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Youngwha Kee  
Seung Jong Lee  
Rhonda Phillips *Editors*

# Social Factors and Community Well- Being



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# Social Factors and Community Well-Being

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# Preface

Social factors traverse a large territory of impact and considerations. This volume seeks to explore several factors from the perspective of interaction, impacts, or outcomes on community well-being. It is at this intersection or nexus between social factors, policy, and impacts, and community well-being that insightful work is being done. The idea of influencing social factors and outcomes is of course not new; however, linking this to *community well-being* is a newer endeavor.

We begin this volume with Chap. 1, *Conceptualizing a Community Well-Being and Theory Construct* by HeeKyung Sung and Rhonda Phillips, presenting foundational concepts of well-being. The chapter looks at the relationship between community well-being and relevant theories, to present a construct for thinking about the dimensions inherent in well-being at this level of consideration. Building on theoretical approaches, a construct is offered that helps explain community well-being as a comprehensive concept covering other related life and community concepts. The term community well-being encompasses comprehensive and integrated concepts developed by synthesizing research constructs related to residents' perceptions of the community, residents' needs fulfillment, observable community conditions, and the social and cultural context of the community. Related terms such as well-being, happiness, and quality of life take on a crucial role in constructing community well-being. Community development in particular is explored by integrating related concepts, and major community components. The construct presented is inspired by well-established theoretical analysis such as systems theory, bottom-up spillover theory, social capital, and needs theory.

Next, Seung Jong Lee and Yunji Kim provide an overview of public services as a social factor and policy study in Chap. 2, *Structure of Well-Being: An Exploratory Study of the Distinction between Individual Well-Being and Community Well-Being and the Importance of Intersubjective Community Well-Being*. In this work, a comprehensive framework of well-being clarifies its meaning by distinguishing different types and aspects of well-being. Since public policy concerns public resources these aspects of community well-being are explored. Previous works only identified objective and subjective aspects of community well-being, leading to confusion in the measurement process regarding aggregation from individuals

to the community. To address this issue, a third aspect called intersubjective community well-being measured by evaluative questions is identified. Using survey data from six districts in Seoul, South Korea, individual well-being and community well-being can be distinguished empirically and it is shown that the relationship between intersubjective and objective community well-being is stronger than the relationship between subjective and objective community well-being. This suggests that policymakers can gain better insight into policymaking by paying more attention to intersubjective community well-being, which effectively bridges relevant objective measures to collective evaluation of citizens.

Youngwha Kee and Chaebong Nam explore the aspects of community perceptions in Chap. 3, *Does Sense of Community Really Matter in Community Well-Being?* This chapter compares one vibrant grassroots community with its surrounding municipality in the context of subjective community well-being. Sungmisan is a small community formed from active community organizing and strong grassroots civic networks. It has similar objective conditions—in terms of local public services, or, objective community well-being—to those of its larger municipality host. Still, survey results show that Sungmisan residents were more satisfied with the local public services available in their community than were the municipal residents with theirs, suggesting that objective community well-being does not always determine subjective community well-being. Community-level characteristics, such as sense of community, appear to be the most likely differentiating influence. Sungmisan displayed high community-oriented characteristics, which was strikingly different from those of the larger municipality.

Geoffrey Woolcock's Chap. 4, *The Development and Production of Local, National, and International State of Children's Well-Being Report Cards*, presents the idea that local communities identifying and reporting on key indicators for children and young people is attracting significant attention as a model for many communities across the Asia-Pacific region. A number of these communities have leveraged their work through an association with the UNICEF Child-Friendly Cities model and/or government-funded place-based initiatives, all using various data and well-being reports as a foundational tool for their planning and monitoring. Other communities have looked to the enormous investment in standardized indices or national well-being scorecards to further the interest in how their own children and young people are faring. There is also a growing understanding internationally that 'place-based' and local responses are essential in responding to disadvantages and in promoting community well-being.

In Chap. 5, Sharan Merriam presents *Gender Equity and Community Well-Being*. It is argued here that attention to gender equity including the education and health of girls and women has a direct impact on numerous indicators of community well-being. Several international studies suggest that attention to gender equity creates human and social capital that enables community well-being. Human capital is the knowledge, skills, and health embodied in individuals and social capital refers to the patterns and qualities of relationships in a community characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity. Women's education has been linked to a reduction in infant and childhood mortality, socio-economic

development, community development, physical and mental well-being, and so on. Attention to gender equity and in particular girls and women's education, leads to greater human and social capital which in turn leads to community well-being.

David Sloane and Hyunsun Choi explore the social factor of crime in Chap. 6, *Crime and Community Well-Being: The Role of Social Capital and Collective Efficacy in Increasing Safety*. Safety plays a central role in individual and community well-being. Scholars have long examined an individual's perception of their safety (subjective well-being) and the reality of crime (objective well-being) in their cities and towns. The role that safety has in affecting a community's sense of well-being at a neighborhood scale is explored. Positive community development requires that a neighborhood be safe. Improving safety is not just a role for the police and other governmental agencies. Instead, residents are important, even primary creators of safe neighborhoods in partnership with the criminal justice system. Critical to developing strong community actions to sustain safety are two relatively new concepts in sociology, criminology, and urban planning: social capital and collective efficacy. This chapter provides an exploration of the role these concepts play in increasing a community's sense of well-being through networking and connectivity, which leads to increased safety and happiness.

It is our intent that this volume will serve to spur interest in and more research on the subject of social factors and community well-being. The emergence of ideas and applications is happening rapidly and we sincerely hope this collection of research will be beneficial to supporting research at the beneficial intersection of social factors, policy, and well-being.

Youngwha Kee  
Seung Jong Lee  
Rhonda Phillips



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