

Wellbeing and the four qualities of life

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1. Introduction

In his seminal *The Four Qualities of Life: Ordering Concepts and Measures of the Good Life*, Ruut Veenhoven (2000) provides a conceptual matrix that helps organise concepts, theories and measures related to the good life. Then as now, terms like wellbeing, quality of life, happiness, and the good life are used and understood in a variety of ways across and even within academic disciplines. Veenhoven's (2000) conceptual matrix—Four Qualities of Life—is revisited here in order to assess its suitability for various purposes and to attempt to build on it to better suit the purposes of policy makers and especially western philosophers of wellbeing.

It is fitting that the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Happiness Studies* led with Veenhoven's (2000) Four Qualities of Life. The *Journal of Happiness Studies* was set up to encourage more scholarly work on happiness and wellbeing, especially work that was multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature.¹ Four Qualities of Life ambitiously drew on quality-of-life-related research from an impressively wide range of disciplines, and, in so doing, set the scene for years of productive cross-pollination between many disciplines with an interest in happiness and wellbeing. Providing an example of productive interdisciplinary research was one thing, but Four Qualities of Life also helped clear up myriad confusions and provide a way for scholars from different disciplines and using different methods and measures to talk *to* each other rather than *past* each other.

In addition to the importance of Four Qualities of Life, Veenhoven's work with the *Journal of Happiness Studies* and the *World Database of Happiness*, encouraged and enabled a huge amount of research on happiness, including important interdisciplinary research. Of course, his teaching, supervision of research students, and voluminous other research outputs all also count as considerable contributions in this regard.

In this chapter, Veenhoven's Four Qualities of Life is assessed for its effectiveness for policy makers and for its ability to capture the distinctions western philosophers of wellbeing tend to think are conceptually important. In the next section, Veenhoven's matrix is reproduced and explained, including pointing out why it is useful and how it might have been more impactful on public policy. Section 3 revisits Veenhoven's application of his matrix to some philosophers and their views. Section 4 consists in an analysis of whether and how the most important theories and distinctions of western philosophy of wellbeing are captured by the matrix. To help further clarify the approach of western philosophy, Section 5 presents a novel matrix that attempts to borrow Veenhoven's clarity of presentation and one of his key distinctions while also more precisely capturing the distinctions that matter to western philosophers of wellbeing.

2. Veenhoven's matrix: Four Qualities of Life

Veenhoven (2000) begins *Four Qualities of Life* by highlighting the disunity of happiness, quality of life, and wellbeing terminology. Even then there were myriad terms and even more ways in which

¹ For more details, see: <https://www.springer.com/journal/10902>.

those terms were understood. Veenhoven's (2000, p. 1) intervention was designed to combat the natural tendency of the connotations of these terms within disparate disciplines to "become more specific and manifold". The different understandings occurred and still occur at many levels and within and between academic disciplines. For example, Veenhoven (2000, p. 2) laments the fact that philosophers have not decided on an ultimate definition of quality of life, while empirical happiness scholars tend to measure things idiosyncratically and then compare "apples and pears" in an attempt to create an overall measure of quality of life. In the end, Veenhoven (2000) is more comfortable with there being several qualities of life, with only one of those qualities (subjective appreciation of life) possibly being suitable as an overall measure of quality of life.

Veenhoven (2000, pp. 4-5) uses two important distinctions to create his matrix and group the myriad potential qualities of life into what he dubs the Four Qualities of Life: Life chances versus life results and outer qualities versus inner qualities.

Veenhoven (2000, p. 4) characterises the distinction between life chances and life results as "the difference between potentiality and actuality" or "[o]pportunities and outcomes". Providing the example of good nutrition being required for good health, Veenhoven (2000, p.4) suggests that work in public health seems highly conscious of this chances-results distinction. Indeed, much of it seems to investigate the relationship between various possible determinants of health and health itself (e.g., Marmot & Wilkinson, 2005).

But not every discipline seems to distinguish between chances and results so clearly. Veenhoven (2000, p. 5) identifies social policy as an area that sometimes uses result terms like wellbeing to represent chances. The new politics of wellbeing, as Bok (2010) would call it, also appears to group opportunities and outcomes together. Several nations, including New Zealand², are adapting the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Framework for Measuring Wellbeing and Progress (Durand, 2015; OECD, 2015). The OECD framework (Durand, 2015, p. 5) primarily distinguishes between stocks and flows; the economic, natural, human and social capitals that create the flows of individual wellbeing, which are further divided into "material conditions" and "quality of life". Within the quality of life grouping, the OECD framework includes "education and skills", "environmental quality", and "health status" alongside "subjective wellbeing" (Durand, 2015, p. 5). In contrast, Veenhoven's distinction between chances and results would classify "education and skills", "environmental quality", and "health status" as chances and "subjective wellbeing" as a kind of result. Essentially, Veenhoven's matrix usefully points out that better health, education, and environmental conditions provide individuals with a better chance of achieving wellbeing. Improvement in these internal and external states of affairs seems to provide opportunities for individuals to better appreciate their own lives and contribute to society. Of course, focussing on Veenhoven's (2000) chances versus results distinction also highlights instances in which good results are achieved without good chances and vice versa.

The other main distinction in Veenhoven's (2000) matrix is between outer qualities and inner qualities. Drawing on Lane (1994) and Musschenga (1994), Veenhoven (2000, p. 5) sees the distinction as being between a person and their environment, with the latter understood broadly so as to include everything outside of the person that is relevant to the person's quality of life. Again, Veenhoven (2000, p. 5) points out that work in public health, but not social policy, tends to get this distinction right. In public health, outer qualities like environmental health hazards are often investigated for their effects on health. For example, Brunekreef and Holgate (2002) examine the connection between air pollution (an outer quality) and health (an inner quality). Yet, the same OECD framework for measuring wellbeing mentioned above groups "environmental quality" and

² For more details, see: <https://treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework>.

“health status” together under the banner of “quality of life” (Durand, 2015, p. 5). Essentially, Veenhoven’s (2000) framework draws attention to the difference between qualities of life that lie outside of the person in question and qualities that lie inside that person. It also has the useful effect of highlighting when outer qualities of life are and are not correlated with inner qualities of life.

Veenhoven combines these two distinctions to create a matrix with four distinct qualities of life. The matrix is recreated in Figure 1. Each quality is discussed in turn.

| | Outer qualities | Inner qualities |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Life chances | Livability of environment | Life-ability of the person |
| Life results | Utility of life | Appreciation of life |

Figure 1: A recreation of Veenhoven’s Four Qualities of Life, a matrix of qualities of life (from Veenhoven, 2000, p. 6)

According to Veenhoven (2000, p. 6), livability of environment captures “good living conditions”. I would understand good living conditions to mean conditions conducive to wellbeing, but Veenhoven (2000, p. 6) claims ecologists and sociologists understand the terms quality of life and wellbeing as meaning livability of the environment. It makes sense for ecologists to talk about the livability of ecosystems for particular organisms as an outer quality of life for specific organisms, but it makes much less sense for the wellbeing of ecosystems to be an outer quality of life for that ecosystem. Perhaps livability makes the most sense when the particular target of interest is clearly identified and then everything outside of that target that affects the target’s chances of good quality-of-life results is viewed as an outer quality. For example, if humans are the target of interest, then livability of the environment should mean the things outside of humans (including culture, political institutions, air quality, and so on) that affect humans’ chances of living a good life.

The other life chances quadrant in Veenhoven’s matrix (2000, p. 6) is dubbed the life-ability of the person. For Veenhoven (2000, p. 6), a person’s life-ability is the inner qualities they have, such as strength of body and mind, that help them achieve good life results. Veenhoven (2000, p. 6) likens this to Sen’s capabilities, but Sen’s capabilities approach really combines livability of environment with life-ability of the person in a specific way. Sen (1992, p. 311) explains that he thinks “quality of life [can] be assessed in terms of the capability to achieve valuable functionings”, where functionings are described as “doings and beings”. This may sound like life-ability so far, but Sen (1992, p. 33) is especially concerned with capabilities as the *substantive* (not merely formal) abilities to do and be various valuable things, hence his claim that “[t]he capability of a person depends on a variety of factors, including personal characteristics and social arrangements.” Sen (1992, pp. 33-35) is especially concerned with the kinds of freedoms that are clearly outer qualities on Veenhoven’s matrix, such the particular sets of social, political, and economic factors that enable people to enact any inner capabilities they may have. So, Sen’s capabilities are not a good example of the life-ability of a person, but we could say that a person’s *inner capabilities* are a way to understand the life-ability of a person – the person’s inner qualities that affect their chances of achieving a quality life.

Moving on, Veenhoven (2000, p. 7) labels the outer qualities of lives that are results as utility of life. It is not uncommon to believe that one of the plausible qualities of life consists in what comes of the

life in question—what use did the life have for something outside of itself? Certainly if one believes that there is a particular purpose *for* human life, perhaps ordained by a higher power, and that purpose concerned results outside of us, then producing certain kinds of results can be seen as an important part of living the good life. Secular views about contributing positively to society can also be seen in a similar way. Joshanloo and Weijers (2019, p. 11) recently found cross-cultural evidence for “existential relatedness[—]the characteristic of being meaningfully interconnected with things other than oneself”. Existential relatedness seems to capture both secular and spiritual or religious views about producing some positive results as a quality of life. Veenhoven (2000, p. 7) is careful to clarify that, as an outer quality of life, the utility that arises from the life doesn’t need to be known by the person whose life is in question.

The final quadrant of Veenhoven’s (2000, p. 7) matrix covers the coincidence of life results and inner qualities, and is labelled “appreciation of life”. Veenhoven (2000, p. 7) describes this quality of life as being “in the eye of the beholder” and stresses the subjective nature of this quality of life. Veenhoven gives examples of appreciation of life, including subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction and happiness, which are variously known as concepts, theories, and measures related to the good life and especially our inner experience of or judgment about our lives.

A key strength of Veenhoven’s (2000) Four Qualities of Life matrix is the emphasis it places on the two important distinctions, the combination of which leads to the four distinct qualities of life. Each of the quadrants represents aspects of lives that many people care about, and some other understandings of quality of life or wellbeing seem to conflate these distinct qualities. The distinctions between internal and external chances and internal and external results also helps illuminate the kinds of qualities of life that different groups might have more or less direct influence over. For example, policy makers might find it hard to directly affect someone’s subjective appreciation of life, but they may have considerable control over certain aspects of the person’s outer life chances by manipulating the livability of their environment. Similarly, an individual that can’t easily relocate might have much less control over many aspects of the livability of their environment compared to their control over the utility of their life.

Veenhoven’s (2000) Four Qualities of Life matrix has proven highly influential in the literature on quality of life; it is still discussed regularly, for example, to disambiguate qualities of life and happiness (e.g., Ludwigs et al., 2019). But perhaps it could have been even more impactful. The key distinctions in the matrix and Veenhoven’s (2000, p. 33) argument that only subjective appreciation of life can plausibly be used to assess total or holistic quality of life (or wellbeing) seem not to have been considered in the majority of models of wellbeing used by governments and policymakers (as discussed above). Furthermore, despite discussing how philosophical approaches to wellbeing fit with his matrix, Veenhoven’s (2000) Four Qualities of Life has not received a great deal of interest from philosophers working on wellbeing. The public policy issue is discussed briefly below before turning in a more substantive way to the philosophical issue for the remainder of the chapter.

Although in his discussion of the Four Qualities of Life matrix Veenhoven (2000) made it clear that the two life chances quadrants were likely to affect the two life results quadrants, and that the appreciation of life quadrant was the best overall measure of wellbeing, some readers may not have viewed the matrix as a model of wellbeing. Veenhoven might have discussed his two important distinctions, and then the interrelationships between the resulting quadrants, and then created a process-type model instead of a matrix of qualities of life. The resulting model may have made it more obvious to readers how the quadrants could influence each other and which quadrants were more important to individuals or to policy makers. For example, Figure 2 attempts to capture what a model of wellbeing for policy makers based on Veenhoven’s (2000) Four Qualities of Life matrix might look like.

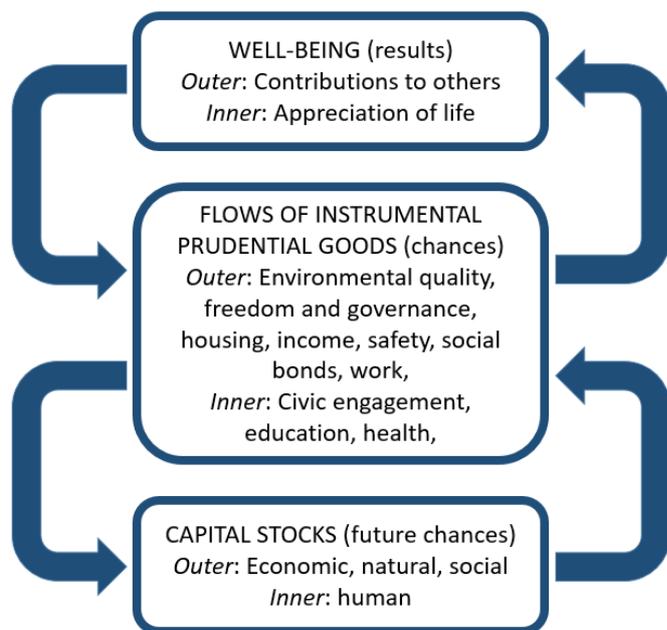


Figure 2: A policy-oriented wellbeing model of Veenhoven's (2000) Four Qualities of Life

Instrumental prudential goods are the things that make life go better for the one living it, but only through affecting some intrinsic prudential good—something that directly contributes to or is a part of wellbeing (Weijers & Mukherjee, 2016). The arrows represent the ability for one of the groups to affect the other groups or variables. The model shows that capital stocks affect the flows of instrumental prudential goods and that those flows affect wellbeing. The model also shows the potential for virtuous and vicious cycles, as changes in wellbeing can have flow on effects for flows of instrumental prudential goods. For example, happier people tend to be healthier (Howell et al., 2007). Changes in the flows can also affect the capitals, such as when higher flows of education lead to higher human capital stocks.

Presumably different versions of the model in Figure 2 could be more or less specific and more or less faithful to Veenhoven's (2000) Four Qualities of Life matrix. For example, contributions to others (utility of life) could be removed on the assumption that contributing the appropriate amount to others relative to one's preferences affects one's subjective appreciation of life. Another possibility would be to highlight the interrelationships and perhaps even the relative weights of the interrelationships between the flows of instrumental prudential goods.

3. Veenhoven's application of his matrix to western philosophical approaches to wellbeing

Veenhoven (2000) applies his Four Qualities of Life matrix to a few western philosophical views of wellbeing and quality of life. I have already discussed Veenhoven's mention of Sen's capabilities approach above. I will discuss some of his other mentions of how the views of western philosophers fit into his matrix directly below before discussing some of the features of the matrix that don't fit perfectly with the conceptual norms in western philosophy of wellbeing.

Veenhoven (2000, pp. 12-13) mentions Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia in relation to the livability quadrant of his matrix because Aristotle stressed that living the good life was an activity. Veenhoven (2000, pp. 12-13) discusses this as a kind of development of inner capabilities, which is

certainly an interest of Aristotle's. Aristotle thought that the good life for the one living it consists in developing and expressing the virtues that best represented the natural kind of being that the subject is (Crisp, 2014). Despite the moralistic connotation of "virtues", Aristotle viewed virtues as character traits—dispositions to act well in a wide variety of contexts (Crisp, 2014). Perhaps not surprisingly for a philosopher, Aristotle viewed intellectual virtues and philosophising as the most prudentially valuable traits and activity (Roche, 2019). Perhaps most importantly, and somewhat confoundingly for Veenhoven's (2000) matrix, Aristotle viewed the activities of developing and expressing the appropriate virtues as both a cause of living the good life and a result because he is clear that pleasure or subjective wellbeing are not the goals of virtuous activity (Crisp, 2014). Rather, virtuous activity is both the method and the goal or *telos* of human activity (Crisp, 2014).

Veenhoven (2000, p. 13) also mentions John Stuart Mill and his famous claim: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides." (Mill, 1861, p. 9). Veenhoven (2000, p. 13) uses Mill's claim while explaining different kinds of utility of life—the various ways in which a life can be high quality because of what comes from it. Veenhoven uses Mill's famous point as an example of how some people judge the quality of a life at least partly based on its moral or aesthetic value. This use of Mill's quote may not be appropriate. Mill uses this famous claim to help explain the difference in prudential value between lower (animalistic/base) pleasures and higher (human-only/intellectual) pleasures, such as the pleasure of philosophising (Mill, 1861). Mill is essentially pointing out that higher pleasures are more valuable because those with experience of both prefer higher pleasures to lower pleasures, as shown by our preference to be the consummate philosopher even if his life lacked many of the lower pleasures. There is some debate about whether Mill was a secret virtue ethicist like Aristotle or a hedonist like his God father and tutor Jeremy Bentham (e.g., Nussbaum, 2008, p. S85), but either way Mill's view of wellbeing (as opposed to his Utilitarian view of moral theory) would place him squarely on the inner qualities side of Veenhoven's (2000) matrix.

On much surer footing, Veenhoven (2000, p. 15) places Bentham and his hedonic calculus in the appreciation of life quadrant of the matrix. Without a doubt, Bentham (1789) thought all and only pleasures (defined broadly to include feelings of satisfaction, joy, and so on) made life go well for the one living it (and the opposite for pains). For Bentham, the inner results of pleasure and pain were the only qualities of life that ultimately matter. Just to be clear, it should be noted that Bentham was much more interested in quantities of pleasure and pain than qualities generally (Weijers, 2011).

4. Veenhoven's matrix and western philosophical approaches to wellbeing

Moving on from the views of specific philosophers, modern western philosophy of wellbeing tends to focus on three main groups of theories and, less explicitly, a few important distinctions that don't perfectly map onto Veenhoven's (2000) distinctions between chances and results and inner and outer qualities. In this section, Veenhoven's (2000) matrix is applied to the three main groups of western philosophical theories of wellbeing. Then the key distinctions in the field and the extent to which Veenhoven's (2000) matrix accommodates them is discussed.

Mainly following Derek Parfit (1984), most modern western philosophers of wellbeing think there are three main competing groups of theories of wellbeing: hedonistic theories, desire-satisfaction theories, and objective list theories (Crisp, 2017; Weijers, 2020).

Most hedonistic theories of wellbeing essentially claim that all and only pleasures directly make a life go better for the one living it and all and only pains do the opposite (Weijers, 2011). Different versions of hedonism about wellbeing define pleasure differently, or value some kinds of pleasure more than others (as we saw earlier with Mill). But these differences are not enough for any hedonistic theory of wellbeing to escape from Veenhoven's (2000, pp. 7, 14-15) appreciation of life quadrant because they are all inner qualities that result from a combination of inner and outer chances.

As mentioned above, Veenhoven (2000, p. 7) explains that the appreciation of life quadrant is "subjective", in the sense of being "in the eye of the beholder". This use of "subjective" risks conflating two concepts: subjective and internal. Qualities that are internal to a person include many features, but only those that are valuable based on the subject's specific beliefs or preferences are considered subjective. Subjective is usefully understood in contradistinction to objective theories of wellbeing, which effectively tell subjects what ultimately makes their lives go well for them, and doesn't blink if the subjects claim not to agree with the theory. Most hedonistic theories of wellbeing are objective in this sense—they claim that all and pleasure ultimately makes lives go better for everyone *regardless* of whether some people do not believe pleasure is intrinsically prudentially valuable or would prefer a non-pleasure good over pleasure. So, pleasure and pain are inner qualities, but they are not subjective qualities on most western philosophical interpretations of subjective.

The second main group of western philosophical theories of wellbeing is made up of the desire-satisfaction (or desire fulfilment) theories (Heathwood, 2016). These theories share a focus on the idea that getting what you want is the only thing that ultimately makes a life go better for the person living it. The main variations within the group are based on which desires count. Simple Unrestricted Desire Satisfaction Theory lets all desires count, while a range of Restricted Desire Satisfaction Theories only let some desires count, such as just the deeply held ones or the ones based on adequate knowledge of the relevant facts (Lukas, 2010).

Desire satisfaction theories will in most cases use the whole of Veenhoven's (2000) matrix in the sense that most people will desire various inner and outer life chances and results. Unfortunately, the nature of desire satisfaction theories means that the relations Veenhoven (2000) discusses between the quadrants of the matrix don't fully explain where the prudential value is supposed to come from according to desire satisfaction theories. For desire satisfaction theorists, it is the perfect coincidence of a desire with an inner or outer state of affairs that generates intrinsic prudential value. Desires are subjective inner qualities, but they are not really viewed as results (even though they are clearly a product of our environment and previous experiences). Rather, desires are a vital input into the all-important desire satisfaction process. The other input is the satisfaction, which really means the inner or outer state matching the desire. For example, if I desire for another person to love me, my life goes better for me if they do love me and worse if they don't. This effect on my wellbeing occurs even if I have no idea whether the person loves me. This feature of desire satisfaction theories—that one's *experience* of the desire being satisfied is not directly relevant—is very important because it is widely thought that it allows these theories to avoid the central problems with hedonistic theories of wellbeing (e.g., Kagan, 1998, p. 36). An implication of the experience of the desire being satisfied not being directly relevant is that the subjective measures of satisfaction used by psychologists and mentioned by Veenhoven (2000, pp. 30-31) fail to get directly at the right inner quality (the desire). Just to be clear, the pleasantness of pleasure only makes a life better for the one living it, according to desire satisfaction theories, if the person desires that pleasure. So, the inner result of positive affect is not necessarily a quality of life on this view.

This brings us to the final group of theories of wellbeing for western philosophers: Objective list theories. Objective list theories of wellbeing are a list in the sense that each one comprises of a number of identified intrinsic prudential goods – things that directly contribute to a person’s wellbeing. Many lists are short, including perhaps just friendship, knowledge, and pleasure, while others have ten or more items, such as Nussbaum’s (1995) list of ten core human capabilities (which includes health, pleasure, freedom, and connection with nature). When Veenhoven’s (2000) Four Qualities of Life is applied to these theories as a group, again the whole matrix is needed. There is very little agreement about which goods constitute wellbeing (as opposed to merely being instrumentally good by causing some intrinsic prudential good to come about), but bringing about good in the world (utility of life), social connections with others (livability of environment), practical wisdom (life-ability of the person), and enjoyment (appreciation of life) are all plausible candidates. The upshot of this is that Veenhoven’s matrix could help reveal key differences between rival objective list theories, but may suggest some qualities of life that specific objective list theories would not see as important.

The distinction between subjective and objective theories of wellbeing becomes even more salient with the introduction of this group of theories. Recall that subjective theories, like desire satisfaction theories, essentially allow each person to decide what makes their lives go better for them by directing their desire to those things. Objective list theories usually don’t allow for so much freedom. Like hedonistic theories of wellbeing, objective list theories state the constituents of the good life and say to everyone: these are the things that “are good or bad for us, whether or not we want to have the good things, or to avoid the bad things” (Parfit, 1984, p. 493). But this means that someone could have the inner result of being highly appreciative of their life but not be deemed to be living the good life by various objective list theories of wellbeing because those theories don’t have any or the relevant inner results on their list.

Without rehashing all of the history of the western philosophical debate about wellbeing, suffice it to say that the subjective-objective distinction is of utmost importance. To that end, because Veenhoven’s (2000) matrix does not use the subjective-objective distinction as one of its two main distinctions, it does not helpfully differentiate between groups of views that are considered opposite by western philosophers. Veenhoven’s matrix does capture the difference between inner and outer, but the inputs to the most subjective group of theories spans that distinction in pretty much the same way that the most objective group of theories spans it. Recall also that subjective in the sense that most western philosophers of wellbeing are using it is just a small part of the quadrant dubbed appreciation of life and that the goods that philosophers view as objective can be placed in any of the quadrants, including being completely placed in the appreciation of life quadrant (e.g., hedonism).

Another issue for western philosophers of wellbeing with Veenhoven’s (2000) Four Qualities of Life stems from the purpose of the matrix. Veenhoven’s (2000, p. 1) goal was to provide a way to disambiguate and understand the relations between several key terms used by scholars from a diverse range of disciplines, including quality of life and wellbeing. As such, his matrix was conceptually broad, broad enough to capture the myriad uses of quality of life that apply to both the causes and constituents of wellbeing. The resulting broadness of the matrix’s scope means that philosophers (who tend to view only one or a very few things as constituting wellbeing) view some parts of quadrants, and perhaps even whole quadrants, as being outside of the scope of a targeted analysis of wellbeing. An attempt to resolve this difficulty and the lack of clarity about the subjective-objective distinction follows in the next section.

5. A western philosophical wellbeing matrix inspired by Veenhoven

In this section, I attempt to retain the clarity and some of the applicability of Veenhoven’s Four Qualities of Life while addressing the two issues raised in the previous section. Figure 3 shows a matrix that captures two important distinctions for western philosophers of wellbeing: The distinction between objective and subjective theories and the distinction between internal and external theories.

| | Internal | External |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Objective | You have the “right” internal states (e.g. pleasure is good whether or not you desire it) | The “right” circumstances apply to your life (e.g. employment, being loved, etc.) |
| Subjective | You have the internal states that you think make your life go well (e.g. pleasure, satisfaction) | The circumstances that you think make your life go well do apply to you (e.g. employment, being loved, etc.) |

Figure 3: A matrix of four kinds of philosophical wellbeing

The internal-external distinction helps identify the proper target or targets of the theory of wellbeing. The internal-external distinction is the essentially Veenhoven’s outer versus inner qualities distinction. Internal states are those that occur inside of the person whose wellbeing is in question. Internal states include beliefs, desires, pleasures, pains, character traits, levels of health, and bodily and mental functioning. External states are all the rest – the states that lie outside of the person whose wellbeing is in question. External states include friendships, income, and the weather.

The subjective-objective distinction helps set the rules for how the theory of wellbeing interacts with the people subject to it. The subjective-objective distinction follows the discussion of modern western philosophical views above. Subjective means consciously endorsed by the subject of the life in question through a belief or desire such that they are deciding what ultimately makes their life go well or badly for them. Objective means the opposite; the subject of the life in question doesn’t get to decide what ultimately makes their life go well or badly for them.

The upper left quadrant represents objective theories that identify only internal goods, such as pleasure and pain, as the ultimate bearers of prudential value. Most hedonistic theories of wellbeing fit into this category.

The upper right quadrant represents objective theories that identify only external goods, such as being employed and having a certain level of income. People sometimes seem to behave like they adhere to a theory of wellbeing in this quadrant, especially those that seem to slavishly pursue money and material possessions. An objective list theory based on such people would fit into this quadrant.

The lower left quadrant represents subjective theories that identify only internal goods, such as pleasure and feelings of satisfaction, as the ultimate bearers of prudential value. A theory that

allowed people to decide for themselves which internal states they thought made their life go better and worse for them would fit into this quadrant.

The lower right quadrant represents subjective theories that identify only external goods, such as money and housing, as the ultimate bearers of prudential value. A theory that allowed people to decide for themselves which external goods they thought made their life go better and worse for them would fit into this quadrant.

As readers may notice, objective list and desire satisfaction theories have not yet been clearly represented on the matrix. Adding a third column to the matrix helps to remedy this issue. As shown in Figure 4, the third column identifies that both internal and external states (perhaps in a specific relation) might be the appropriate targets of a theory of wellbeing. At the expense of simplicity, the inclusion of this extra column makes the matrix more useful because, as discussed below, it helps differentiate between the main groups of theories that western philosophers take to be significantly different.

| | Internal | External | Relational/both |
|-------------------|--|--|---|
| Objective | You have the “right” internal states (e.g. pleasure is good whether or not you desire it) | The “right” circumstances apply to your life (e.g. employment, being loved, etc.) | The “right” internal states and external circumstances (or relations thereof) hold for you (e.g., pleasure, truly satisfied desires, friendship, etc.) |
| Subjective | You have the internal states that you think make your life go well (e.g. pleasure, satisfaction) | The circumstances that you think make your life go well do apply to you (e.g. employment, being loved, etc.) | What you desire to be the case about the internal and external things (and relations between them) that you think make your life go well are the case (this is the <i>most</i> subjective type) |

Figure 4: *An extended matrix of kinds of philosophical wellbeing*

Objective theories of wellbeing that include both internal and external states as their appropriate targets now have their own category. Most western objective list theories of wellbeing will end up in the top right category of Figure 4 since, despite only having a few things on their lists, they usually include pleasure or some other internal state and friendship or some other external state. A relational version of an objective list might claim that only enjoyment (internal) of specific external states, such as justice and beauty ultimately contributes to wellbeing (see, e.g., Arneson, 1999).

Subjective theories of wellbeing now have the opportunity to be fully subjective by adopting the bottom right category of Figure 4. A subjective theory that can have either or both internal and external states as its target allows each subject of a life to decide exactly what they think will make their life go better or worse for them without restriction. Simple Unrestricted desire Satisfaction theory would be in this category (see, e.g., Lukas, 2010).

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Despite being enlarged by a column, the above matrix still fails to capture all of the relevant distinctions to philosophers of wellbeing. Matched and Multi-perspective theories can combine subjective and objective elements in various ways to generate more complex theories of wellbeing, perhaps including some Restricted Desire Satisfaction Theories. But adding further to the matrix in Figure 4 would make it very different to Veenhoven's (2000) Four Qualities of Life, and thereby beyond the scope of this chapter.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained and briefly assessed Ruut Veenhoven's seminal *The Four Qualities of Life: Ordering Concepts and Measures of the Good Life*. The matrix at the heart of Veenhoven's (2000) paper, which clearly identified four important qualities of life, provided guidance for hundreds of scholars working in the area, and is still regularly cited. I identified the paper as a beacon for interdisciplinary work in general and interdisciplinary work on qualities of life, wellbeing, and happiness in particular. I then briefly attempted to build on Veenhoven's matrix in a way that might make it more user-friendly to policy makers, some of whom still seem to miss his important distinctions between inner and outer qualities and chances and results. Following this I applied some important western theories of wellbeing to Veenhoven's matrix and identified some issues. Finally, I tried to tease out the difference between subjective theories and inner qualities to make a matrix inspired by Veenhoven's that would more directly demonstrate the distinctions that western philosophers of wellbeing take to be the most important.

I hope by engaging deeply with Veenhoven's Four Qualities of Life, and attempting to build on it in a way that may be of use to policy makers and especially philosophers, that I have done justice to some of his aims for the paper and for his research generally. It is certainly the case that no young happiness and wellbeing researchers would be able to do the research we currently do if it were not for the excellent research and service work of the giants whose shoulders we stand on. Ruut Veenhoven is certainly a giant in the field of interdisciplinary research on qualities of life, wellbeing, and happiness, and I thank him sincerely for all that he has done.

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