Comparing global and local views of wellbeing and development in Peru

Introduction:
Disagreements over development arise in part from different ways of thinking about human well-being. In this research project these different ways of thinking were analysed for Peru in three steps. The first reviews the ontological assumptions behind four national development policy positions. The second combines survey data, ethnography and psychometric analysis to measure individuals’ perceptions of well-being in six rural and urban settlements straddling the Andes. The third analyses congruence and disjuncture between the different views of well-being thereby identified.

Methods:
Mixed method research over five years in collaboration with researchers at the Pontificate Catholic University of Peru and the National University of Central Peru. Methods used included primary surveys, key informant interviews, review of ‘grey’ literature and discourse analysis.

Summary of Findings:
The research identified four global discourses of wellbeing at national level and labelled them “income first, needs first, rights first and local first”. Three individual components of well-being were derived from the primary data using factor analysis and labelled: “improvement with a secure base; raise a family, and better place to live.” Overlaps and gaps between these global and local positions were then identified. The analysis is also used to explain the coexistence of Western and so-called traditional institutions, as well as difficult well-being trade-offs made by Peruvian migrants.

Policy implications:
Policy Implications: The failure of development activities can often be attributed to contrasting top-down and bottom-up visions of well-being and how to pursue them. The research exposes these, and also proposes an innovative multi-disciplinary approach to eliciting them in the field. Such analysis is relevant to understanding variation in the uptake and impact of social protection programmes, for example.

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Selected publications:


Dept webpage address:
http://www.bath.ac.uk/hss/staff/james-copestake/