A Global Examination of the Impact of National Policy on Citizens' Well-Being

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INTRODUCTION

From 2001 to 2005, more than one hundred academic papers analyzing happiness and life satisfaction were published; a decade prior, only four on the same subject were written (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). Growing interest in the measurement of happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being has gone hand-in-hand with the rise of the commercialized wellness industry, valued at over $4.5 trillion in 2018 (Yeung & Johnston, 2019). While one caters primarily to those who can afford the luxury of participation, the other has its eye on a loftier goal: to ask what makes individuals across the world *well*, and how it is impacted by the values and policies of the nation in which they reside.

This question is more important than ever at a time when a global pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of a society based on consumerism and capitalism. As the basic needs of citizens - from food and shelter to safety and healthcare - become a national priority during a crisis, the landscape of government policy has been drastically altered. National leaders must look past prioritizing economic growth and focus their attention on protecting the welfare of their constituents. The measurement of gross domestic product was created during a time of extraordinary change; now is the time to propose a new yardstick of national progress, one which brings social welfare and the needs of citizens to the forefront.

This academic paper explores: (1) the evolution of well-being as a concept and practice from 3,000 B.C. to today; (2) the way wellness and well-being can be defined and quantified on a national and global scale in order to influence policy; (3) the development of gross domestic product as the preeminent indicator of national success and the limitations it places on capturing social progress; (4) how national values impact government policy and the level of trust that citizens place in their government; (5) the way government policy has shifted in the face of past pandemics and the current pandemic caused by COVID-19 (coronavirus disease); (6) how new global measurements must account for well-being as a multidimensional factor in order to guide necessary policymaking at the highest levels. This research has uncovered the need for a global consensus in the definition and measurement of well-being, and will propose a new scorecard which takes into account best-in-class data measurement across ten separate aspects of individual well-being. These findings will provide governments with nuanced insights into how to improve life for their citizens through national policy, and will answer the need for a proper measurement of social progress.

METHODOLOGY

Over the last two years, the Fashion Institute of Technology's Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing and Management graduate class of 2020 has conducted in-depth research on the topic of wellness and well-being in the modern era. Primary research has included field studies conducted in France, Denmark, Sweden, and the United States. Field studies to be conducted in the United Arab Emirates and India were cancelled and have been supplemented with intensive secondary desk research. Utilizing the Survey Monkey platform, 975 residents of the United

States, Denmark, and India were surveyed to field insights on well-being and governance in each nation. The audience surveyed was inclusive of all genders and respondents aged from 18 to over 50 years.

WELL-BEING THROUGH HISTORY

The modern concept of holistic well-being can be traced all the way back to ancient Asian, Greek, and Roman cultures (GWI, n.d.a). These ancient cultures already practiced a preventative approach to health, whereby one seeks to improve overall health prior to issues developing, versus treating illness or curing disease (Global Wellness Institute [GWI], 2010). In 3,000-1,500 B.C., the tradition of Ayurveda emerged in India, focusing on harmony between the mind, body, and spirit as a means to avoid illness. During the same time, Traditional Chinese Medicine taught a holistic, "harmony from within" approach to well-being, giving rise to acupuncture and herbal medicine (GWI, 2010).

Well-being practices spread to the Greek and Roman cultures around 500 B.C. Hippocrates is credited as the first doctor to focus heavily on prevention of disease, and he believed disease could be prevented by means of controlling diet, lifestyle, and environmental factors. In the fourth century B.C., Aristotle popularized the multifaceted concept of *eudaimonia,* "an active behavior of developing the best in oneself, ultimately exhibiting excellence and arriving at self-actualization" (Huta, David, Boniwell, & Ayers, 2013). By 50 B.C, Ancient Roman medicine had also adopted the Hippocrates's teachings, and developed a highly sophisticated sewage and aqueduct system to prevent the spread of disease among the population (GWI, 2010).

A turning point in the evolution of human well-being came after the Industrial Revolution (Nardinelli, n.d.). Prior to the nineteenth century, improvements in life satisfaction were minimal, but the Industrial Revolution brought on drastic increases in life expectancy and wages, which had been previously unimaginable. At the same time, new stressors were created, such as an increase in income inequality and the effects of rapid population increase (Nardinelli, n.d.). During this time Americans and Europeans turned to alternative medicine practices such as homeopathy, osteopathy, hydrotherapy, chiropractic, and naturopathy, all emphasizing healthy lifestyle measures and a mind, body, spirit approach (GWI, 2010).

In the first half of the twentieth century the United States saw major advances in modern medicine, which temporarily seemed to answer Americans' health issues. This lasted until the late 1960s, when it became clear that more Americans were dying of disease caused by lifestyle rather than infectious diseases or viruses (Stará & Charvát, n.d.). A decade later, a report titled "Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention," proclaimed:

> *Today 75 percent of all deaths in this country are due to degenerative diseases such as heart disease, stroke and cancer. [...] It is the thesis of this report that further improvements in the health of the American people can and will be achieved – not alone through increased medical care and greater health expenditures – but through a renewed*

national commitment to efforts designed to prevent disease and to promote health (United States, 1979).

This tipped the scales back to a balance between modern medicine and a holistic lifestyle and expanded the education around well-being (Stará & Charvát, n.d.). The 1960s and 1970s also gave rise to the Social Indicators Movement, a push for large-scale collection and study of statistics related to social indicators of quality of life, such as life expectancy, unemployment, and school enrollment (Land, 2006). This movement was critical for the creation of global well-being indexes and ultimately connecting citizens' well-being with policy change (Land, 2006).

In the current century, the global well-being movement has accelerated across cultures and nations, with a greater focus on mental health. By 2014, one third of all global employers had well-being programs, and in 2015 the United Nations added mental health and substance abuse to its Sustainable Development Goals (GWI, n.d.a; WHO, 2020). Today the world's most respected academic and medical institutions are coming together to fight global chronic disease and the obesity epidemic (GWI, n.d.a). Although the concept of well-being continues to evolve and expand with economic, medical, and cultural advances, the current global well-being movement has ancient roots dating all the way back to 3,000 B.C.

DEFINING THE TERMS: WELLNESS VS. WELL-BEING

The terms wellness and well-being are often mistakenly used interchangeably, and while their definitions continue to evolve as a result of developments within social science and culture, it is important to make a clear distinction between their applications. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, wellness is "the quality or state of being in good health especially as an actively sought goal" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). The Global Wellness Institute, a non-profit organization leading research and education for the wellness industry, asserts that there is a strong physical component to wellness, but they also broaden the definition to a multidimensional approach (Yeung & Johnston, 2019). The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness as "the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health" (GWI, n.d.b). The "active pursuit" has given rise to the Wellness Economy, or the combination of all industries that allow consumers to incorporate wellness initiatives into their daily lives. In 2018, the Global Wellness Economy was valued at $4.5 trillion dollars, with the largest industries being personal care; beauty and anti-aging; physical activity; healthy eating; nutrition and weight loss; and wellness tourism (Yeung & Johnston, 2019).

In contrast, Merriam Webster defines well-being as "the state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). The term "well-being" implies an emphasis on mental and emotional state of being, and a focus on reaching an ultimate state of life satisfaction (GWI 2020; CDC, 2018). An active and intentional pursuit of wellness can sometimes feed into a sense of happiness and well-being, but they are not necessarily linked. Whereas well*ness* is used in an industry context, well-*being* is used in a government policy context to measure citizens' welfare. It is often used as a measure to influence legislation and budgetary spending (GWI, n.d.b). Global economists are increasingly looking for measures beyond gross domestic product to

gauge the success of nations, and often they are looking at happiness and well-being (GWI, n.d.b). It is critical to define the differences between well*ness* and well-*being* as this paper will focus specifically on well-*being*.

According to Gallup, the measurement of well-being is multidimensional and involves a continuum from life evaluation to daily experiences and feelings (Gallup, 2020). There is no universal tool or model to measure well-being on an individual, national, or global level; instead, various theories and methods have been developed and utilized by different organizations and in varying contexts. Whereas economists focus on objective measures, or actual life circumstances, such as income, psychologists recognize that happiness and well-being possess an inherent subjectiveness (Easterlin & Sawangfa, 2007). People have different goals and values, and can also adjust, to a certain extent, to changes in life circumstances. Psychologist Angus Campbell created a new framework, measuring people's subjective satisfaction against various objective conditions (Easterlin & Sawangfa, 2007). This framework, sometimes referred to as the Multiple Discrepancy Theory, involves asking respondents about their overall satisfaction with life, as well as satisfaction with various "domains" in life. The specific domains vary based on the study or research, but can involve areas such as finances, family circumstances, health, and work (Easterlin & Sawangfa, 2007).

Subjective well-being is both challenging and critical to quantify, as it feeds into the indexes that in turn influence policy (Krueger & Stone, 2014). There are two sides to subjective well-being: *evaluative* life satisfaction, which is the cognitive aspect, and *experimental* well-being which is the emotional aspect (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). The most commonly used method in large-scale global well-being surveys is to utilize evaluative life satisfaction questions (Kapteyn et al., 2015). These questions ask respondents to judge their life satisfaction or dissatisfaction against well-being measures using a scale (Kapteyn et al., 2015). One of the most well-known scales is called the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale, which was created to assess well-being through a present and future life evaluation *(*Gallup, 2020). Created in 1965 by Doctor Hadley Cantril, the scale asks respondents to:

> *Imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time? On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now? (Gallup, 2020).*

Gallup has incorporated the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale into the Gallup World Poll, a survey issued in 160 countries, which feeds into indexes such as the World Happiness Report (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). Based on present and future ratings, Gallup groups the respondents into three distinct and independent categories: thriving, struggling, and suffering. (Gallup, 2020). The Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale is also utilized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or OECD (Gallup, 2020; Kapteyn, Lee, Tassot, Vonkova, & Zamarro, 2015).

The second side of subjective well-being looks at how respondents are feeling at a given time, from an emotional perspective. The World Values Survey, a nationally representative

survey that spans almost 100 countries and covers the full range of global economic variables, utilizes this method by asking the question: "Taking all things together, would you say you are (i) Very happy, (ii) Rather happy, (iii) Not very happy, (iv) Not at all happy, (v) Don't know" (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017; World Values Survey, 2020). The General Social Survey, which focuses on subjective well-being of Americans, asks "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days? Would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006).

Two important models that are used to consider well-being include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Multicultural Wellness Wheel. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a widely taught psychological theory used to explain human motivation, which can also be applied to a person's well-being journey. Famous psychologist Abraham Maslow used a pyramid to depict the order in which human needs must be fulfilled, prior to motivation developing at the next, "higher" stage. At the base of the pyramid are all basic physiological needs, such as food, water and sleep. Once these needs are met, a person can move up the pyramid to fulfill their need for safety. The next level of the pyramid is the need to be social, and feel love and a sense of belonging. The fourth step on the pyramid is esteem, or confidence, respect, and sense of achievement. Finally, only after these prior needs are met can a human move up to the top and final point of the pyramid, which is self-actualization. This is when humans meet their full potential (Desai, 2020). Whereas Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs hypothesizes a very rigid structure, well-being dimensions have been found to be more fluid. In 2005 Gallup launched its first World Poll, surveying 60,865 participants and 123 countries on the topic of well-being. The respondents answered questions closely tied to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and also rated their personal well-being across three measures: life evaluation, positive feelings, and negative feelings. University of Illinois Psychology Professors Diener and Louise Tay analyzed these results to find that the ordering of needs is flawed when applied to a person's well-being, and benefits can be gained from various stages without fulfilling the stages before. In actuality, all of Maslow's needs are important at all times (Villarica, 2011).

The National Wellness Institute acknowledges that cultural socialization shapes an individual's worldview and therefore wellness has different meanings depending on the audience (NWI, 2020) The National Wellness Institute introduced the Multicultural Wellness Wheel (Figure 1) in 2016, in an effort to advance multicultural competency within wellness and healthcare professionals (Wilcox, 2017). The wheel concept focuses on three interconnecting pillars of well-being: personal and family, community, and worksite (Wilcox, 2017). Personal and Family focuses on a holistic, mind-body-spirit approach to daily habits and medicine. Community takes a three-tiered approach to minimize disparities in the healthcare system through policies, resources, and grassroot initiatives. Worksite Wellness considers the main components necessary for work/life balance, and promoting culturally sensitive and inclusive workplaces (NWI, 2020). The outer sphere of the wheel illustrates the diverse measures that shape human beings such as education, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and spirituality, race, and socio-economic status (NWI, 2020). When properly utilized, the goal of the

wheel is to teach professionals to look beyond their own assumptions and worldview, understand and appreciate clients from diverse backgrounds, and be able to work appropriately and effectively with these clients (Wilcox, 2017).
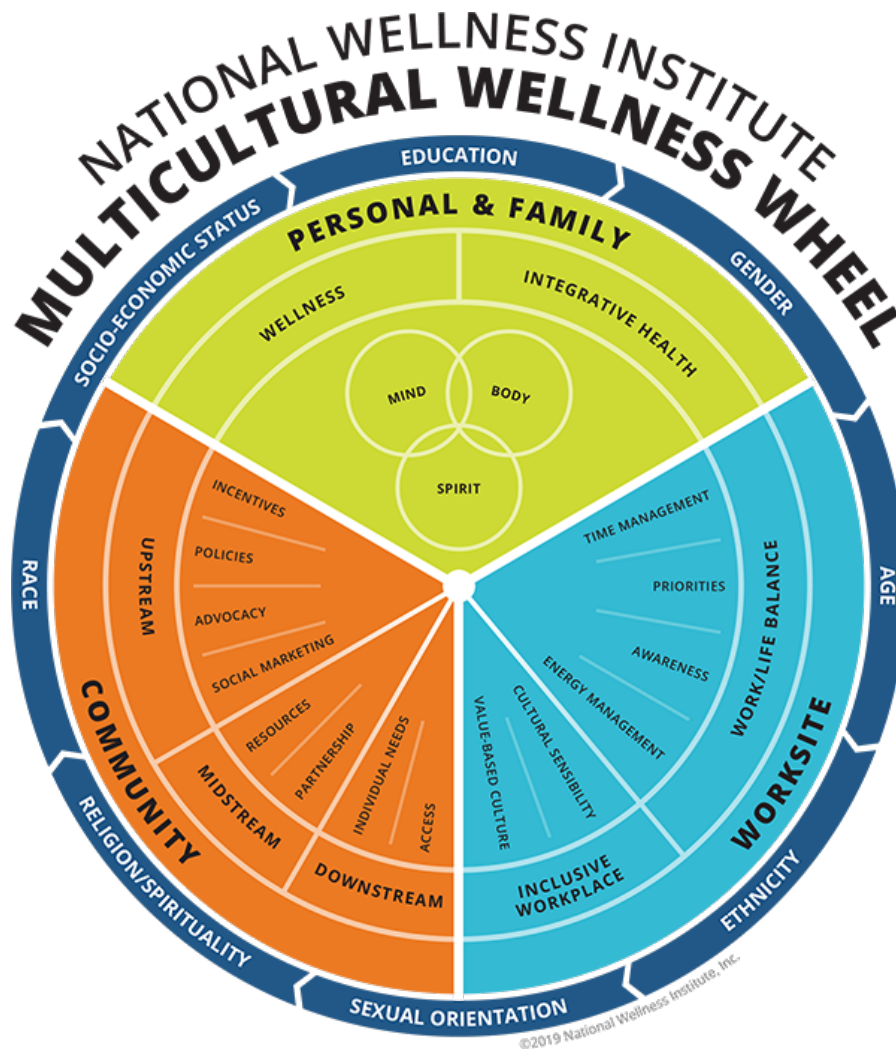

Figure 1. Natural Wellness Institute's Multicultural Wellness Wheel, Retrieved from https://www.nationalwellness.org/page/mcc. Copyright 2019 by National Wellness Institute, Inc.

THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VARIABLES ON WELL-BEING

As well-being is measured among different nations, it becomes apparent how the values and culture of that national group influence how its citizens both perceive and self-report their own well-being (whether that is termed "life satisfaction" or "happiness"). In fact, one 2015 study found that cultural variables can contribute up to 92% toward predicting an individual's self-reported well-being level when compared with the more "traditional" variables of national income, income growth, social comparison of income, population density, education, and human rights (Ye, Ng, & Lian, 2015). There are also correlations across nations with similar cultural

values. When well-being is compared with gross domestic product, for example, Latin American countries that share similar cultural and historical backgrounds report higher levels of well-being in comparison to countries with similar GDP per capita. On the other hand, countries who experienced past communist regimes have lower levels of reported well-being than countries with similar economic development who did not have the same government history (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). These examples demonstrate how the shared experiences of national or global groups define the way citizens perceive well-being.

The cultural differences between nations also provide insight into what traits individuals associate with a high level of well-being. For example, individualist cultures tend to associate self-esteem and extraversion with positive feelings, and therefore higher life satisfaction, than in collectivist cultures (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2009). *Individualist* cultures are those in which individuals are expected to care for a small network of people that includes only themselves and their immediate families (Hofstede, n.d.). Nations where individualism reigns tend to "emphasize individual freedom, individual achievement, and the pursuit of individual positive feelings." As a result, there is a more direct relationship between an individual's personal achievement and how high they report their well-being (Ye et al., 2015). *Collectivist* cultures, on the other hand, have more tightly-knit social networks where loyal ingroups look after each other (Hofstede, n.d.). These nations raise citizens who place more value on relationships with families, colleagues, and neighbors, and less on individual achievement. As their feelings of satisfaction are affected more by others, it may cause lower levels of self-reporting (Ye et al., 2015). The way individuals are raised to value both their achievements and their relationships to those around them impacts the way they perceive, and therefore report, satisfaction with their lives and levels of their own well-being.

A national culture's views and enforcement of power dynamics are also a significant indicator of the way individuals view their personal well-being. Hofstede's "Power Distance Index" measures this factor by determining how a society handles inequality among its people. Cultures with *high* power distance have a population that accepts hierarchy without justification, while those with *low* power distance see individuals seeking to equalize power distribution and demanding justification for inequality (Hofstede, n.d.). Larger power distance is linked to inequality across social status, wealth, civil rights, and workplaces. Greater inequality can cause feelings of helplessness in people, where they feel that they have less control over their own lives and therefore report lower levels of well-being. A nation's power distance level can contribute up to half of an individual's predicted level of well-being (Ye et al., 2015), making it a powerful determining factor in both measuring and ensuring citizens' well-being globally.

While national culture and values have a major impact on how citizens both perceive and report their individual well-being, additional external factors also play a role - including the changing urban-rural divide and the economic status of both nations and individuals. Worldwide, an upward trend in urbanization has led to increased scrutiny around the impact of city living on the well-being of citizens and their communities. The total urban population has grown to over half of the global population, 4.2 billion people, as of 2018 – up from one-third of the population

in 1950. This population is expected to swell to 6.7 billion people by 2050, with developed nations seeing a concentration of almost 90% urban citizenry (Burger, Morrison, Hendriks, & Hoogerbrugge, 2020). Movement by a nation's population to cities is a key factor in driving economic growth and delivering better living standards. The accessibility provided by metropolitan areas produces expanded employment opportunities, higher wages, and more opportunities for social engagement, all of which benefit citizens (Burger et al., 2020). When directly comparing the well-being of citizens living in urban and rural areas, however, a paradox emerges.

Initially, the wider opportunities and higher wages of a city benefits citizens and directly correlates to a higher level of self-reported well-being in comparison to rural areas. As economic development within the nation continues, infrastructure also evolves, increasing accessibility to more rural areas. More citizens are able to access the benefits of a city, including public services, without residing within its boundaries while the urban population contends with higher costs of living. The resultant increase in rural well-being and decrease in urban well-being produces "the urban paradox" (Burger et al., 2020). So even as citizens reap the benefits of their nation's economic development, their well-being may decrease as the consequences of that development impact their lives.

Economic development itself is another key external factor that massively impacts the well-being of a nation's citizens. Statistically, individuals with higher income tend to self-report higher life satisfaction – this holds true even when viewing reports from multiple nations with differing levels of economic growth (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). This trend is found not only on an individual level within countries – but on a global scale as well. There is a clear correlation between citizens in richer countries, defined as those with higher GDP per capita, and higher life satisfaction (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). When taking into account economic growth – the major measure of success for both developing and established nations worldwide – the benefits of higher national income continue to shine. As a nation's GDP per head increases, more people tend to report higher levels of happiness (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). In a given nation, then, continued economic development seems to help all citizens lead happier lives.

The United States, however, showcases how economic growth does not benefit all citizens of a nation equally. Economic inequality has increased massively over the past four decades even as the nation has experienced incredible national growth. Specifically examining the last twenty years, the living standards of lower income groups stayed relatively the same even as the richest groups netted the most gains from national growth (Thewissen, Nolan, & Roser, 2015). This has been accompanied by a remarkable stagnation in life satisfaction as reported within the nation. In 2005, the average life satisfaction reported in the United States was 7.18, while in 2017, it was only 6.99 (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). Therefore, even as GDP per capita was increasing, the average happiness of a United States citizen was decreasing. This fact, coupled with the rising inequality in the nation, showcases how the benefits of U.S. economic growth have not reached the majority of its citizens; therefore the positive benefits toward well-being are also not reaching all citizens equally. This example demonstrates how nations need to

work to ensure that any programs crafted to benefit the well-being of citizens must work to reach all citizens at an equal level to prevent the rise of further inequality.

GOVERNMENT IMPACT ON CITIZENS' WELL-BEING

There is a wide disparity in reported well-being across nations, and the quality and effectiveness of government plays a large role. Citizens of well governed nations overall report significantly higher levels of happiness (Ott, 2010). Economist John F. Helliwell conducted a longitudinal study between 2005-2012, across 157 countries, and found that improvements in quality of government generally lead to increases in well-being (Martela et al., 2020). The World Bank defines good governance in terms of six aspects. Democratic quality of government consists of two aspects: voice and accountability, and delivery quality of government consists of four aspects: absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Ott, 2010). *Delivery* quality has shown to have a stronger correlation with average citizens' happiness, with +.75% correlation, versus +.60% for *democratic* quality (Ott, 2010; Martela et al., 2020). Good governance can impact citizens' happiness both directly and indirectly, by creating conditions which are favorable for average happiness, such as healthcare, wealth, safety, economic and individual freedom (Ott, 2010).

The five Nordic countries consistently rank at the top of global well-being indexes year over year, drawing attention to both their quality of government and their welfare state model. The governments of these five Nordic countries, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland, provide extensive social benefits to their citizens, such as universal basic income, universal healthcare, and free education. Studies cited in the 2020 World Happiness Report demonstrate that the welfare state model positively impacts life satisfaction by reducing social and economic risk (Martela et al., 2020). A study focusing on OECD countries further showed that the effect of income security has a positive effect on all citizens, regardless of their income or employment status (Martela et al., 2020). Nordic countries also experience less status anxiety in part due to the welfare state model, which positively affects well-being (Martela et al., 2020). Finally, the World Happiness Report looked beyond the Nordic countries, to study why other countries consistently rank high on life satisfaction. These countries, including, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, and Australia, all have similar elements as the Nordic countries in place: high quality and trustworthy institutions, especially in delivery quality, and protection of their citizens from adversities (Martela et al., 2020).

Trust in government has the effect of shaping good behavior, allowing for successful policy making, and boosting economic growth, all factors that contribute to well-being (OECD, 2013). When governments gain trust, it allows for long-term structural reform, as citizens are more likely to be okay with sacrificing in the short term (OECD, 2013). This trust is built based on citizens' expectations, versus perceived functioning of government, as well as the cultural interpretation of what is fair and unfair (OECD, 2013). Governments can influence trust through the process in which they govern and through their policies, especially those that safeguard and cater to the well-being of their citizens. (OECD, 2013).

In the Nordic countries, a case can be made that a positive, mutually reinforcing loop is created between high-functioning institutions and social trust. A high level of trust in people and government allows for the welfare state model to exist. Simultaneously, the welfare state model leads to lower crime rate and corruption, and reinforces trust in government (Martela et al., 2020). The opposite can also be true, as evidenced by scholars Rothstein and Uslaner, who in 2005 published findings of an "inequality trap." Their findings reinforced the strong interdependencies between social-economic equality, good governance, and trust, and found that nations with high levels of inequality and low social trust can find themselves in an "inequality trap," whereby effective governance becomes impossible (Ott, 2010). In nations with low levels of trust, it has been found that citizens are less likely to abide by the rules, pay taxes, or support reforms that could lead to long term improvements for citizens' well-being (Martela et al., 2020).

In 2012, 54% of citizens in developing nations of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (commonly referred to as BRICS countries) expressed confidence in their government, versus only 40% of citizens in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries (OECD, 2013). The OECD also analyzed data between 2011-2017 to find that only one-third of citizens in its member countries feel they have a say in government (OECD, 2020a). Trust in government and political parties is lowest in the OECD countries hit hardest by the 2008 financial crisis including Slovenia, Greece, Spain, Italy, and Portugal (OECD, 2013). In the United States, trust is at an all-time low, with only 17% of Americans reporting that they have trust that the government will do what is right (Pew Research Center, 2019). This is because expectations in government have not been met, a trend we can see going back to the 1960's (Pew Research Center, 2019). The main reasons that citizens in BRICS countries report high levels of confidence is due to cultural factors, perceived functioning of government versus expectations, and different stages of socioeconomic development (OECD, 2013). The data shows that as citizens' education levels increase, so does their expectation in government (OECD, 2013).

More recently, the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer looked into trust levels between the main societal institutions, including government, business, non-governmental organizations, and media, and found very low trust levels across the board (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2020). Where *trust* is defined as competence plus ethics, business is seen as the most competent institution and non-governmental organizations the most ethical, yet no institution is seen as both. The global citizen's views on where the four societal institutions fall is outlined in the Dimensions of Trust graph (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2020). Government is seen as incompetent and unethical, with 57% of the global population believing that "government serves the interest of only the few" (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2020). The report also uncovered a growing trust-divide, finding that the mass population trusts institutions 14 points less than the informed public (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2020).

National policies must align with the institutional and cultural values of citizens in order for governments to effectively build trust and impact the well-being of their citizens. Denmark, India, the United States are nations whose policies are addressing the needs of their citizens to

different degrees and different measures. The primary research survey conducted by the Fashion Institute of Technology's CFMM program uncovered that the majority of respondents across all the three nations believed government should be responsible for ensuring the well-being of their citizens, and 62% of respondents in Denmark felt their government *does* prioritize citizens' well-being, compared to 70% in India and only 22% in the United States.

By enacting a welfare state model, the Nordic countries are able to keep the cultural values of their citizens at the forefront of their policy (Martela et al., 2020). An egalitarian mindset, driven by tradition, is the bedrock of national culture and policy in Denmark. The Danish people prioritize quality of life over individual success and tend to have an optimistic outlook on life (Hofstede, 2020a). The welfare state model supports these ideals, and Denmark consistently ranks in the top tiers of well-being indexes. The Danish government has enacted policies that provide access to high-quality healthcare and free education for all citizens (Helweg-Larsen, 2018). The FIT primary research survey also revealed that Danish citizens prioritize mental health, and 92% of the population happily report that they can afford those services. Many of these policies are funded through some of the highest taxes in the world – an average of 45% of annual income as of 2016. Though taxes are high, they represent the dedication of Danish citizens to collective well-being: investment in a society that allows citizens to pursue opportunities regardless of their background (Wiking, 2016). This belief is extended to an active involvement in government, as an average of 85% of registered voters cast votes in elections - 16 points above the OECD average (OECD, 2020a).

India, meanwhile, has a socially-strict hierarchical society that values success and power. It showcases a unique blend of collectivism, reflected in a larger social framework that encourages citizens to act in a way that benefits the greater good, with individualism, through an emphasis on individual responsibility (Hofstede, 2020b). The government of India provides much less to their citizens than that of Denmark, with low investments in health and education. However, they have made progress to improve the well-being of their citizens through prioritizing affordability of housing and improving sanitation measures (OECD Economic Survey, 2019). In 2018, the government introduced the Ease of Living Index, a data-driven approach to improving the livability of their cities, to ensure they are measuring life satisfaction of their citizens, not just economic growth (Ease of Living Index, 2019). Further development of public services is key to promoting well-being, according to the OECD; this includes training more doctors and nurses to meet healthcare needs and establishing a fair retirement system (Boone, 2019). The unique combination of India's national culture and the new policies being put in place may contribute to the fact that despite experiencing far more inequality than Denmark, citizens in both countries report similar levels of confidence in government (OECD, 2013).

The United States, on the other hand, is highly individualistic and achievement-driven as a nation. The culture is highly competitive and focused on success, with strong opinions on what is good and bad. American society tends to be more loose-knit, and the expectation is that individuals prioritize care for themselves and their families even as inequality rises (Hofstede,

2020c). This tendency toward individualism and achievement is reflected in the nation's global status: the U.S. has the largest economy in the world at $21 trillion yet fails to top any of the global well-being indexes (Bajpai, 2020). Social welfare policies that are universal in many developed countries are limited, or nonexistent, in the United States. Citizens face financial barriers to healthcare, and among the OECD countries, the United States ranks first for healthcare expenditure and last for coverage (Lorenzoni, Belloni, & Sassi, 2014). As of 2019, the United States was also the only OECD member country that does not mandate paid leave for new parents on a national level, though some individual states including California, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island have instituted statewide paid leave plans (Livingston & Thomas, 2019). The United States is one of the lowest-taxed countries in the OECD, with tax revenue accounting for only 26% of GDP in 2014, far below the OECD average of 34%, or the rate of the highest-taxed country, Denmark, at fifty-one percent (CRFB, 2016). Citizens of the United States reap far fewer benefits from the taxes they do pay in comparison to welfare states, with less access to public services that would directly benefit their well-being.

When evaluating nations on a global scale, gross domestic product (GDP) has become the preeminent indicator of not only economic success, but also where a nation falls in relation to its peers in power and influence. The measurement was first proposed by Simon Kuznets, who in 1932 introduced a measurement of national income in the United States in order to fully understand the extent of the Great Depression; the modern definition as utilized today came nearly a decade later (Debroy & Kapoor, 2019). During World War II, John Maynard Keynes was working for the United Kingdom Treasury and saw firsthand how existing economic statistics fell short in calculating the production capacity of the British economy. In place of Kuznets' measurement, he proposed a new calculation that included government spending, private consumption, and investment in estimating a total national income. The inclusion of government spending was specifically driven by the necessities of wartime, but the measure has far outlasted the war itself (Debroy & Kapoor, 2019).

The measurement of GDP is a complex endeavor, requiring over 10,000 points of data in the United States alone to be factored into the calculation of a single number (Gertner, 2010); however, its limitations have been a subject of conversation among economists and politicians alike for decades. In 1968, Robert Kennedy famously said: "It [GDP] measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile" (Debroy & Kapoor, 2019). As the world has changed, the measurement of gross domestic product has stayed the same, leading many to call for a new measure of national success. In 2008, then-President of the French Republic Nicholas Sarkozy and the French government created the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, generally referred to as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, in order to identify the limits of the GDP as it related to both economic performance and social progress (Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009). The landmark findings of this commission have been echoed by numerous expert sources in the years since, highlighting the inadequacies of the GDP as the defining measure of national success on a world stage.

From an economic standpoint, a key limitation of the GDP is that it fails to adequately

measure inequality. Since it does not measure the distribution of income, it is impossible to judge whether a society is equal or unequal by looking at their respective GDP – the nations would be indistinguishable if they were of similar economic sizes (Debroy & Kapoor, 2019). The GDP can suggest positive economic development even as the people of a particular nation become worse-off in the same period. In a number of countries, real household income grows at a different – and often lower – rate than real GDP per capita. By focusing on production, which can expand as income decreases, it can mislead policymakers on the status of living standards in a particular country, leading to flawed decision-making at the highest levels (Stiglitz et al., 2009).

The focus of the GDP on production as the key driver of economic performance also creates a statistical bias against countries with welfare state policies. Nobel laureate and member of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission Joseph Stiglitz argues that the GDP inherently undervalues public-sector benefits like universal public education, health care, and childcare. The United States, for example, consistently outpaces many European countries in GDP growth, but those same countries utilize higher tax rates and greater government spending in order to offer its citizens more services. As Stiglitz points out, if those same services were accounted for properly in a measurement like GDP, the free market mindset of the United States might suddenly seem to be lacking in comparison with its socialist-leaning peers (Gertner, 2010). This can contribute to the conclusion that "changes that enhance people's economic security, whether through improved pensions or a better welfare state, come at the expense of national economic performance," impacting future policy globally for generations to come (Stiglitz, 2019).

One of the primary reasons the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission was established was also the acknowledgement that the preeminent measurement for economic performance failed to alert government officials around the world to any potential issues ahead of the 2008 financial crisis. By focusing on the wrong set of statistics, the GDP showed great performance by the world economy from 2004 to 2007 while ignoring how sustainable that same growth would be in the long run (Stiglitz et al., 2009). These same measures also failed to capture the long-term impact of extreme European austerity measures: in highlighting the economic results the long-term impact on citizens' standard of living, and how much they suffered, is pushed aside (Stiglitz, 2019). The incorporation of measurements assessing sustainability may have enabled policymakers to better predict and manage major crises on both a national and global level (Stiglitz et al., 2009).

Another major limitation of the GDP is its failure to measure the environmental impact of the same production it prioritizes. It does not take into account the quantity, or quality, of the natural resources that are depleted annually (Stiglitz, 2019), nor does it measure the level of environmental damage caused by means of production such as greenhouse gases (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Ironically, major natural events such as hurricanes and floods, which devastate the well-being of populations the world over, actually have a positive effect on the GDP due to the resultant construction boom (Gertner, 2019). This lack of insight into environmental issues also perpetuates inequality between nations. Lower-income countries traditionally pursue prosperity by prioritizing GDP-measured economic growth, but this short-term focus on production

compromises the longer-term prosperity and well-being of its citizens by failing to measure the future impact of environmental degradation (Chandran, 2020).

In its report, the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission ultimately recommended that the GDP be fixed to better reflect the true circumstances of citizens today by incorporating measurements that assess quality of life. Their suggested metric for this measurement included eight dimensions that shape an individual's well-being: material living standards, health, education, personal activities, political voice, social connections, economic and physical insecurity, and environmental conditions (Stiglitz et al., 2009). The report also cites the need to measure both national equity, defined as the distribution of material wealth and other social goods, and economic and environmental sustainability in order to properly assess the progress of any nation (Gertner, 2019). The Commission's findings, and the consensus of countless economic experts across the globe, make it clear that the traditional GDP-focused measurement of government success is massively flawed and fails to account for many aspects of the needs of modern citizens.

WELL-BEING MEASUREMENT INITIATIVES

In June 2011, the United Nations passed a resolution that asked governments to "undertake steps that give more importance to happiness and well-being in determining how to achieve and measure social and economic development" (United Nations [UN], 2011). As a result of this resolution, a "Well-Being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm" meeting was planned, and the first World Happiness Report was prepared in order to review global evidence on the science of happiness. Each report draws from the results of the Gallup World Poll, which reports individually-assessed life satisfaction based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale, in order to track the quality of life satisfaction in over 153 countries. The report then enhances these findings by utilizing six key variables (GDP per capita, social support, life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption) to explain the variations between countries. The 2020 report ranked Finland as the happiest country in the world, while Afghanistan was ranked as the least-happy country (Helliwell, Layard, Sachs, & De Neve, 2020).

The Bloomberg Global Health Index utilizes data from the United Nations Population Division, World Bank, and World Health Organization in order to examine factors that contribute to overall health. This index establishes a "health grade" for each nation, which is equivalent to its "health score" minus its "health risk penalties." A nation's "health score" is measured by taking into account the mortality rate, life expectancy, and survival probability of its citizenry. Its "health risk penalties" brings in behavioral factors (such as prevalence of tobacco use and alcohol consumption, mental health coverage, and vaccination rates) and environmental factors (such as access to clean air, water, and sanitation facilities) to assess the total health risk for each nation (Miller & Lu, 2019). In 2019, the index evaluated 200 economies and determined that 169 had enough data to be included in the final ranking. The top-ranking

country was Spain, with a health grade of 92.75, which boasts the highest life expectancy among European Union nations, a tendency toward healthy eating habits, and widely-available healthcare (Miller & Lu, 2019).

The Happy Planet Index, meanwhile, looks at measuring the well-being of citizens through a lens of environmentalism and sustainability. It seeks to measure "what matters: sustainable wellbeing for all" (Jeffrey, Wheatley, & Abdallah, 2016). This index utilizes four key elements in its calculation: well-being (as defined by the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale), life expectancy, inequality (the difference between how long they live and how happy they feel), and ecological footprint (the average impact that the average resident places on a country's environment). Its incorporation of environmentalism as a key pillar of well-being showcases the success of countries in Latin American and Asia as opposed to the wealthier western countries who normally top other indexes. In 2016, Costa Rica was ranked number one in the Happy Planet Index rankings – marking the third time that the country achieved this status. The index results cite its higher well-being, longer life expectancy, and lower per capita ecological footprint as the pillars of its success in comparison to nations such as the United States (Jeffrey et al., 2016). Its bottom-ranking country out of 140 total is Chad, where a small ecological footprint is outweighed by comparatively short life expectancy, high inequality, and low well-being (Jeffrey et al., 2016).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Better Life Index rose from the mission of the organization, founded in 1961, to help governments design "better policies for better lives" (OECD, n.d.b). In contrast to other indexes, which utilize definitive rankings in order to evaluate the performance of different nations, the OECD Better Life Index is an online tool that allows global citizens to slice and dice the data into any combination of factors and/or nations (OECD, n.d.b). This places knowledge back in the hands of everyday citizens. This index includes values for eleven topics which the OECD has identified as essential to well-being including housing, income, and jobs (all relating to material living conditions) as well as community, education, environment, governance, health, life satisfaction, safety, and work-life balance (impacting quality of life). The online tool also allows citizens to compare the way gender, social and economic status affect results. The index includes 35 countries, who are members of the OECD, plus key partners Brazil, Russia, and South Africa (OECD, n.d.b). This quick snapshot of existing indexes only showcases four of many, all of which take into account different factors and have separate objectives for how their findings should be utilized. While these groups have sophisticated definitions and data measurement tools at their fingertips, there is no current consensus or globally-accepted scorecard.

For several decades, an increasing number of nations have acknowledged the limitations of utilizing gross domestic product as their primary yardstick of progress. In 1972, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of Bhutan famously stated, "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product," (OPHI, 2008) kicking off the process of creating the first national index for defining and measuring happiness. In 2008, Bhutan transitioned to a democratic state and its first constitution incorporated the four pillars of Gross National Happiness. Before

passing any new legislation, good governance, sustainable socioeconomic development, preservation and promotion of culture, and environmental conservation must all be considered (Schultz, 2017). This ensures that as the nation continues to develop and progress, it must always take into account how the well-being of its citizens will be affected by new proposals – no matter how economically beneficial.

In 2016, the United Arab Emirates made headlines for becoming the first nation to appoint a minister of happiness as part of a massive government reorganization. An Emirati political scientist said, "The government feels that we have provided basic services so far, education and health, so now we should strive for higher goals," (Hubbard, 2016) showcasing how governments are re-considering their roles in citizens' lives, moving from providing only those "basic" services to ones that can help their citizens flourish and maintain well-being. The first appointee to this position, Ohood bint Khalfan Roumi, has stated that her objective in this role is to focus on empowering citizens through strong infrastructure as well as access to education, jobs, and healthcare (Simmons, 2017). However, some have been skeptical of this development, given the U.A.E.'s status as a surveillance state where unelected officials rule the government and criticism of political activity can lead to arrest or imprisonment (Hubbard, 2016). The consideration, then, becomes both when and how nations should begin prioritizing the well-being of their citizens. In a nation like the U.A.E., where economic growth has exploded and potential human rights violations occur, publicly showcasing the importance of happiness is less important than the policies that must be enacted to ensure citizens are well.

More recently, New Zealand's new approach to budgetary guidelines has also called the importance of well-being to the forefront of policy making. In 2019, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced the intention to "[do] things differently" by creating a "well-being budget" for the nation (Charlton, 2019). Focusing on the long-term impact of qualitative policies, five priorities were highlighted: transitioning to a sustainable and low-emissions economy; supporting the digital age; lifting Māori and Pacific incomes, skills and opportunities; reducing child poverty; and supporting mental health (Charlton, 2019). These policies are distinct not just for their specific link to the well-being of citizens, but also for how they are incorporated into the national budgetary process. New initiatives must target one of these five priorities, and officials must cite how they will directly impact the well-being of citizens; after implementation, each initiative will be analyzed and evaluated for effectiveness in order to truly gauge the long-term impact on quality of life (Charlton, 2019). The budget for 2019 allocated billions of dollars in support for mental health services, child poverty, and domestic violence prevention (Charlton, 2019), showcasing a realistic policy-driven method of building a strong foundation for *well* citizens. This increased attention by governing bodies is a step in the right direction, demonstrating how nations can impact the well-being of their citizens through stronger, more multidimensional policy making - and emphasizing the mindset shift that must take place, with a focus on long term impact rather than short term gain.

THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON GOVERNMENT POLICY

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, infectious diseases have devastated humans since the dawn of civilization. The extent of the outbreaks has only intensified over time as a result of globalization, and crucial insights can be gained from the consistent themes and inadequacies that emerge from multiple epidemics. SARS, Ebola, and Zika are all recent pandemics from the twenty-first century, where impact on citizens is heavily influenced by socioeconomic conditions, and structural violence is unmistakable, uncovering inadequacies in health systems and government policy (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018).

SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was the first major new disease to surface in the twenty-first century (Mackenzie et al., 2004). The severe and easily transmittable respiratory disease emerged in 2002 in the Guangdong province of China, later spreading to 26 countries and infecting over 8,000 people (WHO, n.d.). A major shortcoming in dealing with the SARS epidemic was the inconsistency around quarantine measures, especially as seen in the high-income city of Toronto. Toronto authorities bypassed preventative measures such as face masks, putting significantly more people under quarantine than in other affected cities such as Hong Kong or Shanghai. Toronto also implemented a travel advisory, without the proper evidence to do so, unnecessarily costing the city of Toronto $1.1 billion and restricting citizens' freedom of movement (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018). These drastic measures resulted in a psychological and economic impact that could have been avoided through better communication between the WHO, public health officials, and clinicians (Blendon, DesRoches, Raleigh, & Taylor-Clark, 2004). The SARS outbreak was, in some circles, blamed on the Asian-Canadian population in Toronto, leading to a racialization of the epidemic and widespread stigmatization in the city (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018).

Following the major 2015 outbreak of Zika in Brazil, the virus has been called the "infectious disease of poverty" (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018). The Mosquito-borne virus was first identified in humans in 1952 and isolated cases were recorded in the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century (WHO, 2018b). Similar to other infectious diseases, poor, marginalized populations were most affected, and this time specifically women (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018). Although most people experienced mild symptoms, the virus was linked to microcephaly in developing fetuses (WHO, 2018b). When comparing the effects of the virus on citizens of Brazil versus citizens in the U.S., Brazilians were disproportionately affected due to their limited access to healthcare resources, poor waste management and lack of mosquito repellent. The effects of overcrowding further accelerated the spread in Brazil. Not only did this virus highlight major social inequalities, but it also brought to light a lack of reproductive freedom, as many of the most affected Brazilian women lacked access to contraceptives and faced severe social stigma for such practices. The WHO issued a travel advisory for women who were pregnant or trying to get pregnant but discarded the risk of all other international travel. In the end globalization, population growth, and regional (not global) climate change were blamed for the widespread Zika infection in Brazil (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018).

The Ebola virus was originally discovered in 1976 and the largest outbreak hit West

Africa in 2014 (WHO, 2020). The severe and often fatal disease accounted for more than 11,300 deaths in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (CDC, 2016). Similar to the effects of Zika in Brazil, citizens of Liberia were disproportionately affected by the Ebola outbreak due to their weak public health infrastructure, and the fact that many citizens of Liberia live in poverty, lacking proper infrastructure, sanitation or health facilities (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018). On an international level, very little happened in terms of medical action until select cases emerged in Europe and the U.S. (Shelley-Egan & Dratwa, 2019). Even so, response aid targeted traditional Liberian burial practices and the consumption of bush meat, rather than population growth and the critical aforementioned conditions of poverty. Ultimately the outbreak narrative largely blamed the local Liberian population for the epidemic. Later, the United Nations Security Council was criticized for not mobilizing resources to their full extent (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018).

Structural violence is defined as "social structures—economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural—that stop individuals, groups, and societies from reaching their full potential" (Farmer, Nizeye, Stulac, & Keshavjee, 2006). In these three epidemics of the twenty-first century, governmental responses have been flawed in a variety of ways, ranging from violations of citizen's rights and freedoms, to perpetuating structural violence, and marginalizing poor communities (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018). A prime example of the abuse of power and privilege can be explored by comparing research and funding for Zika in Brazil versus HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS affected prominent Brazilians with social and political status, and subsequently the research received significantly more in funding than Zika, which largely affected poor communities (Kapiriri & Ross, 2018).

As of June 2020, at least 177 countries have reported cases of the COVID-19 virus, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus; more than 7 million have been infected, and 406,000 individuals have died. The first cases of the coronavirus were identified in Wuhan, China, in late December 2019, and the first confirmed cases in Japan, South Korea, and Thailand were reported in late January 2020. On January 30th, the World Health Organization declared it "a public health emergency of international concern" (Taylor, 2020). In late March, the United States became the hardest-hit country, with the most confirmed infections in the world, and the death rate in the country surpassed 100,000 in late May. As of early June, more than 100,000 new infections per day were being reported, with densely-populated low- and middle-income countries hit the hardest (Taylor, 2020).

As the COVID-19 virus spread from country to country, the readiness and responses of individual governments varied widely. Nations like Taiwan and South Korea utilized learnings from previous epidemics to enact public health-focused measures in order to minimize and contain infection rates. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen initiated flight restrictions and established command centers early while also increasing production of personal protective equipment (Fincher, 2020). Extensive contract tracing coupled with mobile tracking systems ensured quarantined citizens stayed home. As a result, as of mid-June Taiwan had registered only several hundred cases and deaths in the single-digits (Bremmer, 2020). South Korea's early response has been hailed as one of the best globally, resulting in a low case and fatality count in

comparison to similarly-sized nations. Even when its own cases numbered fewer than 100, the nation scaled up production of tests to create thousands per day and was vigilant in supporting a program of contact tracing, isolation, and treatment for its citizens. South Korean President Moon Jae-in saw record approval ratings in May, showcasing how an effective government response to crises builds trust between nations and their citizens (Bremmer, 2020). In addition to their successful responses on home soil, both Taiwan and South Korea have engaged in global outreach by exporting tests, masks, and medical supplies around the world (Bremmer, 2020).

Some of the most major policy shifts have been financially focused as nations work to safeguard the financial well-being of their citizens and of their national economy. Denmark negotiated with prominent trade unions to safeguard jobs, with the government covering up to 75% of the salaries, and up to 90 of hourly worker wages, for those who otherwise would have been laid off; businesses are responsible for covering the remainder of these wages in order to ensure minimal financial impact on citizens (Collington, 2020). Norway extended its existing social welfare system to aid citizens who had been furloughed, covering their full pay for up to 20 days and 62% of pay after that, ensuring peace of mind (Jones, 2020). New Zealand's Prime Minister and her cabinet took a 20% pay cut to their salaries for six months in solidarity with those citizens financially affected by the pandemic. The nation also enacted tax reforms to help small businesses, and its latest budget includes a fund that will work to reduce unemployment over the next two years (Bremmer, 2020). The French government has also protected jobs by paying from 84 to 100% of salaries for workers who would otherwise be laid off, and has announced that they will extend this initiative by two years in order to prevent massive unemployment (Mallet, 2020). While these policies have not prevented a global economic downturn, they have demonstrated the way governments have the ability to enact policies that provide for and protect their populations – and how quickly these initiatives can be put into play when sufficient motivation is present.

Nations that have delayed or politicized their responses to the COVID-19 virus have seen a massive decline in public trust as a result. Britain's top scientific advisors have publicly criticized the government's reaction to the virus, stating that an earlier lockdown would have halved the death toll throughout the nation (Mayes & Morales, 2020). The nation put "unprecedented" policies into place for both individuals and businesses: protecting jobs for those who would otherwise be laid off by covering up to 80% of salaries, and offering a giant business bailout package (Partington, 2020). Despite these measures, the United Kingdom's economy is projected to shrink by nearly 12% this year – reflecting almost twice the impact expected on the global economy (Mayes & Morales, 2020). The approval ratings of the government have declined significantly: in early April, nearly half of the country approved of the government's response, but by June that number had declined to only one-third of the country – with half now registering disapproval (Ross & Donaldson, 2020).

The response of the United States to the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has also led to a severe erosion of public trust in the government. The death toll in the United States – the largest economy in the world and one of the wealthiest nations on earth - surpassed 340 per

million residents by mid-June. That is equivalent to 100 times the rate of China, the second-largest economy in the world (Yamey & Jamison, 2020). Citizens cite frustration in the uneven nature of economic support, as corporations receive bailout packages that leave small businesses behind, and individuals only receive a single small stimulus check for relief (Tavernise, 2020). National crises historically contribute to higher trust in government as a feeling of solidarity takes hold – the highest level of trust in government in recent history was the period immediately following the September 11th terrorist attacks (Tavernise, 2020). Instead, the pandemic has led to a huge divide in how Americans interpret response on a national versus local level: only 26% of Americans believe that federal government policy is greatly influenced by scientific evidence, while 43% think it has great influence on state policies. Twenty-four percent of Americans do not think scientific evidence influences the federal response at all (Funk, Kennedy, & Johnson, 2020). Without sufficient testing and contact tracing, the end of the pandemic is not yet in sight for the United States (Yamey & Jamison, 2020).

In June, a University of California, Berkeley team estimated that the policies implemented in six countries – China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, and the United States – prevented 530 million COVID-19 infections. The policies of China alone may have averted up to 285 million total cases (Lempinen, 2020). These striking statistics showcase the impact of government policies on maintaining a high level of public health and welfare. Millions of additional cases were prevented due to national intervention and the implementation of home isolation, business closures, and public lockdowns globally. Solomon Hsiang, lead author of the study, stated that "By using science and cooperating, we changed the course of history" (Lempinen, 2020). When governments act in the interests of their populations, safeguarding and protecting their well-being through decisive policies, the life of a global citizen can be hugely improved.

THE FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Now it is clear that gross domestic product does not provide a holistic view of a nation's success, and it is critical for governments to move beyond the dated macroeconomic measure. Policies that effectively improve people's well-being are likely to have lasting impacts on health, productivity, and education. In order to effectively move beyond GDP, there needs to be a global consensus on the definition and quantifiable measurement of citizens' well-being, through which governments can gauge their successes and shortcomings. For this purpose, FIT established a new, globally consistent scorecard to redefine and quantify the success of a nation. The FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard (Figure 2) will allow well-being to be the currency upon which all governments measure their nations policies.

The new scorecard incorporates four pillars that impact the well-being of individual citizens: health, safety, economic, and social. These pillars were chosen based on in-depth primary and secondary research, inspired by the valuable work that was initially done by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, and tailored to add additional measures to properly consider the current global climate. Each pillar consists of two to three sub-measures. For each sub-

measure utilized in the scorecard, a corresponding existing index was chosen that reflected best-in-class measurement and the most comprehensive national ranking system available. By identifying the nations that perform best on these indexes, the scorecard is able to highlight government policies that best support well-being and make global recommendations. Through this comprehensive methodology, the FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard will serve as the new yardstick of national progress.

Figure 2. Fashion Institute of Technology Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard.

Pillar: Health
Health is indisputably vital to well-being, and accordingly the FIT Global Citizen Well-Being

Scorecard has identified health as one of the key contributing factors to well-being. Health considers two important sub-factors: physical health and mental health. Although physical health has long been considered a critical aspect of well-being, attention to mental health has been a relatively new phenomenon as deaths of despair, including suicides and drug and alcohol related overdoses, have increased at alarming rates in the U.S. In 2020, around a million Amercians are estimated to use heroin on a daily basis (Gawande, 2020).

Physical Health

Physical Health is measured with the Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index, a tool that ranks 169 countries according to factors that contribute to overall, holistic health (Miller & Lu, 2019). This holistic piece of health is crucial, as explored through the entire history of well-being and, more recently, the U.S. Surgeon General's Report from 1979 warning citizens that 75% of deaths in the nation are caused by degenerative diseases (United States, 1979). The Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index ranks nations based on variables such as life expectancy and environmental factors, while imposing penalties on risky behaviors such as tobacco use and obesity (Miller & Lu, 2019).

In the 2019 Bloomberg Healthiest Countries Index Spain ranks in first place with the highest life expectancy among European nations, projected to reach the highest global lifespan of 86 years in 2040 (Miller & Lu, 2019). This impressive life expectancy can be attributed to their healthy diet habits, but also importantly to their successful universal healthcare system (World Population Review, 2020). With specialized care provided for all citizens, Spain has seen a decline in deaths over the past decade due to cardiovascular disease and cancer. In addition to long life expectancy, in 2020 Spain proudly reports only 45.4 preventable deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (World Population Review, 2020).

Mental Health

The WHO defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 2018a). This definition sums up the impact that mental health has on citizen's overall well-being and the decisions they make every day. Mental Health is measured by the World Happiness Report, which leverages Gallup World Poll data, reaching 156 countries and 99% of the global population (De Neve & Krekel, 2020). This index, which rates citizen's perceived happiness, ranks Finland in first place. Finland's first place ranking in 2020 marks their third consecutive year achieving this ranking. Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is ranked the happiest city in the world (World Happiness Report, 2020). This rating is a complex combination of cultural factors and governmental policies, many of which are specific aspects of Nordic culture, specifically their quality of institutions, universal healthcare, sense of autonomy and freedom, and high levels of social trust towards each other (Martela et al., 2020). The welfare state provided by the government of Finland ensures low levels of happiness inequality, and environmental factors such as ample

green spaces only top it off (World Happiness Report, 2020).

Key Recommendation: Health
The FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard's key recommendation for health is for governments to enact universal healthcare, including physical and mental services, and health education services. European nations like Spain and Finland are the current gold standards in taking care of the health of their citizens. By removing financial barriers to healthcare, governments such as the U.S. can make strides to reduce chronic disease, improve life expectancy and lower overall healthcare expenditures (Moritz-Rabson, 2018; Lorenzoni et al., 2014).

Pillar: Safety
Citizens cannot truly be well until they feel safe in their environments and in the way government policies impact their lives. The safety pillar is defined by two factors: environment and political voice, stability, and effectiveness. As previously established, a global focus on economic growth has done little to account for the impact of this growth and of production on the environment, despite far-reaching consequences. Any measurement of individual well-being must take into account how the environment impacts the mental and physical health of citizens globally. Climate-related natural disasters can result in anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder in populations impacted by the disasters; economically-disadvantaged people are even more likely to develop these issues (Weir, 2016). For any of these policies to be impactful on a population, the governing body must be stable and effective. The delivery quality of government has a strong connection to citizens' happiness, and good governance can help create conditions that favor higher levels of well-being (Ott, 2010). Governments must also work to decrease disparities across race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability through intentional action and policies that work to uplift marginalized communities.

Environment
A nation's environmental score is drawn from the Environmental Performance Index, which provides data-driven findings on the state of sustainability around the world. The EPI ranks countries on environmental health and ecosystem vitality, taking into account 11 different categories to answer how close countries are to established policy targets. In 2020, the EPI ranked 180 different countries, with Switzerland ranking third with a score of 81.5 (Wendling, , Emerson, de Sherbinin, & Etsy, 2020). Switzerland's high ranking can be linked directly to its national identity and the preservation of its postcard-worthy natural scenery, which has produced a strong tourism industry (House of Switzerland, 2020).

The national government has established a series of policies that limit future impact on the environment while also providing incentives for both industries and consumers to make more sustainable choices. For example, the Spatial Planning Act of 2013 works to slow urban sprawl and limit impact on unused land, and the Swiss Soil Strategy of 2020 establishes a goal of zero net soil loss by 2050. Fossil fuel usage is subject to a CO_2 levy, the proceeds of which fund the

use of renewable energy. Additional stages have been added to existing wastewater treatment plans in order to maintain high water quality – which is essential as Switzerland is the source of many European rivers (House of Switzerland, 2020). Switzerland serves as a guideline for countries seeking to improve their environment as part of a concerted effort to build the well-being of citizens: it highlights the necessity of crafting impactful policies that safeguard the environment and promote sustainable living practices.

Political Voice, Stability, and Effectiveness

A nation's political score is taken from the Worldwide Governance Indicators project, which summarizes the quality of government for over 200 countries and territories by looking at six different dimensions (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2018). Each dimension has a separate ranking system according to its sources and intentions. For the purposes of this political score, the following dimensions are considered: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; and government effectiveness.

Voice and accountability indicates whether a country's citizens enjoy freedom of expression, association, and media, as well as the extent of their participation in government selection. The top-ranking country for this dimension is Norway with a score of 1.73 on a scale of -2.5 to +2.5 (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2018). Norway has also been ranked one of the top democracies in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Citizens benefit from automatic voter registration, and as a result turn out in droves with 78% of citizens casting their votes. With a system of eight political parties, no single party can amass power – they are instead required to cooperate in order to form a government, creating better balance among different political viewpoints (Smith & Adams, 2017).

Political stability and absence of violence indicates the likelihood of political instability and/or politically-motivated violence (i.e. terrorism). One of the top countries for this dimension is New Zealand with a score of 1.54 total (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2018). New Zealand has an established, stable parliamentary government with a mixed member proportional system, and holds general elections every three years. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it boasted a strong economy and low unemployment rates (Roy, 2020). A traditionally peaceful nation, it was rocked by tragedy in 2019 when a right-wing extremist perpetrated the worst mass shooting in its history (Freedom House, 2020). Its indigenous population, the Māori, are overrepresented in poor socio-economic outcomes and in the prison population (Roy, 2020). The government has made attempts to establish institutional systems to rectify the historical grievances of colonization, including reserving seven parliament seats for its representatives and establishing a Māori-language public network (Freedom House, 2020).

Government effectiveness demonstrates the quality of public services, civil service, policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of government commitment to policy. The top-ranking country for this dimension is Singapore, with a score of 2.23 total (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2018). The country's effectiveness is closely tied to the governance of its longtime leader Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's longest-serving prime minister who died in 2015. As a leader, he

proclaimed "the ultimate test of the value of a political system is whether it helps that society establish conditions that improve the standard of living for the majority of its people," (Allison, 2015). Even as incomes for the middle class have risen and both health and security for ordinary citizens exist at high levels, critics point out that strict regulations on the media, the courts, and political associations diminishes the status of the government as an electoral democracy (Allison, 2015). Singapore is an example of a nation that showcases the value of effective government policies and delivery, but serves to learn from the lessons of Norway in fostering a more democratic country.

Key Recommendation: Safety
The FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard's key recommendation for safety is for governments to actively safeguard communities and the environments in which they live through a combination of protective policy and a strong welfare state model which provides for basic needs.

Pillar: Economic
Economic well-being has been identified as a key factor of citizens' well-being. The FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard takes the measure of economic well-being far beyond a nation's macroeconomic GDP to include material living standards, education, and income inequality.

Material Living Standards
        Material living conditions are measured by the Legatum Prosperity Index. This index measures 12 key pillars including material resources, shelter, basic services and connectivity to determine the degree to which and basic quality of life is experienced by all. The Index uses publicly available and verifiable data which covers 167 countries across the globe. The prosperity index is built around 65 actionable policy areas, making it a highly practical tool for governments (The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2019a, 2019b). The top five countries ranked on the Legatum Prosperity Index in 2019, from one to five, are Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, and Finland (The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2019c).
        Denmark's strong social policies, supported by citizen's tax dollars, help to solidify its top position on the Legatum Prosperity Index. These generous social policies provide universal healthcare, tuition free university, allowances to families with children, and care for the elderly. (Schuetze, 2018). Household income is critical to material living standards, and Sweden, another country topping the list, boasts an impressive 77% employment rate among citizens 15 to 64. Their Job Security Councils are seen as best in class for working with displaced workers to find tailored opportunities, resulting in 80% of the participants finding a solution within seven months (OECD, n.d.a).

Education
        Our World in Data appropriately states "education has been one of the most integral

drivers and outcomes of global development" (Ritchie, 2019). As education is now widely considered a basic right, governments face more pressure than ever to ensure that a quality education is available to every citizen (Ritchie, 2019). Every year the United Nations publishes a Human Development Index (HDI), which includes an educational index component. This index measures educational attainment by expected years of schooling (EYS) and mean years of schooling (MYS). *EYS* is the number of years of education a child can expect to receive, and *MYS* is the average number of years of education a person has received by age 25 and older (Roser, 2019). Germany ranks the highest on the HPI education index, with 17.1 years of EYS and 14.1 years of MYS (HDR, 1990-2018)

A notable difference that sets Germany apart from other OECD countries is the high teacher salaries paid to primary and secondary educators. This results in higher expenditures from taxpayers, but also a first-class educational system and students who are adequately prepared to compete in the global economy. In pre-primary education classes, Germany mandates a small class size - 9 students per teacher - and class time is 70% longer than in other OECD countries (OECD Education GPS, 2020).

Income Equality

Income equality is an important measure for an entire society, whether rich or poor, as it supports economic growth and social cohesion for all (Ingraham, 2018). The Gini coefficient is utilized as it is the most popular method used to measure income inequality (Left Business Observer, 1996). The statistical measure is based on a coefficient range, where *0* equates to a perfectly equal society, and *1* equates to extreme inequality. In countries with higher Gini coefficient, poverty is a prevalent issue (World Population Review, 2020). It has become increasingly important for governments to manage their Gini coefficient, as income equality has increased for 71% of the global population since 1990 (World Social Report, 2020).

The Nordic countries typically have considerably less income inequality due to their social safety nets and progressive taxation (Collins, 2016). Aside from the Nordic countries, Central Eastern European nations such as Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Slovak Republic have historically had low Gini coefficients (OECD, 2017). In the Czech Republic, for example, the government's aggressive redistribution policies, targeted at low income households, helps to keep income inequality at one of the lowest levels globally. Additionally, their decision to slowly raise minimum wage has progressively helped to reduce inequality (Patricolo, 2018).

Key Recommendation: Economic

To account for the economic well-being of their citizens, the key recommendation of the FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard is for governments to maintain high levels of individual and corporate taxes, ensuring services and welfare. The Nordic and European countries with the most progressive taxation also reap the benefits of the lowest inequality, and highest social cohesion. The Danish pay some of the highest tax levels in the world, but the vast majority of the citizens see the value in investing in their society, and they gladly pay (Wiking, 2016).

Pillar: Social

A healthy social life and relationship to others is essential for the well-being of global citizens. The social well-being pillar is defined by two factors: social connectedness and work/life balance. Healthy relationships with others are essential to overall well-being, and a lack of connection can lead to consequences for the physical and mental health of individual citizens. People with healthy social connections have a 50% greater likelihood of survival, while loneliness can cause depression and a weakened immune system (UMN, 2020). Better work-life balance helps to reduce chronic stress, preventing issues such as hypertension, heart problems, depression, and anxiety. One study found that the risk of heart-related problems for white collar workers who worked three or more hours longer than required was 60% higher than those who did not work overtime (Wedgwood, 2019). Balance also helps lower the rate of burnout within a workplace, which can be caused by higher levels of stress and longer working hours; the mental and physical consequences of burnout cost an estimated $125 billion to $190 billion per year in healthcare spending in the United States (Kohll, 2018).

Social Connectedness

A nation's social connectedness score is derived from the OECD Better Life Index's community measure. Community and social network findings are based on whether citizens have someone they can rely on in a time of need – 98% of Icelandic citizens agreed with this statement, well above the OECD average of 89 percent (OECD, 2020b). Iceland's small size makes it easy to develop and maintain strong relationships with family and friends, as the majority of the population lives near the capital city of Reykjavik. There is also a high level of trust at the community level, and children can play freely without close supervision. Iceland's government began including mental well-being measures in a national survey on health and well-being in 2007; now these indicators of happiness and well-being are published each year, enabling policymakers to prioritize and plan for their citizens accordingly (Suttie, 2019).
The nation's Youth in Iceland initiative showcases how government intervention can improve social networks of its citizens. In order to counter high instances of teenage drinking, cannabis use, and cigarette smoking in the late 1990's, Iceland passed a series of laws that banned certain advertisements, established stronger parental organizations in partnerships with local schools, and – most crucially – increased state funding for organized sport, music, art, and dance classes to give teens new ways to connect and learn. Drug and alcohol use among teenagers plummeted, and the model has been exported to new countries in an effort to spread its learnings far and wide (Young, 2017). By increasing state funding for essential community initiatives like classes for teenagers, Iceland demonstrates how a well-resourced community produces happier, healthier citizens.

Work/Life Balance

A nation's work/life balance score is taken from the OECD Better Life Index's work-life

balance measure. This is measured based on two indicators: the percentage of citizens working 50 or more hours per week, and the average amount of time a citizen dedicates to leisure and personal care (OECD, 2020d). These indicators are interconnected: the more time an individual works, the less they have to spend on other activities – including ones that will enhance their well-being or allow them to engage in self-care. The top-ranking country in this measure is the Netherlands, scoring 9.5 out of ten. Only 0.4% of citizens report working very long hours, the lowest of all OECD countries and far below the OECD average of 11 percent. Dutch citizens also spend an average of 16 hours per day engaging in leisure or personal care activities, representing a full additional hour more than the OECD average (OECD, 2020c).

Working culture in the Netherlands is supported both by government policy and by industry expectations. In January 1996 the Working Hours Act limited the maximum number of hours an employee can work in a specific period, but rest between 36 and 40 per week on average (Passport to Trade 2.0, 2013). The legal minimum for paid time off is 20 days (presuming a five-day workweek), in addition to 10 national public holidays which are paid. However, in most industries 25 days of paid time off is the standard (Expatica, 2020a). Family leave laws are also extensive: maternity leave is 16 weeks total, with four to six of those weeks taken before the due date, though paternity leave is lacking at only one week paid (Expatica, 2020b). Policies around limiting working hours and mandating time off have a huge impact in promoting work/life balance among citizens.

Key Recommendation: Social
The FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard's key recommendation for social well-being is to introduce policies that mandate more limited working hours and comprehensive paid leave policies across all industries, for both full-time and part-time workers. Implementing a four-day workweek to decrease working hours can lower stress while keeping the same levels of productivity, as seen in a trial by a New Zealand-based company (Lu, 2020). This is not the only firm to see strong results: Microsoft offices in Japan found that a four-day workweek test yielded happier staff and a 40% boost in productivity (Lu, 2020). In addition, comprehensive paid leave policies such as family leave are crucial for establishing a healthy work-life balance and allowing individuals to act as caregivers when needed. Paid parental leave policies also present economic benefits, leading to increased employment rates for both parents and more earnings for mothers (Coley, 2019). Policies that limit working hours while protecting compensation will allow individual citizens to spend more time on leisure activities, personal care, and building social networks – all of which will have a demonstrable impact on well-being.

CONCLUSION

As the concepts of well*ness* and well-*being* continue to expand and evolve, national governments all over the world are beginning to recognize the value of developing policies that ensure their citizens live *well*. Historically, gross domestic product has served as the preeminent indicator of national success on the global stage, and has influenced policy creation for decades;

however its limitations mean that governments are looking at the wrong factors in determining progress. Gross domestic product alone fails to account for many aspects of citizens' needs, as well as the future impact of current economic growth. An array of indexes have arisen in order to answer the need for new measurements, all using different factors and coming to different conclusions, with no consensus. Within these indexes, the five Nordic countries consistently top the rankings, as the extensive social benefits of the welfare state model provide their citizens with the everyday needs that contribute to positive well-being.

The basic needs of global citizens have become national conversations as the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the cracks in the system. The impact of this pandemic has been heavily influenced by socioeconomic privilege, exposing major inadequacies in government responses and policies. It has become a catalyst for change and sets the stage for the acceleration of ideological shifts in the role of government. Policies being enacted as a result of the pandemic could become the new standard of governance, predicated on the support of citizens' well-being rather than on the economic prosperity of the nation.

This is an opportunity to revolutionize policymaking, but in order to determine what policies are needed there must first be a global consensus in the measurement of well-being. As Nobel-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz stated, "What we measure affects what we do, and if we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing" (Stiglitz, 2018). The FIT Global Citizen Well-Being Scorecard provides governments and policymakers with insights into how their nations currently measure up on the global stage, and sets the best-in-class policy standard for the pillars of well-being: health, safety, economic, and social. During this extraordinary time of change, constituents are asking more of their governments, employees are asking more of their employers, and customers are asking more of the businesses they support. Those in power have a responsibility now more than ever to ensure they are safeguarding and ensuring the well-being of all individuals.

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