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Value Mapping: Practical Tools for Wellbeing and Sustainable Consumption

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Introduction

The goal of consumption is wellbeing. Sages have said that happiness is easiest found if one's needs and desires are small. That would also mean wellbeing for the environment. However, the word *satisfaction*—from the Latin *satis*, meaning enough or sufficient—finds no place in the world of unlimited economic growth and consumption. Sufficiency is considered a virtue in most religions; but it goes against, indeed is a direct threat to, the logic of industrial growth and maximum profit. The word "enough" seems to have disappeared from our moral and political vocabulary.

How, then, to achieve sustainable consumption? The study of consumption has long confronted the questions as to what, who, where, how, why of consumption. Whilst this volume explores all of these

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questions, the most pressing question is arguably why change happens so slowly, or even in directions away from, rather than towards sustainability. And, related to this: how, in practical terms, can we assist consumers to move towards sustainable consumption? The aim of this chapter is to offer some answers to this question.

Solutions, lifestyles and behaviours of course already exist which largely fulfil the three recognized sustainability requirements of ecology, economy and society, and which provide wellbeing in ways that are both equitable and sustainable over time. And, those of us whose work involves searching for concrete solutions—such as sustainable buildings, cities and energy—have developed, and promoted, and evaluated, such solutions for several decades. The technology is if anything the easy part—and it is getting easier—and costs are coming down too. Near zero energy buildings have in fact existed for 40 years (Butters, 1982), and seminal research such as the *One Kilowatt per Capita* study (Goldemberg et al., 1984) showed that the globe could achieve energy sustainability with the technology of 35 years ago. Only a fraction of those solutions have become common practice; in poorer countries, virtually none of them. So, as practitioners we are constantly faced with the question: "why not"? Many of the answers lie, as our late colleague Hal Wilhite and the contributors to this volume will agree, only partly in the realm of engineering, but largely in the realm of the social sciences (Reisch & Thøgersen, 2015).

Whilst much consumption is determined less by conscious choice than by embedded ideas and habits, transition to more sustainable consumption requires conscious decisions in all areas, from politics to industry to the individual. And, for sustainable solutions to address all three facets of ecology, economy and society, we need to integrate all three within a holistic framework. Such frameworks and approaches are, we argue, still largely lacking. Looking beyond the material, psychological, cultural and other forces underlying consumer perceptions and behaviour, this chapter turns to address the challenge of how we can enable or assist those—consumers and policy makers—who have the intent to move towards sustainable choices. We first offer a brief discussion of consumption, wellbeing and economics, before we note two key issues that hinder moves towards sustainable choices. The first is the largely unseen role of the financial system itself in consumption; the second, which we

do not explore in detail here, is the persistent mechanistic or dualistic thinking that separates objective/quantitative from subjective/qualitative considerations, thus effectively hindering a holistic approach to and framework for consumption. The final sections then address these challenges by presenting two simple tools which consumers can apply to make holistic assessments and choices for wellbeing and sustainable consumption in practice, in a manner that integrates both objective and subjective factors, both quantities and qualities. These tools are in the form of "value mapping". This methodology, previously applied in the Sustainability Value Map (Butters, 2004, 2012), has the advantage of being visually intuitive as well as easy to apply, both for experts and for citizens; either in a simple version or in detailed forms not described here.

Consumption: Intent and Impact

Individual consumption comprises a large part of humankind's total environmental, economic and social activity (see Hansen and Nielsen, this volume). It is therefore also a key part of the problem of unsustainable development. Whilst often considered as individuals, consumers also play an indirect role, less easy to assess, as members of a community and as citizens (Liu et al., 2017). Consumer behaviour is widely researched within the natural and social sciences (Rockström et al., 2009; Reisch & Thøgersen, 2015), in which a key distinction has been made between intent and impact. Generally speaking, while natural science research into consumption behaviours is key to identifying forms of behaviour with high impacts, social science research into intentions, influences and motivations is essential in order to understand behaviour, and to target efforts to change high impact behaviours (Gatersleben et al., 2002; Shove, 2014; O'Brien & Sygna, 2013). Relevant here is the paradox that sustainable intentions often translate into actions that have limited, or even negative effect on sustainability. The drive to inspire is often based on *ideals* with scant reference to measured *impacts*; and for their part, interventions to reduce impacts have often failed to appeal or inspire. What is important to note in both cases is the lack of tools that combine intent and impact.

In many countries today, consumers have a wealth of product labels, consumer programmes, online guides and footprint calculators that could (in theory) assist them in making sustainable choices. But some are confusing or unreliable, or involve complexities which even highly educated—and motivated—people cannot evaluate. It is, in fact, only in recent years that serious analysis of products and their impacts has become common. Methods such as the Ecological Footprint (Wackernagel & Rees, 1996) have aided our understanding but are still not widely understood. The same is the case with a more recent model, the SCB cube model of sustainable consumption behaviour (Geiger et al., 2017). This model introduces a novel four-dimensional approach, but it too is beyond the grasp of laypeople. Comparable tools such as Product Declarations (EPDs) or life cycle analysis (LCA) techniques are extremely helpful, but mainly directed at a specialist audience (Steen-Olsen & Hertwich, 2015; NL Agency, 2011). Meanwhile, advertising continues to push intent towards ecologically or socially damaging choices. Hence, there are strong pressures towards unsustainable intent at the same time as we have few tools to assist sustainable consumer behaviour.

Consumption and Wellbeing

As stated, the goal of consumption—and hence of economics—is wellbeing. Wellbeing, the thriving of both people and planet, or *enjoyment-of-life* as expressed in ecological economics (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971), has been widely studied in consumption research in recent years (Guillen-Royo, 2010, 2019; Guillen Royo & Wilhite, 2015; Guillén-Royo, Temesgen and Vangelsten, this volume; Sahakian, this volume) and, although it may be defined in various ways, it is upheld as the ultimate goal of development. For our purposes, the New Philanthropy Capital (NPC)'s definition offers a useful starting point:

> Personal and social well-being describes a person's state of mind, relationship with the world around them, and the fulfilment they get from life. It can be understood as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole (Finch et al., 2014; NPC, 2013).

Four key categories are important: feelings about self; relationships with family and friends; perception and connectedness to the community; and overall life satisfaction.

Frameworks for assessing wellbeing are often based on a view of the self as an autonomous, rational and independently acting (or feeling) individual; theories of the self as relational, however, highlight how wellbeing also has a collective component. Approaches such as the Ecosystems of Wellbeing (IFTF, 2011) develop this broader view. They also place a strong focus on wellbeing as process, underlining how the flow and dynamics of change (or stability) are essential features in wellbeing.[1]

The hierarchies of human needs approach (Maslow, 1943; Max-Neef, 1991; Seligman, 2004) describe how consumption ranges from basic goods and services, such as food and shelter, to non-material categories such as freedom, trust or friendship. Wellbeing, and hence consumption, encompasses and requires both material and non-material flows. While ecological economics insists on a focus on the common good (Daly & Cobb, 1989), a good that must include nature itself, such considerations are largely absent within mainstream economics. Here, "benefit" is largely limited to consideration of (quantifiable) flows of goods and services that provide material (and to some extent psychological) satisfaction.

The Easterlin paradox (Easterlin, 1994) exemplifies a comparable disconnect between economics and wellbeing. It concerns—to simplify—how increased income does not, beyond a certain point, seem to result in increased happiness. But the Easterlin paradox has had no practical influence on policy decisions; the underlying assumption, even in the richest societies, is still that we all both need and want "more". The dominant paradigm of endless growth has resulted in a pervasive global consumer culture. Historically speaking, this is quite recent; a very different culture of frugality characterized the nineteenth century in western countries (Hansen, 2018), and has done so in other cultures (see e.g. Hansen et al., 2016). Today, however, the consumer culture is deeply embedded in our thoughts, assumptions and habits and, as a result, in our policies and technologies as well. But important as it is, it is not the only driver of unsustainable consumption.

The Cost of Money

Our current financial-monetary system reinforces the cultural practices of unsustainable consumption in ways that influence both production and consumption immensely, yet which is often unseen. We single out three elements of this system as particularly important, namely the cost of money; importing, exporting and consequently hiding "impacts"; and credit and debt. We start with the cost of money itself.

By far the largest portion of global economic activity today is not consumption of anything tangible at all, but finance. Given the rules by which money operates (interest in particular), that activity has a vast influence on all production and consumption: for example, it encourages short life products, trend-driven consumerism and production in locations where ecological externalities can be disregarded.

We currently find that money has become a goal in itself rather than a means to implement concrete wellbeing outcomes. Profitable speculation is encouraged, and permitted by laws—in particular "limited liability"—to stimulate innovation by protecting innovators against the risks they take. When the early industrial capitalists made profits, they generally invested in new factories—in new productive capacity and jobs. But today, due to the interest system, money often makes more money than would investing it in productive activities—let alone community welfare. Nor is money vulnerable to technical breakdowns, changing product demand or strikes.

This speculative trend exploded from the 1970s onwards (Kennedy, 2012), a development Maynard Keynes foresaw already in 1936:

> Speculators may do no harm as bubbles on a steady stream of enterprise. But the position is serious when enterprise becomes the bubble on a whirlpool of speculation. When the capital development of a country becomes a by-product of the activities of a casino, the job is likely to be ill-done (Keynes, 1936).

In other words, when risky innovation is a small component within the real economy, well and good. But the real economy, that is, *productive* capital directed towards amenities, services and wellbeing, is now dwarfed

by speculative finance. More than 95% of all foreign exchange transactions are motivated by gain through speculation, less than 5% is related to goods and services (Lietaer & Dunne, 2013). Compound interest and discount rates are particularly problematic. As President Obasanjo of Nigeria famously stated after the G8 summit in Okinawa in 2000:

> All that we borrowed up to 1985 or 1986 was about $5 billion. So far, we have paid back about $16 billion. Yet we are being told that we still owe about $28 billion, because of foreign creditors' interest rates. If you ask me what is the worst thing in the world, I will say it is compound interest. (Lietaer, 2001)

This impacts consumption in major yet largely unseen ways, insofar as the cost of money itself is embedded in consumption—in the cost of consumer goods and services—and forms a considerable part of what we pay for a given product or service. For example, the cost of a house includes the cost of the interest on the money that the developer borrowed. Our water bill includes the cost of the money that our municipality borrowed to build the water supply system. And these hidden costs can be very large. Examples from Germany are that the cost of interest on capital was 12% in garbage services, 38% in what we pay for water supply and 47% in sewage costs (Kennedy, 1995). While seldom recognized or perceived, they have large economic impacts on consumption.

Many consumer choices and activities are thus both shaped by, and lend support to, an unsustainable and inequitable financial system. While consumption therefore has global financial and even geopolitical implications, these connections are largely unseen and seldom understood, and consumers lack practical tools to evaluate their choices. The same is the case for the measurement of energy and emissions that we turn to next.

Hiding Emissions and Impacts

Most approaches to energy and emissions (Kyoto Protocol, IPCC, COP-2015) continue to employ a production-based model where impacts are measured where energy is used to produce goods, with

resultant emissions. It is now increasingly recognized—though not yet widely—that this provides an insufficient and misleading picture. Much of the "dirty" high impact production has been relocated to developing countries in the global south. When what we consume is produced in China, for example, then the energy and emissions to produce those goods occur far away; but they are nonetheless caused by our demand. It is thus, to simplify, not China's consumption but ours (Peters & Hertwich, 2006; Diana Ivanova et al., 2017). In the case of Sweden, for example, nearly 60% of a typical Swede's carbon footprint now comes from carbon "imports" (Nilsson, 2012). It should be noted that these indirect impacts are not only carbon-related but also social, such as air pollution deaths or child labour in other countries. This global perspective is increasingly important for understanding consumption, but it is also a perspective that may be hard to take on board for laypersons. In light of this, the recent development of consumption-based carbon accounting (CBCA) is essential for consumer-oriented approaches (Peters, 2008; Steininger et al., 2018) insofar as CBCA shows the hidden or indirect impacts, especially in imports.

Credit and Debt

Lastly, debt, the extension of money in time, has a major influence on consumption, both on the individual and political levels. In former times, every farmer knew that without a reserve food store the family could not survive a bad season. Every business too held a stock, as opposed to today's "just in time" supply chain. But today we all live in debt—consumers as well as nations, who often have debt amounting to 50–100% of one year's total national product. This means that we are living off the future, off value that has not yet been produced. The 2020 pandemic has made this situation worse as trillions of dollars were created—out of thin air—to get the world going again. The assumption is of course that with renewed economic growth we will be able to eventually "catch up" and pay off the money that we have borrowed from the future.

It is not the mechanism of credit itself that is in question, but its application and the kinds of activities and consumption it tends to support.

Credit for the poor to buy essentials can evidently be positive. So too credit to prevent or tide over temporary crises. But the credit system works selectively, as the above example from Nigeria highlights: credit can later constrain the provision of basic needs in a poor country; in some countries more than a third of all revenues is unavailable for any constructive purpose because it must be used to pay off credit. Comparably, credit for regenerating forests or emission reductions often has a long payback time, if any, making it unattractive to the finance system. By contrast, easy credit is often offered for short-term purchases that are of very dubious sustainability.

Consumption choices and patterns are thus largely influenced by and dependent on what can be borrowed, when, by whom and for what kinds of consumption. Credit has very selective agency. What the global south in particular can or cannot choose is therefore greatly conditioned by it. In effect, credit has become a prime means to sustain the growth paradigm, being the key mechanism to promote rising consumption, and threatening both consumer wellbeing and planetary wellbeing. In short, our monetary system is not in accordance with the challenges in today's society (Lietaer & Dunne, 2013).

All three of the above phenomena expose profound systemic problems in the economic growth paradigm, which superficial tinkering cannot solve. They are largely hidden from public view; are largely ignored in evaluations of sustainability, in particular its economic dimensions; and hence demand far more research and exposure in order to inform consumer choices and policy discourse.

Accounting for Benefits and Disbenefits

In order to design tools to assist sustainable consumption, we need to reframe consumption in a more complete way. This reframing must be able to include the "hidden" factors and impacts outlined above, and must accordingly build on a radical critique of current economics.

Consumption in orthodox economics is measured by a collection of quantities, mostly of a material kind, with little accounting of environmental or social impacts. The less tangible human needs are hardly addressed at

all. That economics, whilst useful for some purposes, tells us little meaningful about the state of the planet—nor about our state of wellbeing. Newer frameworks, such as *Doughnut Economics* (Raworth, 2017) or those briefly noted above, introduce qualitative criteria and now form a kind of parallel discourse about the world, embracing a much broader view of costs and benefits. However, they still leave us without the tools to actually guide and frame decision making. The goal of ecological economics that we are inspired by here aspires towards the same goal, by offering a theory and practice that see the economy as "operating within, rather than dominating, the spheres of nature, society, and culture" (Capra & Jakobsen, 2017).

We consume potatoes, clothes, building materials. We also consume haircuts, concerts, holidays. Most of these are now entirely monetarized. Shiva notes that, paradoxically, "the global economy defines people as poor if they consume the food they have produced themselves rather than buying commercial junk food" (Jakobsen, 2019, p. 132). The consumption categories that lie beyond the basics in the hierarchy of needs, just as important to wellbeing, are not monetarized. However, it is evident that we also "consume" *negatives.* Some are quantifiable: toxins in food, polluted air, noise. Others are qualitative: stress, insecurity, discrimination. To convey a full account of development, of wellbeing, all these must be "framed" into a whole picture. The "negatives" cannot just be noted as "externalities" but must be included and deducted on the balance sheet—some kind of balance sheet—as in any correct accounting.

We recognize the absurdity that car accidents, dental bills and waste treatment, all help to raise GNP. Whilst limited models such as GNP are useful, a large part of GNP as seen by standard economics in fact consists of disbenefits; the above are at best repairs to damage caused by unwise or faulty consumption. Many other "goods" are decidedly negative since their consumption (at least beyond a point) impedes human or environmental wellbeing: such as meat, alcohol, sugars and beauty products; and there are many consumption activities which may enhance *individual* wellbeing whilst being harmful to *others*, or to the environment, such as foxhunting or tourist travel. And then, of course, there are many "services" that are necessary but which a well-functioning society would need *less* of: such as bureaucracy or police. To put it simply: our accounting is wrong. Recall the unique voice of Robert Kennedy in the 1960s describing GNP:

It does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their educa-
tion, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry
or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or
the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our courage, nor
our wisdom, nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in
short, except that which makes life worthwhile. (Mankiw, 1999)

In effect, reducing all the negative and undesirable economic activities
might halve global GNP—whilst providing a better world.

Endless growth on a finite planet is impossible; but much before we
get to where growth becomes impossible, it becomes uneconomic: it
damages more than it is worth. We have reached this point, but are unable
to recognize it. To bring economics and wellbeing together, our questions
should be: which economic (and non-economic) activities are *useful* in
the sense of leading to positive human, societal and ecosystems develop-
ment? What kinds of consumption can give maximum wellbeing with
minimum impact? Value Mapping offers a way of addressing this ques-
tion, insofar as it provides process tools for sustainable choices and
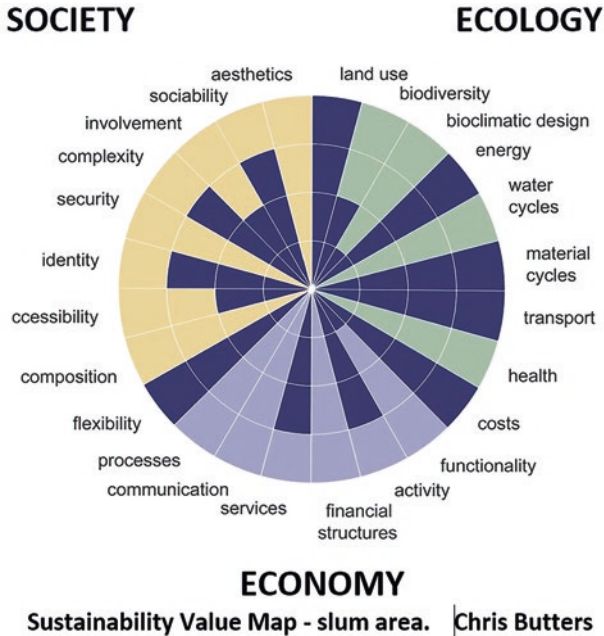behaviour.

Value Mapping

The aim of the simple tools described below is a practical one; it is to
assist the consumer in the daily processes of sustainability choices and
decision making—in a holistic manner. It offers a framework that com-
bines objective and subjective factors, quantities and qualities, ecological
and social considerations, in a holistic approach to consumption.

Decision making—*wise* decision making, that is—must involve both
quantities and qualities. But quantities are ultimately also measures of
quality (or in a broad sense, efficiency). We describe a house needing
200 kWh/m^2/year of energy as "inefficient", one needing 100 kWh/m^2/
year as "good" and one needing zero net energy as "excellent". Similarly,
an ecotope containing only 15 insect species can be described as "poor"
in biodiversity. In terms of impact—in the sense of overall benefits for
healthy development—all quantities can ultimately be reduced to

qualities: excellent, good, mediocre, poor and so on. Additionally, quality is also relative to place and context (what is "too much" energy for a *Norwegian* or for a *Kenyan* house, for example?). Given the complex and partly subjective nature of holistic decisions, they *cannot be* produced by a "software". Hence, quantities not only can but must be given a qualitative value; measured not in mechanistic units but in terms of human, societal and environmental value or *worth*. This is what Value Mapping seeks to achieve. At the same time, Value Maps have the function of shifting our focus to the interconnections. This is in line with the systems or networks approach where "quantities can be measured; qualities need to be mapped" (Capra & Henderson, 2009, p. 7). The two maps presented below for Wellbeing and for Sustainable Consumption illustrate the integration of both. For the sake of clarity, we first very briefly describe the original Sustainability Value Map which the two maps below are developed from.

The Sustainability Value Map (Butters, 2004, 2012) investigates the quality of a project, consumer product, building or region, in environmental as well as economic and social terms. Whereas the environmental aspects are largely objective, the social ones are largely subjective. A segment that is largely filled out indicates high sustainability, whereas a nearly empty segment indicates poor quality. The simplified example here, for a typical slum area, illustrates some of the interesting connections and trade-offs that emerge. In environmental terms, the people of this area have the lowest ecological footprint on the planet: they use virtually no energy, no water, no land, no transport; and their habitat is mainly from recycled materials, built at extremely low cost. It has very high flexibility as a habitat—it can be moved or removed in an hour. However, this is countered by the resulting economic and social deprivation that are evident from the many large "holes" in the diagram, such as very poor health and security conditions of life. Hence, when seen holistically, such an area and social context mapped is very far from sustainable. A sustainable outcome requires reasonably good quality in all three sectors—ecological, economic and social (Fig. 11.1).

The Value Maps for Wellbeing and Sustainable Consumption are primarily geared to the individual, family or group, for consumers to make sustainable consumption choices, wherever deliberate intent and choice

SOCIETY   **ECOLOGY**

aesthetics   land use
sociability   biodiversity
involvement   bioclimatic design
complexity   energy
security   water cycles
identity   material cycles
ccessibility   transport
composition   health
flexibility   costs
processes   functionality
communication   activity
services   financial structures

ECONOMY

Sustainability Value Map - slum area.   **Chris Butters**

Fig. 11.1 Sustainability Value Map with a very unbalanced outcome. Source: Butters (2012)

exist. They are equally relevant at the level of policy making and macro-economics in terms of moving consumption patterns, products and habits in a sustainable direction. They are, further, designed to have two key pedagogical functions. The first is to make visible, in a simple manner, the complex interlinkages between ecology, economy and community aspects of sustainable consumption, and thus to foster a holistic understanding among consumers. The second is that the act of using these tools in discussions and decisions creates a pedagogical process towards clarifying assumptions and values underlying choice, reinforcing sustainable intentions, understanding impacts and channelling consumption towards the most effective outcomes.

The Value Maps oblige users to notice and discuss overlaps, synergies and conflicts between ecological, economic and social goals. The ideal is a balance between these three areas. A picture thus emerges about the *overall* quality of a proposal or product or consumption activity. The Maps can be used by ordinary consumers or experts, insofar as their graphic form is intuitive and easy to use, integrating ecological, economic and social criteria in a single diagram. Assessment is on a simple qualitative scale—from "poor" to "mediocre", "good", "excellent" and "outstanding". As such, Value Maps both inform users about relative consumption impacts and bring forth fascinating discussions and reflections. Although intuitively easy to use, a teaching session with the Value Maps should be run with a facilitator or resource person who can present information on the approximate relative impact of daily activities and typical purchases; and later during group work answer questions that arise.

The Wellbeing Map

The Wellbeing Map is a simple application developed from the hierarchy of human needs. It is designed in extension of the Sustainability Value Map (SVM), on the same holistic principle of overcoming the quantity/quality dichotomy and integrating both quantitative and qualitative factors into one framework. Originally developed as a tool for evaluating products, buildings or cities, the SVM has been applied in planning processes and community projects as well as in other fields (see e.g. Skjerve-Nielssen, 2009; Barahona & Oviedo, 2008). The Wellbeing Map is divided into three equal sectors; individual, local and global. One fills in the sectors up to the values assessed, on a scale from one to five. Scores below two indicate that the outcome is considered poor. It is important to note that the choice of parameters illustrated is provisional and will in any event be contextual; the relative impacts of consumption behaviours will vary between socioeconomic groups and even more in different country contexts (Fig. 11.2).

Whereas both the Sustainability Value Map and the Consumption Value Map below contain objective and subjective factors, the Wellbeing Map asks for a largely subjective evaluation of one's feelings of satisfaction or wellbeing. And just as sustainability has both individual, local and global
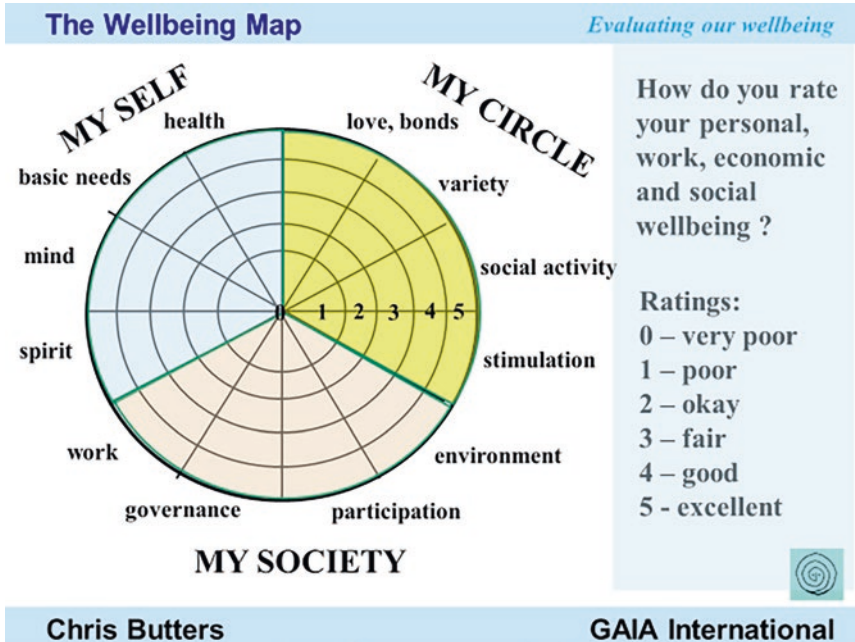
Fig. 11.2   The Wellbeing Map. Source: Chris Butters

dimensions, our feelings of wellbeing relate to three similar levels covered in the Wellbeing Map: the personal, the inner circle and society.

It is important to underline that Value Mapping offers an open system that can, indeed should, be adapted by users to their context, so that a more detailed version might have more than four parameters per sector. And of course, responses, like perceptions of wellbeing, can vary very widely. For example one person may be personally happy but perceive their country to be extremely "unsustainable"; another may perceive their country to be quite good but their own social and professional circle to be environmentally wasteful and careless; and so on. For this reason the parameters should ideally be decided by the persons or group involved. Tasking a group of consumers to develop *their own set* of criteria creates a very fruitful discussion and brings forth many key—often surprising—issues. This also ensures "ownership" of the process.

Lastly, these maps highlight the deeply contextual nature of wellbeing. It has, for example, often been noted in wellbeing studies how people

from, for example, poor and troubled Latin American countries seem to be "happier" than people from economically better-off and more stable countries. Similarly, whereas Norwegians might grumble about the quality of their governance or opportunities for civic participation and score them as a mediocre "3", someone from a poor country in the Global South might immediately award Norway a top score of "5". Wellbeing is indeed individually, historically and culturally relative, and intrinsically contextual.

The Consumption Value Map

Finally the same framework—again presented in a simplified form here—offers a guide to sustainable *consumption*. The Consumption Value Map asks the following question: to what extent does a given consumption item or activity enhance or detract from wellbeing—for myself, my community and my planet? Using the Map requires all our faculties: our head (knowledge, science), our body (feelings, health) and our heart (emotions, values, soul). Whilst it has the same intention as Bhutan's famous system for Gross National Happiness,[2] it makes the three sustainability areas—the personal, the local and the global—explicit to users, as well as their interconnections, and links consumption choices directly to key aspects of wellbeing.

A Value Map should ideally be used both in making decisions, and for ongoing follow up and feedback processes. Whilst detailed data can be used when working with this map, for many purposes it is not necessary to make detailed quantitative estimations. Reasonable awareness of the relative impacts of, for example, solar versus coal, or eating beef versus chicken, aided by a facilitator where appropriate, will be sufficient for arriving at an overall picture and sensible judgements. Judgements should naturally be continually revisited in the light of emerging knowledge (Fig. 11.3).

To offer a few simplified examples of how this map may be used in practical decision making: Buying a bicycle is positive on almost all counts, except for the local economy (jobs for manufacture of items like bicycles are "lost" to China). Buying a car has positive effects for our own wellbeing (convenience and time saving) but negative ones for nearly
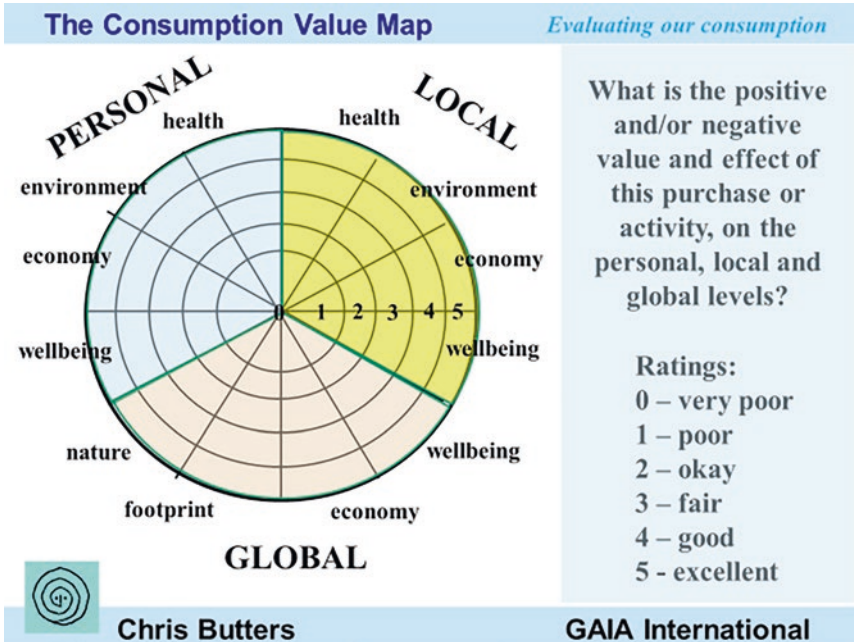
Fig. 11.3 The Consumption Value Map. Source: Chris Butters

everyone else. Tourist travel is good for Thailand's economy, for the airline and for the travellers' wellbeing but bad for much else. Buying ethical shares is good for global environment but perhaps comes at some cost to our own pocket (due to lower returns). And, buying long life or fair trade products or re-using things is ecologically and socially positive but sabotages the global growth economy.

The contextual nature of both wellbeing and consumption cannot be emphasized enough. This means that ascribing some form of universally applicable weighting to parameters of wellbeing or consumption is futile. To take the example of access to energy or water. In Norway, these will generally speaking normally be far down on a list of priorities or resource concerns, whereas in say Egypt they will be near the top. However, a few rich groups in Egypt may have both energy and water readily available, whereas for a few people in Norway—such as farmers in the inland valleys where precipitation is only 400 mm annually—water is indeed a major issue, especially if hydropower storage is allowed to reduce river flows towards the interior.

Table 11.1 Evaluating Wellbeing Intentions versus Impacts

Table 1. Sustainable consumption: the desired outcome of a purchase or activity is evaluated against the impacts—environmental, economic and social.
This is considered on three levels: individual, local and global *(source: Chris Butters)*
WHAT IS THE VALUE/IMPACT OF A PURCHASE OR ACTIVITY FOR:

Wellbeing goal:	Typical negative impacts:
PERSONAL LEVEL:	PERSONAL LEVEL:
1 My physical health, fitness	1 Unhealthy nutrition or activities
2 My environment: eco home, goods	2 Indoor pollution, toxins, energy wasting
3 My economy and meaningful work	3 Waste, luxury, lack of or boring work
4 My happiness, creativity, empathy	4 Negative or stressful focus, egoistic
LOCAL LEVEL:	LOCAL LEVEL:
1 Healthy local environment and nature	1 Pollution, noise
2 Low local ecological footprint	2 Locally polluting, resource depletion
3 Local economy and governance	3 Weakens local production and trade
4 Inner social circle and community	4 Selfish, excluding, conflictual
GLOBAL LEVEL:	GLOBAL LEVEL:
1 Healthy global environment and nature	1 Harmful to global species or biodiversity
2 Global eco footprint/impact	2 High footprint and emissions
3 Global economy, equity	3 Exploitation, inequity
4 Global tolerance, harmony	4 Divisive, excluding, conflictual

Source: Chris Butters

Building on the 12 parameters in the Map, Table 11.1 provides a summary of typical wellbeing goals and consumption impacts. Importantly, all three levels—personal, local and global—are brought into consideration.

Conclusion

There are several emerging examples of integrated, transdisciplinary ways of seeing and acting in the world, many of which sensitize us to the negative impacts that our choices and lifestyles have on others and on the planet. Among these emerging ways of seeing and acting, wellbeing studies in our view form an essential corrective to the technical-economic approaches of the past. However, the new paradigm that wellbeing studies and related approaches support needs to be further developed in the form of practical tools that can move us towards sustainable consumption. In this chapter we have sought to show how Value Maps provide, in a visually

intuitive form, such practical tools, within a framework that assists consumers to evaluate as well as to compare consumption choices in the light of an integral approach to wellbeing—an approach that integrates individual, collective and environmental dimensions. Value Mapping highlights how wellbeing of the self, the community and the planet requires a balance of all areas of sustainability. As consumers we act based on necessities, influences and habits which are both individual and collective, personal and political, conscious and unconscious.

It is tragic that our "development" paradigm encourages those experiencing one lack of wellbeing (hunger) to move towards the opposite lack of wellbeing (obesity). For example, comparing Norway and Bhutan offers useful reflections on the concept of "overdevelopment" in the richest societies (Amundsen and Butters 1995).

If wellbeing is the goal of consumption—as indeed we argue is the case—then that goal should guide not only our own choices, but how we organize our world, how we organize our finance system, what we decide to produce and what we do or do not research, always using a holistic mind-set that explores the real benefits and disbenefits of products, consumption and lifestyles. The strength of the Value Maps is that they *oblige* the consumer or policy maker to think and see in a holistic manner. By offering a simple, practical guide and tool to evaluate, communicate and make decisions, both in daily practice and in policy, Value Mapping is equally applicable on the level of macro policy. Importantly, Value Mapping stresses the process nature of the transition towards sustainable development, and offers appropriate process tools to stimulate such a transition. By also bringing many of the "hidden dimensions" into the light, by making connections visible and by stimulating new conversations and learning processes, Value Mapping may contribute to the radical change that we need.

Notes

1. Indicator sets for wellbeing are many and include the New Economics Foundation (NEF, 2019), the OECD 'How's Life' (2015), the Gallup Health Ways Wellbeing Index (2019) and the Canadian index of Wellbeing (2013). Another approach is offered by the Patterns of Aliveness theory

(Kuenkel, 2015). This builds on a systems view, wherein the basic pattern of organization of all living systems is the network; and because a network is a particular pattern of connections and relationships, thinking in terms of patterns and relationships is the essence of systems thinking (Capra & Jakobsen, 2017).

2. The one country implementing a Wellbeing approach in their planning is Bhutan, whose Gross National Happiness (GNH) model is now spreading worldwide (Ura et al., 2012; Di Tella and MacCulloch, 2008). The GNH concept traces its origins back to Bhutanese Buddhist beliefs, and was formulated in 1972 by the fourth king of Bhutan. The GNH model contains nine basic domains with in total 33 clustered indicators. Seen in detail these build on a total of 124 variables. The nine domains are: psychological wellbeing, time use, community vitality, cultural diversity, ecological resilience, living standard, health, education and good governance. These are all considered equally important for wellbeing and are therefore weighted equally.

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