Editorial
Leading Wellbeing in Rural Contexts

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"Leading Wellbeing in Rural Contexts" is the theme of this Special Issue of *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* (*JCC*) which is also the final issue of the *JCC*. From 2018, we will be transforming the *JCC* into a book series in order to continue to develop and share the ground-breaking research in the field. The book series will be called *Citizenship and Sustainability in Business and Organizations.*

The seed for this Special Issue on "Leading Wellbeing in Rural Contexts" was planted at a conference under the same title jointly organized by Brathay Trust and the University of Cumbria on its Ambleside campus in November 2016. The premise of the conference was that new ways of working were needed to support wellbeing in places where different types of actors—public, private, third sector, self-employed and volunteers—are more professionally isolated.

From the outset, the Special Issue was envisaged by the editors very much as an opening foray into an area of academic inquiry with a relatively unexplored body of literature to date and without a formal disciplinary "home". Perhaps, therefore unsurprisingly, our various contributors have interpreted the brief diversely, producing a delightfully broad range of articles. The result is that this issue is less cohesive than a "special issue" might be expected to be and draws in authors from several different academic and practitioner disciplines and contexts. Any pre-conceptions we may have had about the theme have been challenged, deconstructed and reconstructed into a new understanding—at least of the underpinning questions, if not yet all the answers.

At the most fundamental level, we found a broad discussion of the term "rural". Some contributors have explicitly discussed the meaning of this (Doughty and Livingstone; Policek), reflecting on the limitations—or lack—of formal definitions. What is apparent is how differently this word is interpreted across the world and what a variation there is in the consideration of rurality at a policy level. Indeed, in Italy, there is no state definition of the term, with the implication that there is no explicit policy. Political definitions have focused on remoteness and geographic characteristics, but several articles reflect on broader issues, such as lifestyle and

structural differences. Two authors have chosen to focus on agriculture as an embodiment of quintessential rurality (Melo; Policek).

The term "wellbeing" was a more deliberately ambiguous choice, selected to denote not only professionally delivered health and social services, but to refer also to quality of life, personal practices or behaviours and informal activities (e.g. community and cultural events). The range of articles reflects this, including case studies of public health, social care and rehabilitation service interventions (Wallcook and Morris; Taylor and Todman; Policek), through to discussion of consumer choices in health and wellbeing (Doughty and Livingstone) and on to a discussion of ethics and the teachings of the Dalai Lama (Egan *et al.*).

Finally, the perspectives of "leadership" and "corporate citizenship" have been approached and discussed in different ways by contributors from the conceptual (Illes) to the applied (Malan; Egan *et al.*). The role of the private sector is discussed in terms of the food supply chain (Melo), technology providers (Doughty and Livingstone) and housing associations (Taylor and Todman). Public sector organizations acting as corporate citizens, "anchor institutions" and agents for change are discussed (Wallcook and Morris; Policek). The relationship between the individual citizen and the corporate entities is explored by both Egan *et al.* and Malan.

One of the interesting outcomes from this collection of papers is that lessons from rural contexts can have much broader relevance. While rural contexts place particular and often more challenging constraints, they reflect a focus on quality of life that is often missing in urban contexts, but may be desirable there. Many contributors have reflected on choices (individual and corporate) that converge towards improved sustainability, quality of life and hence wellbeing.

We have sought to start a discussion of the topic and, as such, have selected articles ranging from the theoretical to the applied, including practical project reports and a case study. *JCC* 68 is structured as follows.

We start with a Turning Point article by the Editors (Marshall and Murphy) reviewing the literature related to the promotion of innovation, attitudes to growth and sustainability and wellbeing in rural ecosystems, particularly exploring the urban–rural differences in businesses' motivations and aspirations. Emerging thinking around "place-based" regional development is that rural businesses and individuals have differing needs from their urban counterparts, but there is a need to develop research in this area. The Turning Point is followed by five research articles, a case study and two project reports, which we outline below.

In her theoretical proposition paper, Katalin Illes reviews literature on leadership and wellbeing, contending that the wellbeing of individual leaders is interconnected with the wellbeing of their organizations. This proposition is explored through review of various models, including neuroscientific perspectives, concluding with suggestions for empirical tests.

This is followed by an exploration by Matthew Egan, Vijaya Murthy and Angela Hecimovic of ethics in business and the attitudes of professionals to the importance of values and ethics. Their study looks at attitudes to using

"virtue ethics" and the teachings of the Dalai Lama in the workplace.

In Jenny Melo's article, there is a discussion of relative roles and power within the food supply chain and what this means for rural economies. The social impact of the power imbalance, particularly on smallholders and farmers, is discussed. The author proposes a new model for agribusiness interaction and poses new questions.

Kevin Doughty and Anne Livingstone reflect on the use of digital and assistive technology in the home by older adults with declining health. The choices and decisions made by rural individuals and their carers are discussed through application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The role of the consumer in exercising their priorities is explored.

The article by Sarah Wallcook and Karen Morris looks at rural health professionals' use of digital technology, their attitudes and perceptions. The authors describe the urban–rural divide and its association with lower health status, with reduced access to services. Digital technology is often proposed as a solution, but is set against a background of poor connectivity infrastructure and perceptions of poor digital skills. The agency of health professionals to promote and introduce digital health interventions is critical. By exploring attitudes within one profession, occupational therapy, through a qualitative study, the authors conclude that digital technology could be implemented successfully to address the rural–urban health divide.

Nicoletta Policek presents a case study paper reflecting on a novel social enterprise within a rural prison and its impact on the community, as an example of corporate citizenship.

This unique social enterprise is both constrained and enabled by its rural landscape. The relation between rural business and society is compared with a neighbouring urban-industrial area.

The final two articles are Project Reports of early stage work. Simon Taylor and Andy Todman explore the impact of a scheme by a rural housing association to introduce digital services and describe their planned research. The project uses an innovative social tariff to provide internet connectivity, transferring a model used in developing economies in Africa to rural Scotland. The second Project Report by Daniel Malan considers the economic cost of health and its importance to business. The author has been involved in development of a scorecard tool to assess health metrics in the workplace. After piloting in North America, it will be adapted for use in South Africa.

This eclectic collection of articles address, in their different ways, the "exam question" we set to contributors, asking for reflections on leadership and wellbeing specifically within a rural context. It is very much the start of the discussion on this topic and one that we look forward to developing further in the future.

As this is the final issue of the *JCC*, we would like to celebrate the life of the journal's Founding Editor Professor Malcolm McIntosh who died peacefully on 7 June 2017. In this apposite quote from his final book, *In Search of the Good Society*, published in November 2017,[1] Malcolm grapples with the

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1 McIntosh, M. (2017) *In Search of the Good Society: An Essay on Love, Hope, Art and Social Progress*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

essence of sustaining wellbeing in a personal as well as a global context:

> One of the issues in thinking about political economy and the good society is making links between values and value, between wealth, health and well-being. Research into longevity in communities with long life expectancies and low levels of many of the illnesses and frailties of affluent societies often leads us to the all-male Mount Athos religious community in Greece where many men live well into their hundreds. This community hardly suffers cancers, Alzheimer or cardiovascular problems: people die of old age. As a cancer survivor myself, I'm intensely interested in lifestyles that last (p. 97).

Fare-thee-well, Malcolm.

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Note from the Publisher

We would like to take the opportunity in this final issue of the *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* to thank all the authors and editorial advisory board members for their outstanding work since the journal's foundation by Malcolm McIntosh and Greenleaf Publishing. The journal has made a significant contribution to the development of research and thought-leadership in corporate citizenship, social responsibility and sustainability and will be cited for many years to come. We would also like to thank our current Editor, David Murphy, for his very valuable contribution in steering the editorial direction and the management of quality articles in more recent years.

We are pleased to inform you that from 2018 we will be continuing the important work of this research community through the transformation of the journal into a book series. This decision enables us to develop significant themes in a deep-dive way, commissioning leading thinkers to edit and contribute to the most burning issues in corporate citizenship. David Murphy will continue to edit the series and will be delighted to talk to you about forthcoming book ideas and proposals. In order to reflect the developments in the field of corporate citizenship, the book series will be called *Citizens and Sustainability in Organizations.*