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The Satisfied Poor: Evidence from South India

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Abstract

The paper explores the extent to which people adapt to their deprived living conditions and what kind of form adaptation processes take. The study combines quantitative and qualitative information drawing back on survey data and case studies from two villages in Andhra Pradesh, India. One of the contributions of the paper is that two distinct adaptation processes in the context of poverty are identified, namely resignation and optimism.

Keywords: Adaptation, Subjective wellbeing, Poverty, India

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1 Introduction

It has been argued that the so-called 'adaptation problem' poses a serious challenge by undermining the reliability of subjective wellbeing (SWB) measures. Qizilbash (2006) argues that the adaptation problem occurs when people's desires and attitudes adapt to the straitened circumstances in which they live. It is widely presumed that adaptation to poverty is a widespread generalised phenomenon and therefore the reliability of utility (measured, for example, in the form of SWB) as a proxy for wellbeing is questioned (see Nussbaum, 1995, 2000, 2006; Sen, 1990, 1992, 1999). The value of a SWB as an indicator of wellbeing would have to be questioned if the adaptation problem systematically affects subjective reports of satisfaction. The aim of this study is to explore whether and to what extent people adapt to their deprived living conditions (i.e., report to be satisfied despite living in poverty) and how people adapt (i.e., what kind of form adaptation processes take). A defining feature of this paper is that it includes case studies based on survey data from two villages and develops a methodology for combining quantitative and qualitative information to enhance our understanding of adaptation processes. The main findings are that the poor, on average, are less satisfied with their lives compared to their non-poor counterparts as are the lower castes and Muslims compared to the higher castes. Hence, apart from economic conditions, the social context the individual is embedded in and constraining structures (caste) seem to influence people's SWB. Moreover, the findings suggest that a person's evaluation of the past and the expectations regarding the future influence his or her subjective wellbeing. The paper identifies two different adaptation processes in the context of poverty, namely resignation and optimism.

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 briefly summarises some of the literature on adaptation; Section 3 considers the findings of relevant empirical studies; Section 4 distinguishes between different forms of adaptation; Section 5 investigates the extent and scope of adaptation in two rural villages in Andhra Pradesh using quantitative and qualitative techniques; and Section 5 concludes.

2 Adaptation: A literature review

The psychologist Martin Seligman (1975) discovered in rather cruel experiments with dogs a phenomenon which he terms 'learned helplessness'. During these experimental trials, a dog was repeatedly given electric shocks while being exposed to a specific sound. After some time, the same dog was again exposed to the sound (and additionally a flashing light) but was also given some time to enable the dog to avoid the electric shock by jumping over a low divider. The time given was sufficient for the dog to respond but the dog did not even try to avoid the electric shocks. Seligman thus concludes that the dog had learned to be helpless, i.e., learned to believe that nothing it would do could

change the outcome of the situation.¹ In further experiments, however, Seligman (1975) observes that not all dogs would show this kind of resignation. Some of the dogs would still try to avoid the undesirable situations whereas others learned to be helpless.²

Rabow, Berkman and Kessler (1983) apply these findings to poor people of the Appalachian region in the US.³ They argue that learned helplessness is an acquired state where people fail to perceive contingencies between behaviour and outcome; expected frustration and failure because of past experiences; do not receive rewards for expanded efforts, and finally feel hopelessly lost for solutions to environmental demands. The authors hence conclude that learned helplessness in humans is the ‘... extreme consequence of objective powerlessness and of adaptation to cultural and structural barriers to achievement ...’ (ibid: 428).⁴

Social indicators and research on subjective wellbeing have a long tradition (see Neff and Olsen 2007 for a brief overview). One of the ongoing debates in the field concerning adaptation is concerned with the (lack of) overlap between ‘objective’ (i.e., income) and ‘subjective’ indicators of wellbeing (i.e., SWB).⁵ For example, Wolfgang Zapf (1984) in a book about the quality of life in former West Germany finds two types of discrepancies between objective and subjective indicators of wellbeing. Some of the surveyed persons were found to be objectively well-off but reported do be dissatisfied with their quality of life. Zapf names these people the ‘frustrated privileged’ and terms this phenomenon the ‘dissatisfaction dilemma’ (dissonance). The second discrepancy he notes was that there were people who were objectively deprived but nonetheless claimed to be satisfied with their quality of life. These people he calls the ‘adapted people’ (adaptation) and terms this phenomenon the ‘satisfaction-paradox’ (see Table 1).⁶

¹ Nussbaum (2006: 344) sees these ‘... deformed preferences ...’ which are ‘... the product of unjust background conditions ...’ as ‘... a recipe for endorsing an unjust status quo’.

² Later, Seligman’s findings were replicated with humans and as a result his original theory was extended (see Abramson et al., 1978 cited in Olsen and Schober, 1993: 182). The theory was further modified to be able to distinguish between acute or chronic helplessness.

³ In fact they base their work on a previous work by Ball (1968) which contains anecdotal evidence on the Appalachians region.

⁴ As a policy consequence, they argue that ‘some individuals who have been conditioned to a life of poverty will not always perceive or respond to newly presented opportunities and challenges’ (Rabow, Berkman and Kessler, 1983: 419).

⁵ There is especially a vast literature on the relationship between income and subjective wellbeing or happiness (see, for example, Easterlin, 2001; Frey and Stutzer, 2000).

⁶ The satisfaction paradox is equivalent to Qizilbash’s adaptation problem.

Table 1. Four wellbeing positions

Objective indicators of wellbeing	Subjectively perceived quality of life	
	Positive	Negative
Positive (i.e., high income)	Wellbeing	Dissonance
Negative (low income)	Adaptation	Deprivation

Source: Based on Zapf (1984: 24).

Glatzer (1987 in Olsen and Schober, 1993: 178) later tries to explain this phenomenon with the help of Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. Festinger's theory postulates that dissatisfaction is a state which people cannot endure for a long time because of the associated cognitive tension. Hence, they have to try to reduce this tension which they can do in two ways. The first way is to change the situation so that it meets the standards of the person, whereas the second way is to change their standards in order to adapt them to the situation. If the second way is chosen, the satisfaction-paradox is produced.

An alternative explanation is put forward by Olsen and Schober (1993). The authors develop a theoretical framework by using the theory of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1979) in combination with the 'theory of minimization of cognitive dissonance' (Festinger, 1978) to explain the satisfaction-paradox. They believe that the theory of learned helplessness by itself is not enough to explain the satisfaction paradox since learned helplessness constitutes an end state. Olsen and Schober therefore integrate the theory of cognitive dissonance into a model to explain adaptation.⁷ The authors (1993: 188) conclude that:

...being unhappy with the living conditions and yet 'knowing' that all available coping-strategies will have no positive effect on the situation, creates a cognitive dissonance within the individual, that he will try to reduce. This reduction can be achieved either by finally using an effective coping-strategy or by the re-evaluation of the perceived situation with adapted (lowered) standards.

However, even if a person reports to be satisfied despite being poor, the person might not also be satisfied with objectively unsatisfactory circumstances (Teschl and Comim, 2005: 238).

As we have shown, there is some sociological and social-psychological literature on adaptation which is closely related to the adaptation problem. In the following, accounts

⁷ Adaptation in the form of the 'satisfaction-paradox' as described by Zapf (1984).

of adaptation in moral philosophy are reviewed which are directly relevant to the adaptation problem.⁸

Elster's (1982, 1983) account of adaptive preferences is based on the parable of a fox, who, dying of hunger, sees some ripe grapes that the fox is not able to reach and finally decides that they are too green and fit only for boors (Qizilbash, 2006: 93). We could argue that the fox finds himself in straitened circumstances, i.e., is literally dying of hunger, and as a survival strategy changes his preferences. In general, Elster believes that adaptation is not intuitional and therefore different from character planning and is neither shaped by learning nor past experience. Thus, in his eyes, adaptation is due to habituation and resignation to poor circumstances, i.e., a downgrading process of the inaccessible options (sour grapes effect). Elster explicitly perceives adaptation to increase individual wellbeing, but at the cost of autonomy (see also Teschl and Comim, 2005: 236).

Amartya Sen's work stretches over decades and is spread over a vast number of journals, books and lectures. Consequently, a summary of Sen's work on adaptation might not be exhaustive but still gives a clear idea about his position. The problem of adaptive preferences is used by Sen to reject utilitarian notions of wellbeing.⁹ Sen's conception of adaptation is clearly broader than that of Elster (see Qizilbash, 2006a), since he restricts adaptation not only to preference or desire change but extends it to life-long habituation (Nussbaum, 1995). His notions of adaptation can be broadly summarised as accounts of 'adapted perceptions' (Sen, 1985: 196) and the 'legitimacy of the unequal order' (Sen, 1990: 12). One of Sen's earliest accounts of adaptation is based on a post-famine survey of widows in Singur, West Bengal, India in the year 1944. The survey findings suggest a significant difference between these self-reports of the widows regarding their health and external (objective) observations. In the light of these findings Sen argues (1985: 188):

... if a starving wreck, ravished by famine, buffeted by disease, is made happy through some mental conditioning (say, via the 'opium' of religion), the person will be seen as doing well on this mental states perspective.

In this example Sen states that people adapt their perceptions as an outcome of a process of social or cultural conditioning, i.e., people basically learn to adjust to straitened circumstances by the '... sheer necessity of survival'¹⁰ (Sen, 1984: 309 and

⁸ Moral philosophical discussions of adaptation are part of a general critique of utilitarianism. Three of the most prominent examples are found in the work of Jon Elster, Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

⁹ In order to justify his capability approach.

¹⁰ As examples he mentions the hopeless beggar, the precarious landless labourer, the dominated housewife, the hardened unemployed or the overexhausted coolie and concludes:

1987: 63). 'Through this process of social or cultural conditions not only individuals but also groups in society are entrenched in deprivation' (Sen, 1992: 54). This then indirectly leads to the 'acceptance of the unequal order' and turns the deprived into '... implicit accomplice[s]' (Sen, 1990: 126).

Martha Nussbaum's views on adaptation are quite similar to those of Elster and Sen.¹¹ One major difference is that she acknowledges that adaptation can actually be positively good.¹² If people take a realistic view and adapt to the circumstances they live in, it can be positively good (Nussbaum, 1995: 136). This, however, is the case only if the circumstances they live in are not straitened. She argues that the acceptance of deprivation and what she calls 'bad fate effects' can bias the self-reported wellbeing upwards, i.e., that deprived people report to be happier than their objective circumstances would suggest. In her work on adaptation she tries to differentiate life-long habituation (due to the absence of information) from simple forms of adaptation like giving up a desire one once had. She argues that due to habituation effects, women on a large scale undervalue central human capabilities which they might later come to value once they come to know about them. The evidence she presents is based on the life stories of two women (Vasanti of Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat, and Jayamma of the state capital of Kerala, Trivandrum) and a group of women (of Mahabubnagar, Andhra Pradesh) in India (see Nussbaum, 2000). Vasanti lived for a long time in an abusive marriage, suffering from violence and domestic exploitation. After Vasanti escaped her abusive marriage with the help of her brother and a nongovernment organisation, she seemed to be happier and more confident. The life during her marriage was not the life she preferred, but the only one she could have at that time.

The second example of adaptation Nussbaum relates is that of Jayamma, a woman who is in her sixties. Jayamma was born in deprived circumstances and worked for four decades in a brick kiln, earning less than the men while doing the same (or even harder) work. Jayamma seemed to have resigned to her situation, accepting discrimination and exploitation. Nussbaum (1998, 2000) believes that Jayamma is a clear example of a woman who, because of the lack of alternatives, had resigned to bad circumstances – and such a resignation cannot be regarded as something a person would desire.

'...the mental metric of pleasure or desire is just too malleable to be a firm guide to deprivation and disadvantage'.

¹¹ Nussbaum argues that Sen's version of the capability approach might be vulnerable to the same criticisms arising from the adaptation problem since poor people might adapt to unfavourable conditions by adjusting the list of capabilities. Hence, she concludes that there is a need to provide a list of valuable capabilities to avoid the problem (Qizilbash, 2006b).

¹² Apart from being a survival strategy and therefore good (Elster, 1982, 1983).

Lastly, Nussbaum narrates the story of a group of women in a village in the Mahabubnagar area who did not have access to basic resources. Only after a government consciousness-raising programme informed them about their rights, the women changed their behaviour and stood up for their rights and achieved access to basic resources such as drinking water, electricity and a bus service. Before the awareness-raising programme the women did not consider the lack of basic resources as a bad situation since they have never experienced any other way. Nevertheless, the moment they got the chance and learned about the possibilities they quickly adjusted to the new situation. Clearly, Nussbaum sees the lack of information or knowledge and the lack of autonomy to decide as the basis of the problem.

Another rather anecdotal but outstanding evidence of adaptation is in a work by Erika Blacksher (2002). She uses the example of her mother Sally to describe the effects of chronic deprivation. Sally lived through parental abuse, domestic conflict, financial instability and insecurity and educational deprivation throughout her life. Blacksher (2002: 467) writes that Sally:

... did not know she was capable, she did not think she deserved a better life. Although she possessed the skills to survive, she lacked the more complex human functionings (self-esteem, imagination and hope) that would have enabled her to see and stretch for opportunities.

Hence, Blacksher concludes that chronic deprivation has an effect on the physical, psychological self as well as 'moral self', which she considers to be the person's moral agency, encompassing 'one's capacity to act autonomously, to be self-determining, to make a life plan that reflects one's values, interests, and hopes for the future (ibid.: 460). In contrast to Nussbaum's examples, this points not to a lack of relevant information but to diminished autonomy due to a lack of self-esteem and other human functionings.

Combining the literature on adaptation by Elster, Sen and Nussbaum and the literature on SWB, Teschl and Comim (2005) propose to differentiate between 'natural' and 'resigned' adaptation. People indeed inevitably change over time. They change with regard to age, health, jobs, social status, experience, etc., so there is a need for them to adapt to these changes by altering their goals (ibid.: 239). Natural adaptation processes might not distort people's satisfaction reports whereas the resigned adaptation to adverse circumstances most likely does. Teschl and Comim hence conclude that a focus on adaptation processes that actually distort people's perceptions becomes relevant for the analysis of SWB.

As we have seen the different authors describe quite different notions of adaptation (see Table 2), but nevertheless there are some commonalities which are worth pointing out.

Table 2. Overview selected accounts of adaptation

Author	Characteristics	Examples	Type
Seligman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned helplessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiments with dogs 	Experimental
Rabow et al.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned helplessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor in the Appalachians 	Empirical
Glatzer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction-paradox 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWB in Germany, cognitive dissonance 	Empirical / hypothetical
Olsen and Schober	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction-paradox 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned helplessness and cognitive dissonance 	Hypothetical
Elster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive preferences • Good for wellbeing, but loss of autonomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fox, dying of hunger, sees some ripe grapes which he is not able to reach and finally finds them to be too green and fit only for boors 	Hypothetical
Sen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted perception • Survival strategy • Legitimacy of the unequal order • Implicit accomplice • Social or cultural conditioning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectively perceived health against actual health of widows • Deprived person who is poor, exploited, overworked and ill, but who has been made satisfied with his lot by social conditioning • Hopeless beggar • Precarious landless labourer • Dominated housewife • Overexhausted coolie 	Empirical / hypothetical
Nussbaum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive preferences • Can be positively good if not occurring under straitened circumstances • Lack of information, knowledge, autonomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman in an abusive relationship (Vasanti) • Woman working under bad condition (Jayamma) • Women in a village in AP 	Anecdotal
Blacksher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of complex human functionings, self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sally lived in deprivation; had two abusive husbands 	Anecdotal
Teschl and Comim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural adaptation • Resigned adaptation 		Hypothetical

One such communality is that they all focus on adaptation to deprived, unjust, oppressive circumstances, i.e., the problem which Qizilbash (2006a) terms the adaptation problem. Another communality is that adaptation is seen as an internal process, i.e., a process within the person (even if it is caused by external circumstances) which (except for Blacksker's case and only partly for Nussbaum's cases) can be interpreted to have some function, as for example, sheer survival. All accounts also have in common that adaptation is reversible, i.e., that people can change.

Some of the evidence for adaptation presented above is often criticised for being too theoretical or anecdotal (see Burchardt 2005) and there seems to be only a small number of studies focusing on the adaptation problem in developing countries. In the following section I intend to briefly introduce some of these studies.

3 Existing evidence from country studies

Clark and Qizilbash (2005, 2007) briefly investigate adaptation in South Africa. In general, their sample from two poor communities (Khubus and Murraysburg) reported high levels of satisfaction (73 percent and 82 percent) despite high unemployment rates, high illiteracy rates and a lack of health care which are consistent with adaptation (Clark and Qizilbash, 2005). They also find some evidence of adaptation across dimensions of wellbeing (housing and education)¹³ for the same South African sample (see also Barr and Clark, 2007).

Similarly, Graham and Hoover (2007) observe high levels of optimism among the poorest in Africa using Afrobarometer data. In earlier studies for Latin America, Russia and the US, they define optimism as positive expectations for the respondents and for their children and a more positive assessment of one's own status compared to one's actual objective situation. In Africa, however, they define people as optimistic when they have positive expectations (only) for their children and perceive their own economic status to be higher than an objective measure would indicate. Hence, they conclude that optimism can play an instrumental (psychological) role in survival under dire circumstances. It may also reflect, they add, a realistic assessment that conditions are so bad that they can only improve.

Biswas-Diener and Diener conduct an empirical study of adaptation and subjective wellbeing among the poor in Calcutta (2001), and among two homeless communities in the USA (2006).¹⁴ They find common characteristics among the homeless in the two samples: they express as being mainly satisfied with most of their social domains (social life, romantic relations, friends, and family) and they are highly satisfied with themselves (their self, their morality, physical appearance, and intelligence).¹⁵ In contrast to the US sample, the Calcutta sample expressed significantly greater satisfaction with their overall

¹³ In the housing domain they find that the majority of people who live in shacks actually thought that a person could 'get by' in a shack. However, the findings for the health and education domains were not conclusive.

¹⁴ The poor were composed of slum dwellers, pavement dwellers and sex workers in Calcutta and homeless people in Fresno, California and Dignity Village, Portland, Oregon.

¹⁵ Interestingly, however, the North American sample seems to be much less satisfied with their self than those in Calcutta.

social lives, romantic relationships and their families. Another difference is that the Indian sample reports to be more satisfied with their income, while the US sample seems to be more satisfied with their health. The difference between the US and Indian sample could reflect the fact that the US homeless have been better off before but have become homeless because of tragic personal and economic circumstances whereas in Calcutta most respondents have always been poor and are part of functioning families with supporting networks of relatives and friends.

Camfield (2007) notes that the majority of people sampled in Bangladesh – including the poor – seem to enjoy relatively high levels of happiness. Nonetheless there are significant differences between those who believe they are rich and those who claim to be poor. More people among the rich report to be ‘very happy’ (31.5 percent) compared to the poor (4.7 percent); and among the poor more people report to be ‘not happy’ (33.3 percent) compared to the rich (6.2 percent). Camfield also finds age and gender differences in her sample. More young males report to be ‘not happy’ (28 percent) compared to young females (13 percent).¹⁶ This is reversed among older people. For example, 52 percent of older males report being ‘very happy’ while 19 percent claim to be ‘not happy’; this compares with 25 percent of older females stating ‘very happy’ and another 25 percent saying ‘not happy’. Happiness, Camfield believes, is related to many factors, such as the socioeconomic status of the person, life achievements, good relationships with the family, partnerships, children, education, and community and life domains such as health, housing or food shortages.

In sum, these studies, based in a developing-country context, report fairly high levels of life satisfaction or happiness for their samples. They all find that a large proportion of the poor report high satisfaction levels, although not as high as the non poor. There is also evidence of high optimism levels, that people have high expectations, for example, for the future (i.e., for the future of their children) (see Graham and Hoover, 2007). Moreover, the Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001, 2006) studies seem to suggest that individuals’ SWB partly depends on their own past. Lastly, I want to highlight that SWB seems to be influenced by many factors such as family, relationships, self and socioeconomic status (see Camfield, 2007).

There are few systematic attempts to study adaptation and poverty¹⁷ in specific contexts, particularly in a rural Indian setting. This study tries to fill this gap. In the next section, the forms that adaptation to poverty can take are discussed.

¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that young is defined as 18-45 years old while old is defined as over 45 years old.

¹⁷ There is, however, a vast literature on poverty in India, which is briefly touched upon in the next section.

4 Forms of adaptation

The term *adaptation* describes a range of mechanisms and processes which enable people to adjust and cope with various kinds of situations and changes in their lives. As such, it has been used across intellectual disciplines to portray rather different phenomena, which has resulted in some confusion.¹⁸ In an effort to distinguish between different processes of adaptation, this section takes its cue from Teschl and Comim (2005). The authors identify two distinct adaptation processes, namely natural adaptation and resignation. Contrary to Teschl and Comim (2005), this section proposes a threefold categorisation of adaptation.

First, adaptation can be classified as a natural process which plays a vital role over the life cycle. People inevitably change over time and hence need to change or adapt to these changes – such as to age, health, jobs, social status, experience, etc. – by altering their goals (Teschl and Comim, 2005: 239). This corresponds with Nussbaum's (1995: 136) account of adaptation where people take a realistic view and adapt to the circumstances in which they live. Natural adaptation, then, occurs independently of the individual's actual quality of life and is of limited relevance for exploring the adaptation problem, where adaptation occurs in the context of poverty or deprivation.

Second, in addition to Teschl and Comim, I suggest that a phenomenon which has been referred to as *optimism* (Graham and Hoover, 2007) has to be taken into account when focusing on adaptation to poverty. People are optimistic when they have positive expectations regarding their own or their children's future and assess their situation more cheerfully than might be justified given their objective circumstances. This overlaps with what Zapf (1984) has termed the 'satisfaction paradox' (see Table 1). Optimisms and the satisfaction paradox also seem to correspond to Sen's accounts of life-long habituation (see Sen, 1984, 1985, 1987) and Nussbaum's accounts of habituation effects in which she describes the lives of women who undervalue the central human capabilities they later learn to value and appreciate (see Nussbaum 1995, 1998, 2000). In these accounts people basically learn to be satisfied with their lives despite their deprived living conditions.

Lastly, the third form of adaptation to take into account is resignation. Resignation can occur under many different conditions and basically reflects the fact that people abandon their wants, aspirations and expectations as hopelessness and despair set in. In other words, they resign themselves to their fate. This is similar to Seligman's (1976) notion of 'learned helplessness' which describes a psychological condition where humans learn to

¹⁸ Other contributions in this volume have extensively summarised the theoretical literature on adaptation. This section therefore focuses on selected works which are particularly relevant for the empirical work and arguments presented below.

be helpless in a seemingly uncontrollable situation and as a result, remain passive despite the possible harmfulness of the situation. In some cases, Seligman notes that people would remain passive even if they acquired the power to escape their plight. This threefold categorisation of adaptation helps focus our analysis, which aims to explore the extent of adaptation to economically deprived circumstances. As we will see, distinguishing between the different forms of adaptation requires us to supplement quantitative work with an in-depth qualitative analysis.

5 The data

The following pages explore the extent of adaptation to poverty in two rural Indian villages, i.e., the degree to which poor people claim to be satisfied given their living conditions. This is done by exploring the relationship between expenditure (as an 'objective' indicator of the current living standard) and SWB. Our analysis also looks at distinct social groups, which in the case of India are castes.¹⁹ Elsewhere (see Neff, 2007) I show that such a more differentiated view on distinct social groups (using the case of South Africa) can enhance our understanding of subjective wellbeing.

The survey data consist of a household questionnaire (187 households), an individual questionnaire (one in each household, i.e., 187) and qualitative follow-up interviews with selected respondents. The data were collected between February and June 2007 in two villages (in two different *mandals*) of the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, India. The first village, Chinnapalli, has around 100 households whereas the second village, Peddapalli,²⁰ is double the size. Table 3 summarises the main demographic composition of the villages. A random sample²¹ of the two villages was drawn after the completion of a 2007 census and each of the randomly sampled households was asked to respond to

¹⁹ The caste categorisation is based on the official categories used by the government of India. The scheduled caste consists of Dalits (former 'untouchables'), the Other Backward castes consist of around 3,000 sub-castes which are in the middle of the Hindu hierarchy and the Forward castes are traditionally those at the top of the Hindu hierarchy, such as Brahmins. This categorisation was introduced to identify target groups for reservation policies.

²⁰ In order to protect the identity of the respondents, the villages have been given pseudonyms. This has been done especially because the data and the case studies have been and are used in a number of other studies.

²¹ The household sample survey respondents were selected according to a proportional clustered random sample based on caste. Later, the household was revisited and the individual sample survey was conducted with either the household head or the spouse, again selected on a random procedure. Since we had a list with all names of the people and had identified household heads and spouses, we selected the person whose first name started with the first letter in the alphabet. The selection was purposeful based on their SWB answers and economic situation.

a household questionnaire. After that, either the household head or the spouse was interviewed individually (in accordance with random sampling). Later, selected individuals were re-visited and an in-depth interview was recorded on tape. They were specifically selected on the basis of their answers to the subjective questionnaire, i.e., on their subjective perceived economic position and life satisfaction.

Table 3. Village demographics

	Peddapalli		Chinnapalli	
Demographics				
Adults	681	(70%)	306	(67%)
Children	289	(30%)	148	(33%)
Total number of people	967	(100%)	454	(100%)
Total number of households	211		102	
Average household size	4.58		4.36	
Sample size	128		59	
Sampling rate	61%		58%	
Caste composition				
	No. of households / %		No. of households / %	
Forward caste (FC)	89	(42%)	28	(27%)
Other backward caste (OBC)	22	(11%)	30	(29%)
Muslim (M)	28	(13%)	1	(1%)
Scheduled caste (SC)	72	(34%)	43	(42%)
Total	211	(100%)	102	(100%)

Source: Own household census (2007).

5.1 Quantitative analysis

Subjective wellbeing is operationalised as the satisfaction with life in general. The question asked was: 'Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with your life as-a-whole in general?' The scale ranged from one to seven ('very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'rather satisfied', 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', 'rather dissatisfied', 'dissatisfied', and 'very dissatisfied').

In contrast to the findings for South Africa (Clark and Qizilbash, 2007) and Bangladesh (Camfield, 2007), the sample respondents in rural Andhra Pradesh are generally not satisfied with their life in general (see Table 4). The largest share of respondents are 'dissatisfied' (21.9 percent) with their life in general and only a very small share of the people report to be 'very satisfied' (1.6 percent) or 'very dissatisfied' (4.3 percent). Aggregated, we can say that 43.3 percent claim to be more dissatisfied with their life ('rather dissatisfied', 'dissatisfied', or 'very dissatisfied') and 35.8 percent are more satisfied (i.e., 'rather satisfied', 'satisfied', or 'very satisfied'). 20.9 percent of the respondents claim to be neutral ('neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'). There is no significant difference between men's and women's mean SWB level, but all those who

Table 4. General satisfaction with life

SWB	Freq.	%	Aggregated %	SWB recoded
Very satisfied	3	1.6	36	Satisfied
Satisfied	27	14.4		
Rather satisfied	37	19.8		
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	39	20.9	21	Neutral
Rather dissatisfied	32	17.1	43	Dissatisfied
Dissatisfied	41	21.9		
Very dissatisfied	8	4.3		
Total	187	100	100	

Source: Own survey data (2007).

have reported to be ‘very dissatisfied’ (N=eight) are women. Five of these ‘very dissatisfied’ women are widows and one is living alone, one is an elderly lady living alone with her also elderly husband. Widowhood, as Green and Hulme (2005: 870) explain, often becomes a negative status, resulting in a social casting of widows as second-class citizens. As a consequence of such social casting widows are often stripped from their assets through a politically institutionalised process.

There are two main findings in the SWB literature. One is that the poor are tend to be less satisfied with their life compared to the non-poor and the second is that that money does buy happiness, but only at diminishing rate. Money does buy happiness, especially for the poor, but after a certain threshold level, the impact of money on SWB is diminishing (see for example Clark and Oswald, 1994, 1996; Blanchflower and Oswald, 2004). Testing the hypotheses whether poor people tend to be less satisfied, we can see that SWB and expenditure quintile groups are highly significantly correlated (Kendall’s tau-b = 0.251; $p > 0.00$), i.e., that the higher the expenditure of a household is, the more likely the respondents report a higher life satisfaction. Indeed, on average (see Table 5) there are statistically highly significant differences²² regarding the mean satisfaction level between the expenditure quintile groups (one = very dissatisfied – seven = very satisfied). The lowest quintile groups have by far the lowest mean satisfaction of 2.95. The highest satisfaction level, however, is not among the highest expenditure quintile group (with a mean satisfaction of 4.11) but among the third expenditure quintile group (mean satisfaction level of 4.32). The lowest two expenditure quintile groups are both below the total average of 3.77. These findings confirm the hypothesis that the poor people in our sample are on average less satisfied with their lives in general compared to their non-poor counterparts. The highest mean expenditure level is to be found in the middle-income group, the fourth and highest expenditure quintile levels in contrast have lower average SWB levels. This finding seems to confirm the hypotheses in the literature

²² $F = (df 4) 8.41; p > 0.00$.

that there is a diminishing return to money (or wealth). The higher ones expenditure level, the higher one's life satisfaction, but only up to a certain threshold. From this threshold a gain in expenditure raises life satisfaction only at a diminishing rate. Once the basic needs of people are met, a gain in expenditure seems not to influence their life satisfaction substantially.

There are in total 15 people (12.5 percent) out of all 187 respondents who display the satisfaction-paradox phenomenon, i.e., report to be satisfied with their lives, despite being poor (see Table 6, grey shaded sections). Within the lowest expenditure quintile group, 16.2 percent of the people report to be satisfied with their lives and within the group of the second expenditure group, 24.3 percent report to be satisfied ('very

Table 5. Mean general satisfaction with life by expenditure quintiles

Expenditure quintiles	Mean	Std deviation
Lowest quintile	2.95	1.39
2 nd quintile	3.22	1.38
3 rd quintile	4.32	1.40
4 th quintile	4.24	1.34
Highest quintile	4.23	1.58
Total	3.80	1.52

Notes: Expenditure is measured as the adjusted (adult equivalence scale) per capita monthly household expenditure. SWB is measured on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied).

Source: Own household and individual sample survey (2007).

Table 6. General satisfaction with life by expenditure quintiles

Expenditure quintiles	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Total
Lowest quintile	23 62.2%	8 21.6%	6 16.2%	37 100%
2nd quintile	24 64.9%	4 10.8%	9 24.3%	38 100%
3rd quintile	10 27.0%	10 27.0%	17 45.9%	37 100%
4th quintile	11 29.7%	8 21.6%	18 48.6%	38 100%
Highest quintile	13 33.3%	9 23.1%	17 43.6%	37 100%
Total	81 43.3%	39 20.9%	67 35.8%	187 100%

Note: Expenditure is measured as the adjusted (adult equivalence scale) per capita monthly household expenditure.

Source: Own survey data (2007).

Table 7. General satisfaction with life by expenditure quintiles

Caste	Mean SWB	Std dev.	Median expenditure	Std dev.	N
Forward castes	4.33	1.50	1461.61	1536.74	68
Backward castes	4.00	1.56	1164.95	744.94	34
Scheduled castes	3.36	1.35	1008.27	779.62	67
Muslim	3.00	1.46	1376.14	1407.16	18
Total	3.80	1.52449	1198.55	1204.97	187

Source: Own survey data (2007).

satisfied', 'satisfied', or 'rather satisfied'). In all, 20 percent or one-fifth of the respondent of the lowest two expenditure quintile groups are satisfied despite being poor, which constitutes a high prevalence of adaptation to poverty (the adaptation problem).

Being member of a caste group also seems to have an effect on SWB. The highest castes also report the highest average SWB level, as Table 7 displays. The members of the Forward caste category have the highest average SWB level of 4.33, the Muslims the lowest of 3.00.²³ At the same time have the highest median household expenditure level which is surprisingly followed by the Muslims and then the Backward castes. The lowest median expenditure level is found among the Scheduled castes.

The main findings of the quantitative analysis are, first, that on average the poor are less satisfied compared to their non-poor counterparts. We note that those in the lowest two expenditure quintile groups report the lowest mean SWB level which is also below the total average. The highest mean SWB level, however, is found among those in the middle (third) expenditure quintile groups. This leads us to the second main finding, that money seems to buy happiness, but only at a diminishing return. Once basic needs are met, the affect of money (or expenditure) has only a diminishing return regarding life satisfaction. Third, we have shown that the extent of adaptation – in form of the satisfaction-paradox – is indeed widespread. One-fifth of those in the lowest two expenditure quintile groups reported to be satisfied with their lives. Lastly, we found that caste membership seems to matter. The descriptive analysis has shown that there is a significant difference in the SWB and expenditure level between the caste groups. The highest castes do have the highest mean SWB level. The lowest SWB level is found among the Muslims although they do have the second highest median expenditure level.

In the following section I go on to explore some of the cases behind the data. In recent times there has been a call to bridge the divide between qualitative and quantitative approaches, especially in the context of poverty research (see, for example, the research programme Q-squared: www.q-squared.ca). The bridging of qualitative and

²³ The differences in the mean SWB level are highly significant ($F = (df 3) 7.20; p > 0.00$).

quantitative methods is not a straightforward matter. As is argued by Downward and Mearman (2007), for example, bridging qualitative and quantitative methods (triangulation) should not be understood to imply that qualitative insights are validated by quantitative analysis nor that quantitative results are supplemented with qualitative insights (see also Olsen, 2004). Hence the aim of the next section is not to verify the results, but to get a better understanding of the adaptation processes and to understand the SWB reports given by the selected individuals.

5.2 Qualitative analysis

The following discussion draws on three case studies which were selected in order to look beyond the statistics presented above, in an effort to deepen our understanding of adaptation to poverty. The three cases reported here offer a mixture of caste and gender positions, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Case study characteristics²⁴

Case study 1 Lakshmidevi	Case study 2 Hyder Basha	Case study 2 Sujatha
♀ FC	♂ Muslim	♀ BC
3 rd expenditure quintile group 'Satisfied'	3 rd expenditure quintile group 'Rather Satisfied'	Lowest expenditure quintile group 'Dissatisfied'
Marital status: divorced	Marital status: married	Marital status: married
Age: 35 yrs	Age: 60 yrs	Age: 48 yrs
Children: 2	Children: 2 married daughters	Children: psychologically handicapped son
Works as a migrant labourer on construction sites and as a domestic servant in two houses in the village.	Maintains a small tamarind business.	Dependent on grandson; owns milk cow.

Source: Own interview data (2007).

The first case I want to present is that of Lakshmidevi.

Case study 1: Lakshmidevi (Forward caste, 'satisfied', third expenditure quintile)

Lakshmidevi is of Reddy caste (FC), around 35 years old and lives in Peddapalli main village. She told us that she grew up in poverty. Her father died when she was two years old, leaving her mother with no source of income. She married at the age of 16 to a much older man to whom she was the second wife. Throughout her marriage she suffered physical abuse from her drinking husband and often ran away. But she also

²⁴ In total nine people were interviewed for this study.

often returned because of promises and pressure from him and because of social pressure also from her family's side. Even her mother sent her back, arguing that it was a women's faith which she should cope with. Throughout her life she has had to work as a coolie and a household domestic in other houses to secure an income for her family. Often her husband took away her earnings to spend on alcohol. Lakshmidēvi now has two children aged six and seven. She left her husband four years ago and is now living in her mother's house which however has been taken over by her uncle who asks for rent. Most of the time Lakshmidēvi works as a construction worker in Bangalore and when she returns to the village she works as a domestic helper in two households. All the money she earns is spent on the education of her two children. She is not able to save anything and has no deposits. The children are living with a befriended family in Punganur and attend an English-medium school. She hopes that her children will secure a good job in the future and will take care of her when she is old. As she tells us, her situation has got better since she escaped her husband's abuse:

I always faced the same difficulties. In the past I had to do hard work and now I am also working hard. My present situation is much better than before since I can share my problems with my children. Earlier I had to give my earnings of a day of hard work to my husband. He would also kick me – it felt like hell. Now I don't have these problems (Interview transcripts 2007: 28).

However, although she gets by, she only does so because she works extremely hard:

Income is not enough; therefore I am working hard day and night. I do get Rs 18 for putting 1000 bricks in an order and submitting them to a supervisor. The same amount I get if I supply some sand, cement or sticks. Additionally I am doing housework in two houses. Both families pay me Rs 400 for that (ibid.: 25).

She is proud, however, since she is independent from others and able to support herself and her children and enables them to attend an English medium school:

I never depend on others and I am not less than anybody else. I will continue my hard work as long as I have the energy and educate my children well. So I never feel that I am poor (ibid.: 25).

In fact, she tells us:

I have no desires or hopes for me, I only think about my children. I am only working hard so hard for them. ... I will do hard work until I have energy, after then I depend on my children. I hope they look after me well (ibid.: 26).

Lakshmidēvi is an interesting case for a variety of reasons. First, her life history shows us that she is better off in her new life than when she was living in an abusive marriage. She reports to be satisfied with her current life because the past has been worse and

she is optimistic that she will be better off in the future with the help of her sons. Second, this highlights that a person's subjective assessment of her life satisfaction does not happen in isolation, but is often influenced by other people and their wellbeing. In the case of Lakshmidēvi, such people are her sons, for example. Third, it further shows that a combination of SWB and expenditure might not always provide a sufficient indicator of adaptation processes to poverty or deprivation in a wider not purely economic sense, as has also been shown with the case of Vasanti in Nussbaum (2000). Lastly, it shows that wellbeing is '... part of an ongoing process of struggling against ill-being, and is hence an emergent property of an open system where body, the family, the psyche, society and nature interact' (Neff and Olsen 2007). The measurement metric of SWB fails to fully capture this and hence the measurement of wellbeing cannot be conflated with wellbeing as such. The following two cases of Hyder Basha and Sujatha will reaffirm these hypotheses.

Case study 2: Hyder Basha (Muslim, 'rather satisfied', third expenditure quintile)

Hyder Basha is a Muslim and around 60 years old. He is married and lives with his wife in Peddapalli colony, where they are the only Muslims. They have four daughters, who as Hyder Basha proudly told us, are all married now and live in other villages. To get a daughter married the parents have to be able to come up with a substantial amount as a gift to the groom's family which is called the dowry. Hyder Basha and his wife managed to spend around Rs 200,000 for each of their daughters' marriages and have repaid all debts connected to the marriages. After his last daughter's marriage, both fell ill and had to sell their former house in the main village to meet medical expenses. They now rent a house in the colony which was the former quarter of the Untouchables on the outskirts of the actual main village. Both are feeling better now, but are unable to do physical work, so they are now involved in the tamarind business. He buys the tamarind from villagers, weighs and packs it, and sells it in bundles in towns. Due to his illness they have no savings and deposits and some debt with two banks, consisting of around Rs 2,000 and Rs 4,000, respectively. Hyder Basha is optimistic that he will be able to repay these loans in the future and hopes to be able to build a new house in the main village. Looking back, he feels that he had a better life when he was doing some sharecropping, but he also feels much better now compared when he was ill. He is especially proud of the fact that he fulfilled his duty of marrying all of his four daughters:

... we have four daughters and we managed to get all of them married. We spend two lakh (Rs 200,000) for each of our daughters' marriages. Now we have repaid all debts and are living happily (Interview transcripts 2007: 32).

This achievement is one of his main sources of pride. However, times were better in the past since he had a steady income from cultivating rented land:

At that time we were doing cultivation and living happily. Compared to now, at that time we lived happily. We grew required crops, we married our daughters.

After cultivation stopped I went to loading work. I got Rs 200 per day. Now I can't do that work so I am doing small business and coolie work (ibid.: 34).

Despite modest levels of achievement, he reports to be 'rather satisfied'. From his life story, we know that his situation has been worse, during the time of his prolonged illness, when he lost his house, but now things are slowly getting better and he hopes to be able to buy or build a new house in the main village again. Similar to the earlier case, Hyder Basha has gone through some troubled times because of serious health problems but is better now and is slowly earning money and is optimistic about having a secure future. One of his sources of pride is that he managed to get all his daughters' married by raising sufficient money for their dowry.

Again, we could argue that it is not sufficient to analyse his life satisfaction without taking into account his social environment. It further shows how the life histories of people are different which makes their SWB reports unique. The last case I want to present is that of Sujatha.

Case study 3: Sujatha (Backward caste, 'dissatisfied', lowest expenditure quintile)

Sujatha is 48 years old and lives with her husband in the main village of Chinnapalli. She is married and has three children, one daughter who is already married, a son who is also married and lives in the same village with his wife and another son who is mentally challenged and lives with them. Her grandson (the daughter's son) who is 18 years old lives with them, too. The grandson is the main bread winner for the family, working in Punganur, earning between Rs 1,500 to 2,000 a month. Sujatha studied to the fifth grade and is a member of a self-help group. She was forced to leave school because of family and financial problems. Her daughter and younger son did not attend school; her elder son studied until the fifth grade. Sujatha told us that she has had difficulties since her marriage. Her parents cultivated land and had a good income, but her husband has no land. He worked as a tenant labourer (sharecropping) for eight years but then stopped and bought livestock and occasionally did some coolie work. During the interview she told us that before her marriage her life was happy, without financial difficulties:

My parents successfully cultivated land. Until my marriage I was happy, after my marriage I faced many difficulties. My husband has no land, no property and does no cultivation (Interview transcripts 2007: 55).

... if we had land we could live happily. Our cow died two months back. I am depending on my grandson's income, that's all. My grandson looks after me, without him I can't get any food (ibid.: 60).

Compared to the past, the situation Sujatha currently faces is worse. Sujatha and her family basically depend on her grandson's income and occasional support from her

daughter. Her son is mentally disabled and her husband suffers from health problems, so Sujatha is not sure what her future will bring. This makes it understandable why she reports to be ‘dissatisfied’ with her life.

The qualitative interviews (including those not reviewed above; n=9) lead to the first conclusion that people evaluate their current life satisfaction by comparing their current circumstances with the past and also taking into account their future prospects. If their current situation is better than the past and if they are optimistic about their future, they tend to report being satisfied with their life (see Table 9). This finding is reminiscent of Graham and Hoover’s (2007) conclusion in their study of optimism in Africa. If people have experienced a better situation in the past (or at least believe that their past was better) compared to their current situation and if they also don’t know what the future will bring or fear that it will be negative, then they tend to report either a neutral or negative SWB. If this situation is maintained for long, resignation might set in. Notice that resignation does not involve joining the ranks of the ‘satisfied poor’, i.e., those who resign are not satisfied with their life. They are more likely to report neutral or negative SWB.

Second, the case studies have shown that an individual’s reported life satisfaction is influenced by his or her social setting and in this sense a person’s SWB is dependent on other people’s wellbeing. Third, the qualitative analysis support the hypothesis that the measurement of wellbeing (in our case SWB) should not be conflated with wellbeing as such, since wellbeing is an ongoing process, whereas the measurement metric tends to create a closed system of measurement (see also Neff and Olsen 2007). And fourth, as a consequence, we found the combination of SWB and expenditure not always providing a sufficient indicator of adaptation processes to poverty, because poverty on the one hand cannot be captured solely in an economic sense and because adaptation processes, on the other hand, are not restricted to the ‘satisfied poor’ as our example of resignation shows.

Table 9. Scenarios of subjective wellbeing reports

Past	Present	Future	SWB report	Possible adaptation process
-	+	+	+	Optimism
-	-	-	-	Resignation
-	/	/	/	Resignation

Note: - = negative; + = positive; / = neutral subjective assessment.

6 Conclusion

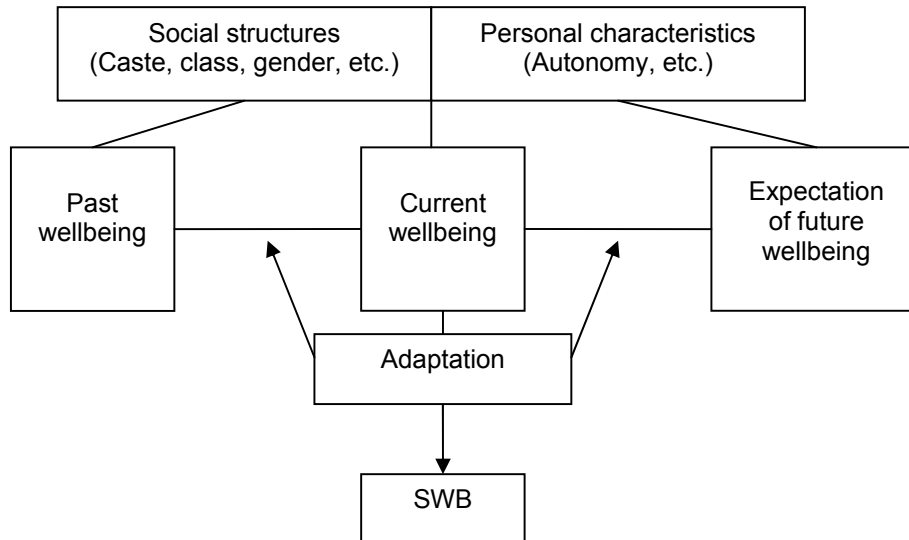
The study has shed some light on the extent of the adaptation problem (the notion that people report to be satisfied despite being objectively poor) in two villages in the Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. It has also shed some light on the reasons why people report to be satisfied despite being poor in objective terms.

The quantitative analysis has shown that the majority of respondents in these villages are dissatisfied with their lives (quality of life). Moreover, it was found that the poor, on average, are less satisfied compared to the non-poor which would suggest that the measure of SWB to be a valid indicator of the actual wellbeing of people. However, we have also seen that a significant proportion or around one-fifth of the poor (those in the lowest two expenditure quintile groups) report to be satisfied with their lot in life, despite living in poverty. This indicates that adaptation does occur in some cases and can potentially undermine the reliability of SWB as a measure of wellbeing. In addition there are significant differences in SWB across cultural groups (castes), which implies that the traditional caste system still has an influence on people's life chances and their satisfaction with life. This fact becomes important when we take into account the findings of the qualitative analysis.

The qualitative analysis helps our understanding of SWB reports by showing, for example, the very different life histories of the respondents that make the SWB reports unique. Despite the differences, distinct similarities can be found. The main finding is that people evaluate their current life satisfaction by comparing their current situation with the past and also by taking into account their assumptions regarding their future prospects. If the past has been better compared to their current situation and / or if their future prospects are bleak, people tend to report either a neutral or negative SWB. If their current situation is better than their past situation and when they are additionally optimistic regarding their future, they tend to report a positive SWB. Moreover, the qualitative analysis has shown that an individual's SWB report cannot be understood without taking the person's social setting into account, such as the family, the caste, the village, etc. Lastly, these findings suggest that wellbeing has to be regarded as an ongoing process.

However, the SWB reports can be distorted by adaptation processes (see Figure 1). On the one hand adaptation can influence how the current situation is seen in contrast to the past and, on the other, it can influence a person's future expectations. The figure also displays how the wellbeing of the people in the village is influenced by social structures such as the caste system. In India, the caste system still has a strong influence a person's life chances in terms of his or her wellbeing. It also includes personal characteristics such his or her agency and level of autonomy which can influence (or

Figure 1: Model of future SWB research



Source: Compiled by the author.

change) the social structure the individual is embedded in. Hence, the model should not be understood as holistic since it sees structure and agency as interconnected. Additionally the model takes into account the history and future by allowing for previous experiences and future expectations. It thereby tries to capture the time element involved, displaying wellbeing as an ongoing process but at the same time showing how the SWB measurement is static. However, further research is required to develop this model.

In the light of this model we can re-visit the different kinds of adaptation identified by Teschl and Comim (2005): namely, the ‘natural’ and ‘resigned’ forms of adaptation mentioned above. Natural adaptation is defined as a process that occurs when people adapt to changes in their life. However, as I have argued, natural adaptation should be seen as different to adaptation to poverty and hence not relevant for the ‘adaptation problem’. Within adaptation to poverty I have suggested to distinguish between two processes, one being resignation, the other being optimism.

Resigned adaptation occurs when people resign to their fate by abandoning their wants, aspirations and expectations. Resignation has a significant influence on people’s agency as Rabow, Berkman and Kessler (1983) and Blacksher (2002) discuss. Yet people who have resigned themselves to their fate do not report to be satisfied with their life. They may lose hope or come to believe there is no escape, but they do not claim to be satisfied with their lot in life. In short, they either report a neutral or negative SWB. This, however, does not undermine the reliability of SWB.

In contrast, optimism may undermine the reliability of SWB. Optimism is given, when people have positive expectations regarding their future and perceive their situation as better than actual circumstances would suggest. This is mainly the case when their situation has improved over time, i.e., is currently better than it was in the past. Optimism undermines the reliability of SWB since optimistic people tend to report a more positive subjective wellbeing than their actual objective living conditions would justify.

Although optimism as a form of adaptation may well undermine SWB as a proxy for wellbeing, SWB may still provide a useful indicator of life-cycle changes. If people constantly change, and this change brings about the need to adjust and adapt to different circumstances, SWB may well be a useful indicator for exploring the success or failure of adaptation to these life-cycle changes. In the case of Hyder Basha for example, SWB could give an indication how and his wife have coped with their challenges in life, such as the daughters' marriages, their ill-health, etc. This, however, would require revising the measurement to rely not only on a single question regarding the current general satisfaction with life, but to take into account a person's life history. This paper and the model (see Figure 1) might be a useful basis for such an undertaking.

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The Brooks World Poverty Institute (BWPI) creates and shares knowledge to help end global poverty.

BWPI is multidisciplinary, researching poverty in both the rich and poor worlds.

Our aim is to better understand why people are poor, what keeps them trapped in poverty and how they can be helped - drawing upon the very best international practice in research and policy making.

The Brooks World Poverty Institute is chaired by Nobel Laureate, Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz.

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