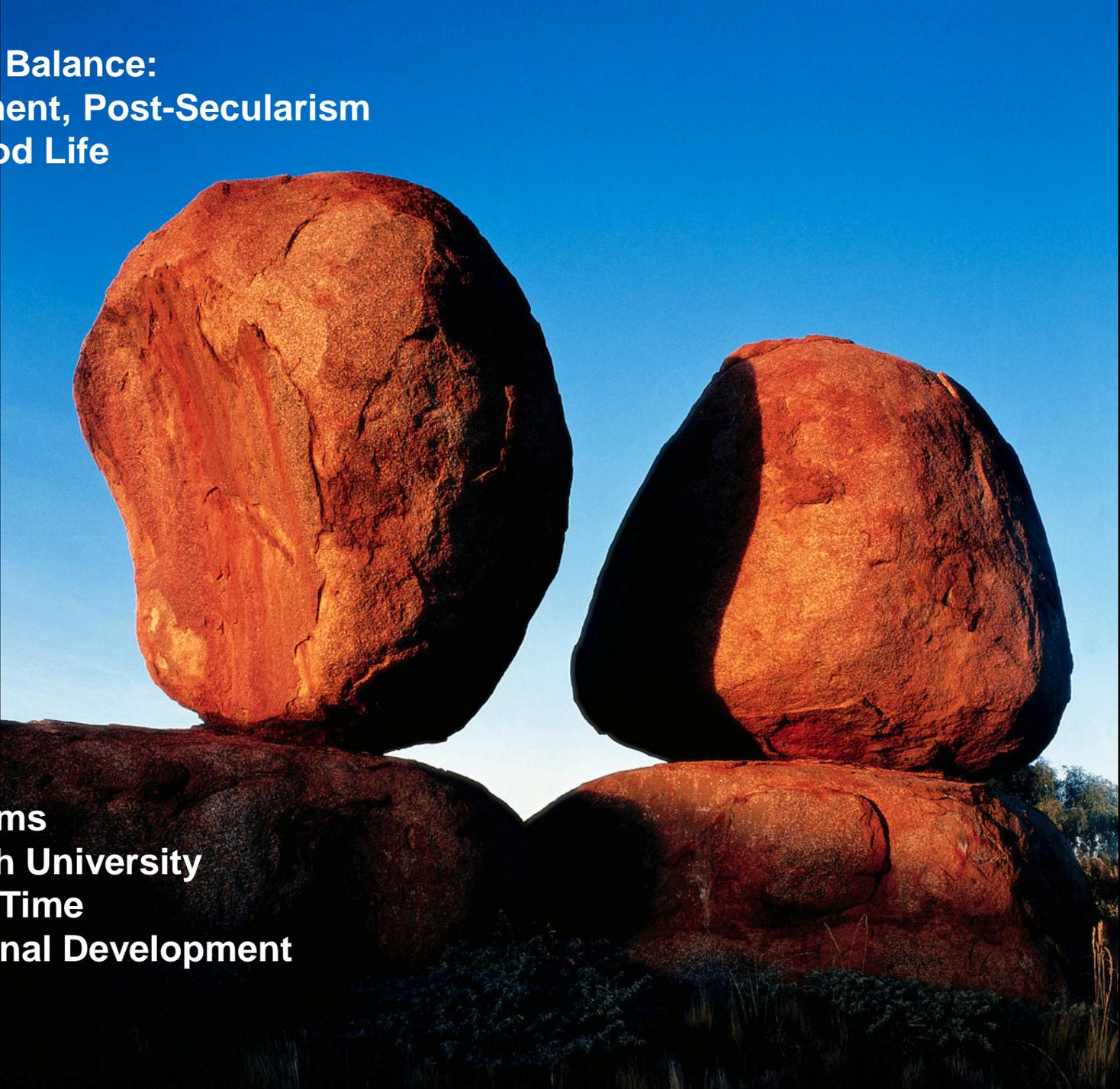


**Finding a Balance:
Development, Post-Secularism
and a Good Life**

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Presentation Structure

- Context of research
 - Me
 - Wellbeing and International Development
 - Outline
 - Why?
 - What?
 - Measures
 - Post-secularism? Faith & Development
 - Operationalising Wellbeing
- Brief comment on Research Design

My Position

- Practitioner / researcher
- Began with academic work on international development, Africa and Latin America
- 25 years in NGOs, 15 overseas
- Development and humanitarian work
- An 'insider'
 - Pros and Cons

Wellbeing and International Development

- Wellbeing is coming of age
 - As a concept
 - As a serious political commitment and objective
- Inadequacies of economic indicators well documented.
- OECD, UN, UK, Kingdom of Bhutan have measures of wellbeing to gauge levels of 'development'
- June 2016, OECD committed itself:
“to redefine the growth narrative to put people’s well-being at the centre of governments’ efforts”.
- Emergency response – ‘human dignity’ Sphere/CHS

Why Wellbeing?

- Wellbeing has much to commend it as a measure:
 - Focused human ‘development’ - Puts the person at the centre
 - Can be holistic
 - Emphasises the positive and aspirations, not gaps and lacks as a poverty focus does. (White, 2009.)
 - A measure for all countries – global
 - UK and Bhutan
 - Voice? Power?
 - Allows the expression of what people wish to do and to be, and what they value – now a popular conception of development (after Sen).
 - Culturally appropriate, space for faith.
 - Potentially allows for some rebalancing of power
 - Service user involvement
 - Structural problem for public services

What Do We Mean By Wellbeing?

- Objective Measures
 - HDI, basic needs ILO
 - Many bleed into grey areas of agency, participation, governance
- Subjective Measures (Subjective Wellbeing)
 - *Life evaluation* – a reflective assessment on a person's life or some specific aspect of it.
 - *Affect* – a person's feelings or emotional states, typically measured with reference to a particular point in time.
 - *Eudaimonia* – a sense of meaning and purpose in life, or good psychological functioning.
 - OECD – 'fit for purpose' for national statistics, when done well.
 - UN annual Happiness Report
- Combined Measures
 - Subjective and Objective
 - Bhutan

Combined Measures – An Example

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH)

“Gross National Happiness is development with values”.

- a. Living standards – material comforts (income, financial security, housing, assets).
- b. Health –physical and mental health.
- c. Education – knowledge, values and skills.
- d. Good governance – how people perceive government functions.
- e. Ecological diversity and resilience – peoples' perception on environment.
- f. Time use – how much time is spent on work, non-work, sleep; work-life balance.
- g. Psychological wellbeing – quality of life, life satisfaction and spirituality.
- h. Cultural diversity and resilience – strength of cultural traditions and festivals.
- i. Community vitality – relationships and interaction, social cohesion and volunteerism.

Supported by Sabine Alkire – composite indicators, Sen's Capabilities Approach

A note: What is International Development?

- ‘International development’ is used with many meanings
- Here – two
 - What those institutions – governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental –deliberately promoting political, economic and social change in the Global South for public good do / cause to happen
 - What people wish to do and be, and what they cause to happen as a result
- Tension between the two is an underlying theme for my research

Post-Secular World? Faith & Devt

- Post-Secular World? Majority claim a faith.
- International devt institutions largely secular – disempowering? Harming?
- Engagement with faith by Int Devt Institutions growing since 1980
 - World Bank
 - USAID
 - DFID
 - UN Agencies
 - Protection and Faith
 - Sphere Standards
- Faith-based international development organisations (along with secular ones) seen growth in funding

Post-Secular World? Faith & Devt

- Engagement with faith by Int Devt Institutions faced comment and criticism
 - Criticised as ‘functional’ / Failing to recognise faith is constitutive of hopes and aspirations – ‘human development’ / ‘wellbeing’
 - Overly focused on Christianity
 - Overly focused on institutionalised religion
 - Claims about distinctive features of FBOs (embedded in communities, universally present, appropriate and in tune) were too generalised and lacked evidence
 - Limited understanding of both faith in wellbeing and how engagement influences institutional landscape of religion
 - Ignoring the risks – secularism’s distinctions have a purpose. Religious tensions amongst refugees in Europe.
 - “Important but not too important”.
 - Moral frameworks rather than organised religion? (White.) Lived religion rather than formal religion? Moral and cultural norms?
 - Wellbeing – a way through this? Sensitive but not prescriptive?

Wellbeing & International Devt

- Substantial research: WED 2005 – 7; W&P 2010-14, both Bath University.
- Framework for wellbeing:
 - Doyal and Gough, Gough, Nussbaum, Sen – White
 - 7/8 ‘domains’: Economic Confidence, Agency & Participation, Social Connections, Close Relationships, Competence & Self-Worth, Physical & Mental Health, Values & Meanings, (Environment).
 - Objective & Subjective
 - Individual & community – social model
 - Dynamic – state and process
 - Includes moral frameworks
- Open, Structured, Prescriptive?
 - Framework ‘generic’ - with space.
 - Test alternative - ‘wellbeing ranking’?

Operationalising Wellbeing

- A number of efforts documented to date in NGO sector
 - Tearfund, Traidcraft, CAFOD, Trocaire, SCIAF, Oxfam
- Wellbeing more recently - success is unclear in terms of:
 - **Influencing interventions'** design and implementation, review and evaluation
 - **Improving outcomes** for women and men, boys and girls
 - **Voice**
 - **Organisational longevity;**
- Too early to call: limited information / new / short-lived
- Vary – level of openness / prescription / methodologies

Research Design

- Under construction:
- Purpose:
 - to evaluate whether and why:
 - Wellbeing as a concept is being used
 - It has influenced the design and evaluation of interventions,
 - It has resulted in improved outcomes,
 - It give greater voice, rebalances power.

Research Strategy

- Comparative, multiple case study approach:
 - Understand the particular, generalise from it
- Multiple methods:
 - Document analysis / In-depth interviews / Focus Group Discussions / Online surveys / Surveys
- On-going action research in Caritas network / Caritas Scotland on integral human devt.
- Other case studies – secular, faith-based
 - (different faiths)

Thank You for Listening.

