



Special Issue: Well-Being and Public Policy

This special issue of Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly contains papers from a workshop on well-being and public policy held at the University of Manchester in September of 2012. The workshop was inspired in part by a 2010 speech by British Prime Minister David Cameron, who argued that the UK government must aim to measure the progress of the nation “not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving; not just by our standard of living, but by our quality of life.” As Sam Wren-Lewis points out in his contribution, the trend toward so-called subjective measures of well-being – which is not unique to the UK – might suggest that the use of such measures for policy purposes is less problematic than it really is. The five papers in this issue explore from different perspectives the challenges and opportunities, advantages and disadvantages, associated with the use of such measures. As the papers illustrate, the debate about the philosophy and public policy of well-being, far from being settled, has only just begun.

Erik Angner, Guest Editor

Well-being as a Primary Good: Toward Legitimate Well-being Policy

How can the use of well-being research to determine public policy be justified?

Sam Wren-Lewis 2

Well-being and Prudential Value

There is a distinction between well-being - what someone has if her life is going well - and prudential value - the value something has if it is 'good for' someone and contributes to making her life go well.

Tim E. Taylor 10

Happy Now? Well-being and Cultural Policy

While much of the debate in policy circles has been on the measurement of well-being, there have been as yet relatively few attempts to apply a well-being lens to specific policy areas. One partial exception has been cultural policy.

Kate Oakley, Dave O'Brien, David Lee 18

The Applicability of the Self-fulfillment Account of Welfare to Nonhuman Animals, Babies, and Mentally Disabled Humans

The latest and arguably most promising philosophical account of welfare is Daniel Haybron's self-fulfillment account. But is it applicable to all sentient beings?

Tatjana Visak and Jonathan Balcombe..... 27

On Capability and the Good Life: Theoretical Debates and their Practical Implications

Amartya Sen's capability perspective does not endorse any particular substantive view of the good life, but it is compatible with a variety of approaches to evaluation.

Mozaffar Qizilbash 35