match services and to enhance wellbeing. It is also informed by the work of Baroness Professor Susan Greenfield, a neuroscientist who was South Australian ‘Thinker in Residence’ as part of the Premier’s Dept. The more we are able to ‘join up the dots’ by making more neural connections the more conscious or aware we become. Human beings tend to engage in conflict to limit the size of territory.

because the terms of reference are defined too narrowly. By compartmentalizing our areas of concern to ‘the social’, the economic and the environmental, we cut up the fabric of life on which we depend. As a result, this approach to academic endeavour is complicit in placing our lives and the lives of future generations at risk.

All people need is to show leadership and to take time to build communities and to share their resources—time being one of the most valuable resources. This is difficult when people base their lives on the notion, ‘time is money’.

The commodification of people, animals and the environment is at the heart of the problem. If humanity continues to ignore the value of the environment, if we lose species to pollinate plants, if the soil degrades as a result of monoculture and diverse organic matter, then we will face a grim future. The prospect of a Dubai-type urban landscape where the elites can afford to live in luxury in digitally controlled, secure gated communities and the rest live outside in the artificial environment in the desert or wastelands is already on the horizon—unless we re-consider how *we ought to live*.

The potential of vertical cities based on ensuring carbon-neutral lifestyles (powered by solar energy and reliant on recycling resources) is modelled (in part) by the Burj Khalifa towers. But the potential needs to be extended to prefigure sustainable, vertical agriculture (rather than pleasure gardens).

It builds on the work of cosmopolitans and stresses that we have responsibilities to others not only because we are now part of one global institution—as a result of the interconnectedness of the economy and our complicity in it—but also because our actions have an impact across space and time that cannot be limited to a single generation or nation state. The multilayered and multidimensional implications for democracy and governance are the starting point for this research.

Human rights underpin all relationships within the nation state and within the wider region. This has implications for social and environmental justice. Gro Brundtland (1989) and Mary Kaldor (in Held 2005, p. 177) have stressed that human security rests on creating a peaceful world, enshrined in rights expressed in the United Nations Charter (Article 55, 56) and in the constitution of the European Union. As stressed below (see McIntyre-Mills 2011), rising living costs led to food riots and the so-called Arab Spring, culminating in the Occupy Wall Street movement. Unfortunately, the human rights commissioner could not complete her term, because lobbyists complained about her support for Palestine.³ Even though she was supported by Bishop Tutu, the wider lobby group did not support her.

The move towards re-membering and re-connecting with the land echoes the voices of Indigenous First national movements and the implications for the way we live, our relationships, our sense of identity and for new forms of governance and democracy.

The book suggests a way to decolonise our minds as a precursor to helping us to value others and the environment on which we depend.⁴

³ Interview on One Plus One, ABC News. Accessed 6/01/2013.

⁴ The ideas of Mathews (1991, 2010) and Rose Bird (1996, 2004) and Donna Haraway help to shape the agenda.

This has implications for the way in which we live and it has specific implications for democracy, governance and ethics.

According to Butler (2011):

Occupations are about bodies; bodies “being” and bodies staying and claiming space and change. Self and collective selves are the site for protest; bodies create the material happening of public protest as a means to bring forward some kind of desired transformation.

The occupation of Wall Street along with the occupation of public spaces in Europe, Turkey, Egypt and the Ukraine, for example, are attempts to transform society. Butler (2011) goes on to say:

‘This continual struggle for and claim over public space is accompanied by a struggle “over those basic ways in which we are, as bodies, supported in the world—a struggle against disenfranchisement, effacement, and abandonment” The body is political and it is guided by changing ideas and a consciousness about self and the world and “our” place in this world. The “occupation” of a limited number of spaces/bodies is changing our collective conversation about how we understand capitalism to work. “1% of the population owns 60% of the wealth...there is no sense in trying to live the American dream” (OWS 2011). The very clear realization that “the people are oppressed” became the front line of shaping the meaning of OWS.... But this lack of a “realistic message” is seen as mirroring the true nature of finance: “OWS is being portrayed as incoherent and Wall Street as coherent; there is nothing coherent about Wall Street since the firms of finance are often in conflict and have interests that are in conflict with each other (Facebook post 1 2011)....” (Žižek 2011)’ (Cobbett and Germain 2012, p. 110).

We already have regional conflicts fuelled by energy shortages and competition for the last of the non-renewables. Satellite monitoring from above seems to be more of a priority at the moment by the USA than space travel. Digital communications are already widely used, but their potential is under-tapped (as a means to sustain wellbeing and ethics) as stressed in this chapter and other research on wellbeing, representation, accountability and sustainability (McIntyre-Mills and de Vries 2011).

- How can engagement be enhanced so that the Orwellian future is avoided?
- How can designs reframe technology in ways that (a) re-claim designs from below and (b) drive policy so that they inform the final decisions?
- How can elected leaders be held to account on the basis of the lived experiences of the electorate as well as by those who are so-called discipline experts?
- How can policy decisions be made by the elected representatives in ways that balance individual and collective interests—rather than the interests of elites. The challenge is that individualism has been taken too far as a result of the power associated with capital. It is possible that the low carbon footprint could be decreed from above as necessary for human survival, but that the elites will exempt themselves from the low carbon lifestyle. This could become increasingly likely if the media (print and digital) are owned by elites. This is why it is vital that cosmopolitan citizens hold elites to account.⁵

⁵ Cosmopolitan rights and responsibilities have been stressed upon by David Held and Ulrich Beck who stress the ‘boomerang effect’ of poverty, pollution and a carbon-based economy on this

The argument builds on the liberative potential of Anna Florini's work in the *Coming New Democracy* on the way in which the Aarhus convention could be scaled up in post-national federations (see McIntyre-Mills 2011) that place human rights above citizenship rights. Nussbaum (2006) has stressed the need to consider the ethical rights of the voiceless young people, the disabled and the rights of all sentient creatures (who have the right to quality of life in which they can achieve their animal capabilities, just as human beings achieve their human animal capabilities) in her book *Beyond the Frontiers of Justice*.⁶

If national constitutions were 'imprinted with global social conditions' that 'stress the discourse of human rights' (Beck et al. 2012, p. 483), then the rights of asylum seekers, young people and sentients who are not protected as citizens could be addressed.

1.2 The Challenge of Poverty and Climate Change

The rationale for this book and its companion volume is that we face risks that could undermine quality of life and our capacity to achieve wellbeing, resilience and a sustainable future.

Droughts, floods and storm surges are regional concerns that affect human security. Many of these risks are the result of climate change. The challenge is to address ways to balance social, economic and environmental rights and responsibilities to this generation and the next. The research addresses the ethical challenge to think about the policy consequences for the majority in this generation and the next whose life chances are sacrificed by a sociopolitical system (and associated culture) that no longer supports a sustainable future.

The research creates, tests and discusses a stewardship process to enable a greater understanding of what Australians value, why and how it relates to their perceived sense of wellbeing and resilience to natural weather events associated with climate change.

The engagement process has the potential to manage consumption and to protect biodiversity, thereby promoting cultural transformation towards stewardship and an appreciation of our rights and our responsibilities to current and future generations.

The research tries to answer the question: What water, energy and food resources (amongst others) are consumed, why and how? An exploration of the perceived implications for wellbeing, resilience and the stewardship of biospheres are dis-

generation of life and the next. Sir Nicholas Stern has stressed that we need to make changes now to reframing economics.

⁶ Hybridity and the potential of digital futures (Elliot 2010; Fukuyama 2002) pose some dangers. Policymakers also need to consider the ethical issues associated with human-machine and human-animal engineering (Greenfield 2003, 2008; Haraway 1991, 1992, 2010) as human beings become more reliant on biotechnology. Even more importantly, the implications for hybridisation would need to be addressed internationally as they impact human and environmental rights.

cussed. The research aims to enable policy to address the consequences in the short, medium and long term.

Climate change is a significant problem in Australia country. There is little doubt that accelerated climate change will adversely affect wellbeing and sustainability in Australia (Flannery 2005; Pretty 2013; Stiglitz et al. 2010)—particularly if we continue to consume at current rates (Davies and World Institute 2008)—resulting in devastation and profound implications for the life chances of many species. The impact of climate change has been underestimated (Lovelock 2009; Rockström et al. 2009) and local solutions have been overlooked. Aboriginal cultures teach us about stewardship and relationships with the land, but these relationships have been lost by many in non-Aboriginal cultures. As Major Sumner, a Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal elder from the periodically drought-ravaged lower Murray River in South Australia and custodian of the river stresses, *we are the land and the land is us*. Re-establishing relationships with the land is at the heart of effective ecosystem management (see <http://www.mdba.gov.au/what-we-do/working-with-others/aboriginal-communities/ringbalin>).

There is evidence that many non-Aboriginal people desire more environmentally sustainable lives, but little is known about the influences on choices around land, water and food that affect the environment. Government response to human wellbeing is often based on economic development, which inadvertently increases consumerism, resulting in greater environmental degradation.

We know that environmental sustainability and human wellbeing are intimately linked, but there is little knowledge about how this linkage can be built upon to improve both areas. Attempts to address climate change are often based on policy information that is not grounded in citizen experiences and fails to address what we do know about human behaviour or choices. How can we increase engagement in the environment that balances individual and collective wellbeing and simultaneously protects the environment when we know little about the vital nature of these connections?

Existential risk has implications for representation, accountability and sustainability. Consumption is very unequal and the gaps between rich and poor become wider and wider. The root cause of consumption is power without responsibility—so whoever comes to power needs to be held to account through mechanisms to main social, economic and environmental indicators that secure the ‘wellbeing stocks’ for the future.

The decisions taken at the local level on how we live have an impact on the way others live. So when personal decisions are made on what food, energy or water resources to use, why and how, it has public implications for others as well as the environment.

Thus, the research enables the development of a personal decision tree in response to basic scenarios linked with a scorecard to manage social, economic and environmental decisions. Wicked problems have many interrelated variables with diverse value dimensions. Developing responses to wicked problems involves enhancing our capability to work across disciplines and with many diverse interest groups. We will need to co-create shared narratives that recognize the areas of overlap.

Ethically, we will need to consider the consequences of our decisions for ourselves, others and the environment in this generation and the next. Sustainable futures rest on careful stewardship of the appropriate management of cultural ecosystems that support our wellbeing. Thus, economics needs to be reframed and supported by new forms of monitory democracy and governance.

This book makes the case that decisions need to be informed by connecting many kinds of knowledge and through appreciation of many ways of knowing. If people make conceptual connections through thinking through scenarios it could enable those of us who are not physicists to think about the big picture.

Our wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of the planet. Our home or sense of place is thus both local and global. The following definition of wellbeing is developed on the basis of research firstly in the Northern Territory with Aboriginal Australians and then in South Australia in the southern region of Adelaide on complex needs. The relevance of this definition is that the Northern Territory and South Australia are, respectively, one of the hottest and driest parts of Australia and thus most affected by climate change. Furthermore, sustainability thinking is now more relevant than ever for planetary wellbeing.

Most importantly it is relevant, because it is likely that the sorts of challenges faced by the poorest on the planet—are the sorts of conditions that humanity as a whole will face in the future—if we continue our addiction to consumption of resources. The Max Neef Human Sustainability Index (1991) *of being, having doing and interacting* shapes the design and analysis of the research and illustrates the need to be the change through rethinking the way in which we place human beings above our responsibility for the land. Our sense of identity as citizens of nation states needs to be transformed to take into account the needs of our neighbours and future generations of life.

This research explores the narratives on wellbeing and stories about how we ought to live, in order to develop a bridge between the thinking underpinning cosmopolitan ethics to the practice that needs to underpin cosmopolitan governance. The idea is to find ways to support greater awareness and willingness to live ethically and elegantly using cultural designs for living that support quality of life. The research spans the five core domains that have emerged from the research on:

- Home safety (personal safety—social indicators and physical indicators, physical safety of the home and environs)
- Physical and mental health (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).
- Sense of purpose (indicators of satisfaction with employment).
- Connection/belonging to healthy community and healthy environment (people and land or place), and that this requires time to connect with others, including sentient beings.
- Self-respect and confidence to speak out. These are seen as overlapping needs which need to be addressed (McIntyre-Mills and De Vries 2008, p. 307).⁷

⁷ This is currently under threat. The management of so-called introduced species', such as a fox, rabbit or cane toads (Taylor, 2013:113) needs to be conducted along humane lines if we are to

Empirical data on more than 300 pathways have been collected and analysed based on the themes that are indicative of wellbeing (<https://wellbeing.csem.flinders.edu.au/>).

The ex-head of the World Bank, Stiglitz (2010), along with his colleagues has adopted similar ideas based on his experiences in response to an invitation from Sarkozy to address the poverty, and global financial issues facing Europe. It recognizes the convergent social, economic and environmental challenges and the need to develop ‘wellbeing stocks’.

Interestingly, the work of Stiglitz et al. (2011, p. 15) uses a multidimensional measure of wellbeing spanning:

1. Material living standards (income, consumption and wealth), 2. Health, 3. Education,
4. Personal activities including work, 5. Political voice and governance, 6. Social connections and relationships, 7. Environment (present and future conditions), 8. Insecurity, of an economy as well as a physical nature.

According to Stiglitz et al. (2010), the essence of the commission’s findings is that wealth needs to include stocks for the future. The decisions taken at the local level on how we live have an impact on the way others live. So when personal decisions are made to use food, energy or water resources, it has public implications for others as well as the environment. Thus, the research enables the development of a personal scorecard to manage social, economic and environmental decisions. The cumulative, de-identified data provide the basis for making evidence-based policy to enable sustainable living.

1.3 Building Wellbeing Stocks for Future Generations of Life

The concept ‘Wall Street’ is used to symbolise economic rationalism and ‘wellbeing’ to symbolise a reframed approach to ‘being interconnected’ and through treading lightly. The software provides a way to enable people to explore the question, how should we live and what constitutes wellbeing? Participants are invited to consider what have, they need, what their turning points are for the better or the worse and what the barriers are. Services that help them meet their needs are detailed as well. The software updates as it is used.

The IPPC formula suggests that the privileged lives of some could lead to existential risk for people and the planet. The research responds to the possible

evolve into a more compassionate society. People want to spend more time exercising, working in gardens, walking, saving money through living simply and slowly, but many who strive for middle and upper middle class lives work long hours and cannot afford to take time out of work. The cost to their own physical and mental health, the environment and future generations is the subject of this book. The ‘wounding of the spirit’ (Ramphele 2012) is central as people strive to have more material resources, rather than being fully human through their relationships with others and the environment. The glossy life of luxury at the expense of the environment is unsustainable.

existential risks⁸ (Bostrom 2011) posed by denial. This has implications for the way we live and the need to change our way of life through living sustainably.

Representation, accountability and sustainability challenges need to be met through addressing consumption choices that are currently very unequal. The gaps between rich and poor become wider and wider.

1.3.1 Addressing Complicity Through Subsidiarity, Sustainable Governance and Regionalism

To sum up, the research explores people's perceptions of what works why and how, but also strives to assess whether the process of engagement enables them to move from denial towards making changes towards a more sustainable future. The research also explores the viability of multilevel and multiagency approaches to support social and environmental justice.⁹

No community can be expected to transform from a high-carbon lifestyle (or aspiring to this lifestyle) without feeling part of the design process and owning the decisions as to how resources should be used.¹⁰

⁸ Cultural values transformation rests on behavioural change prompted by laws. Just as laws for wearing seat belts and laws preventing smoking in public places have influenced behaviour and achieved public health outcomes, laws to fine people for parking in disabled parking bays raises awareness and leads to values transformation. Laws and rules can lead to values transformation as people learn to conform to laws that will uphold rights and responsibilities. Regional scorecards can be developed that respond to social, economic and environmental needs and to the rankings people achieve along a continuum from business as usual to small changes to living in ways that support wellbeing now and in the future. Sustainability cannot be allowed to fall under the limitations of competitive nation states. The sovereign nation state has treated the planet as zero sum—when in fact the notion of externalities is quite wrong. Kantian personal ethics, public ethics (interstate) and cosmopolitan ethics need to be applied in overlapping regions that override zero-sum approaches.

⁹ A sustainable local community is determined by a sustainable region in which food, energy and water supplies are considered as major determinants for wellbeing. Rights to consume need to be balanced by responsibility to consume in ways that impact the life chances of others (including future generations of life). Thus, the rule of law needs to be post national and global supported by a covenant to protect all life. This needs to be secured by overlapping federations of biospheres buttressed in law and supported by a judicial system. Hence, the axiom for expanding pragmatism—human beings the can be free and diverse to the extent that our freedom and diversity do not undermine the rights of others or future generations of life.

¹⁰ The root cause of consumption is power without responsibility—so whoever comes to power needs to be held to account through mechanisms to develop social, economic and environmental indicators that secure the wellbeing stocks for the future. This research emphasizes the creation of multiple paths to form webs to wellbeing through critical, systemic engagement to ensure that local people get to know about local resources (that are listed in directories created by both service users and providers) and that their identity is protected. They are able to see the typical scenarios of what people have, need, are prepared to add or discard from their lives and what they think are turning points for the better and worse.

1.3.2 Wellbeing and Relationships Underpin Systemic Approaches to Economics

The ability to make and re-make connections in the brain—neurogenesis—has been raised by Baroness Professor Susan Greenfield (2000, 2008). Thinking in small compartments and stress stunts creativity.¹¹ But more importantly, it could leave us disadvantaged in the evolutionary stakes. This book responds to the research by Greenfield that stresses the plasticity of the human brain and its ability to respond systemically and creatively to challenges. The *will to change* is the stumbling block.

Wellbeing requires seeing ourselves as one of many species in biospheres. This has implications for identity, ethics and governance. Nation states face social, economic and environmental challenges. Protecting the global commons at the local and regional level is the focus of an ongoing research program in public policy and public administration, which has implications for education and the transformation of organizations spanning the state, market and nongovernment. The fact that this planet is overpopulated and that the minority live at the expense of the minority is the elephant in the room. The fact that the planet's population is mostly located in urban areas requires urgent cultural transformation to address food security.

Cities need to become green and green areas should not be urbanized. Innovative buildings could become food producers. Rooftops and walls could be terraces for food.

Mitigation policies that address rights and responsibilities in all areas of life need to help us limit overconsumption at the personal, local, state, national and international level whilst adaption politics need to enable us to deal with the consequences of overconsumptions through enabling them to consider the implications of different scenarios.

The book makes the case that to address existential risk we need to (a) rethink our values and our relationships with others and the environment and (b) reframe the state, market and civil society by extending the social contract to include biospheres, so that food security for current and future generations can be protected. This requires identifying with and co-operating with others, rather than merely competing with others, based on the zero-sum/us-them approach. It makes a case

¹¹ We need to be mindful of Arthur Koestler's comment (1978) that we have created a sick civilization. Koestler (1967) developed an argument in 'Ghost in the Machine', that human evolution of the brain has retained the basic drives which override reason. So emotion and desire for power can lead to irrational decisions. '...evolution superimposed a new superior structure onto an old one, with purely overlapping functions, and without providing the new with a clear-cut, hierarchic control over the old- thus inviting confusion and conflict.... The limbic system may be compared to a primitive television screen which combines, and often confuses, projections from the internal, visceral environment with the external environment...But Nature in her frugality did not discard the old screen. Since it seemed adequate for smelling, tasting and feeling what is going on inside the body, she has kept the filaments in the tube of the old screen glowing night and day...' (Koestler 1967, p. 283).

Transformation from Wall Street to Wellbeing
Joining Up the Dots Through Participatory Democracy
and Governance to Mitigate the Causes and Adapt to
the Effects of Climate Change

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