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Subjective well-being of El Conde ravine inhabitants, one of the most degraded areas of the Puebla city, Mexico

Bienestar subjetivo de los habitantes de la barranca El Conde, uno de los espacios más degradados de la ciudad de Puebla, México

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Abstract

Urban ravines are among the least habitable spaces due to their physiography and pollution conditions. The people living in the El Conde ravine are in extreme poverty, which would suggest that they experience the least well-being. According to the results of a survey designed from the theoretical-methodological framework of subjective well-being, these individuals experience a slightly higher level of well-being than the national average. Their perception of the ravine is predominantly negative, which does not affect the self-reported general state of well-being, in line with the idea that people's well-being is multifactorial and largely depends on how experiences and objective conditions are processed. This could help explain why environmental issues are not a priority for societies.

Keywords: Self-reported well-being, happiness, extreme poverty, life satisfaction

Resumen

Las barrancas urbanas son de los espacios menos habitables por su fisiografía y sus condiciones de contaminación. Las personas que habitan la barranca El Conde se encuentran en pobreza extrema, lo cual haría suponer que son de las que menos bienestar experimentan. De acuerdo con los resultados de una encuesta diseñada desde el marco teórico-metodológico del bienestar subjetivo, estas personas experimentan un bienestar ligeramente superior al reportado para el país. Su apreciación de la barranca es mayoritariamente negativa, lo cual no afecta el estado de bienestar general autorreportado, en concordancia con que el sentimiento de bienestar de las personas es multifactorial, y en gran medida obedece a como se procesan las experiencias y condiciones objetivas. Esto podría contribuir a explicar por que la problemática ambiental no es una prioridad para las sociedades.

Palabras clave: Bienestar autorreportado, felicidad, pobreza extrema, satisfacción de vida.

Introduction

The city is the quintessential human creation, a place where the most refined expression of anthropic work and spirit converges, revealed in the result of its civilizing labor which, however, carries intrinsic contradictions that both overshadow and pride it, while also confronting it with the space where it is recreated and developed, highlighting the crisis of its relationship with its environment. This crisis is widely documented with multiple environmental problems such as water, air, and soil pollution, deforestation and loss of biodiversity, desertification, waste generation, and global warming, among others.

The city of Puebla is not exempt from this dysfunctional relationship between its inhabitants and their bio-physical environment, as it also reproduces the urbanization process of the world, which has resulted in the population of the city increasing from 234,603 people in 1950 to 1,573,575 by 2020 (INEGI, 1994, p. 48; CONEVAL, 2024).

This population growth has generated, among many other urban problems, the rising cost of land for housing construction and a decrease in its availability. This situation has led people with lower purchasing power to seek land in unsuitable areas for residential use as an alternative to their need for land. They have found this in areas adjacent to ravines in the city and even within their channels (Gutiérrez y Silva, 2020).

Ravines are cracks that crisscross the valley where the city is located, originating from volcanism and water erosion caused by streams that flow down from the La Malinche mountain and small hills within the valley (Instituto de Geografía-UNAM, 1989, p. 44).

The physiography of the ravines varies, showing differences in depth and width, from a few meters to over 100 meters in different locations. In some places, they are accessible, while in others, they are very steep, with walls even at 90°. Although they are urban ravines, remnants of vegetation typical of oak forest ecosystems, xerophytic scrub, and secondary vegetation can still be found, resulting from the removal of the original vegetation and its subsequent regeneration (Gutiérrez, Silva, Chaves, Zayas y Castelán, 2020).

Since the ravines are under the jurisdiction of the federal government, which has shown no capacity to safeguard them, they are seen as no man's land, making their occupation by human settlements an increasingly recurrent phenomenon, particularly in the El Conde ravine; one of the ravines in the city.

According to the measurement of multidimensional poverty conducted by CONEVAL (2024), people living in the El Conde ravine are in extreme poverty. This is based on the nine dimensions of the General Poverty Index: income, educational lag, access to health services, access to social security, quality and space in housing, access to basic services in housing, access to food, degree of social cohesion, and access to paved roads (CONEVAL, 2009, p. 19). For this reason, the Ministry of Welfare (2024) considers this area a priority attention zone. According to this assessment, it could be argued that these individuals are among the most miserable in the social conglomerate if we link material conditions to life satisfaction and happiness, and therefore, these individuals suffer from very low well-being.

Happiness is one of the most commonly used concepts in human daily life and yet one of the most elusive when trying to define and understand it. If happiness as an abstraction slips through attempts to access its understanding, every human being knows internally when they have accessed a state that can be called happiness. Although the omnipresence of happiness as an overvalued aspiration is beginning to be questioned; as the state one should aim for and for which all efforts should be focused, it is true that at least since the arrival of the Welfare State in the 19th century, efforts have been directed towards generating conditions to try to make humans happy.

According to this aspiration, wealth had to be generated, and as in no other era, production and consumption had to be promoted. From this arose, from economics and according to the principles of presumption and attribution, a set of elements that humans had to have or fulfill. This vision justified the implementation of the economy of countries, and under the aegis of developmental theory and the beacon of progress, to produce and provide all products and satisfactors that for the first time would allow humans to access happiness.

One of the most important elements in this model is income or rent, as it is related to happiness, or better said, consumption with happiness; well-being increases with consumption (Oxa, Arancibia y Campero, 2014). Hence, for macroeconomics, economic growth or sustained increase in a country's output is a valid objective, as it posits a link between growth and well-being.

However, this relationship has been questioned, as it has been observed that the influence of income on happiness is neither linear nor direct. The increase in wealth in western countries in recent decades has not led to an increase in well-being standards, even correlating inversely in some cases (Narváez, 2011).

The Easterlin Paradox; a concept used in happiness economics, questions the hypothesis that more material wealth and income levels lead to more well-being (Narváez, 2011; Oxa, Arancibia y Campero, 2014). Once basic needs are met, the average level of happiness that people report experiencing barely varies with increases in wealth and income. This suggests a low cause-effect relationship between traditional determinants and well-being, and consequently a low explanatory power.

Discoveries with empirical evidence strengthen these claims and question the dependence of happiness solely on exogenous factors. Understanding that it is impossible, in a planet with limited resources, to sustain economic growth and the production of satisfactors *ad infinitum*, new models have emerged that incorporate endogenous variables into their explanation.

Given the complex and multiple network of thoughts and infinite reasoning that occur within individuals, the consideration of endogenous variables to explain happiness seems to push the problem towards tautology. However, models proposing to measure and explain happiness as subjective satisfaction consider reducing variables to the same category to simplify analysis, and their measurement with an approach starting from individuals. According to this, the judgment of subjects regarding their own level of satisfaction and happiness is important, not the judgment made by experts (Rojas, 2011).

Since well-being is subjective, if individuals do not experience it, then well-being cannot be discussed. Hence, it starts from the subject's appreciation of their life, how satisfied they are, or how happy they feel, in response to a direct question about their well-being. Being a comprehensive evaluation of the subject, their declaration incorporates multiple aspects of their experience, such as hedonic, cognitive, affective, and mystical (Cummins, 1997; Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2002; Rojas y Veenhoven, 2013).

Well-being is understood as a human experience, as life satisfaction as a synthesis, as a whole. Life satisfaction or happiness is the degree to which people favorably judge the overall quality of their life. Thus, in the subjective well-being model, evaluative well-being experiences (achievements and failures), affective (joys and sufferings), and sensory (pleasures and pains) are considered integrally; therefore, happiness is, in itself, subjective, and its conception results from a constant self-evaluation of how life is going (Veenhoven, 1988).

The conceptions of happiness and life satisfaction serve to approach the concept of well-being, and although strongly correlated, the affective

component is stronger in happiness, while life satisfaction carries a greater cognitive load (Rojas, 2011).

Thus, well-being in general can be better understood if one knows the well-being the subject has in different aspects, spheres, or domains of their life, for example, in their work, family, community, health, and economy, among others (Cummins, 1997). The life domains approach considers that well-being as an ultimate goal is the result, although not additive or linear, of many domains in which the human being expresses itself, as an aggregate of satisfaction in different aspects of life (Möller & Saris, 2001; Salvatore & Muñoz, 2001; van Praag, Frijters y Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2003; Rojas, 2006). These domains are multiple, although there is consensus to reduce them to a limited number, which with variations among authors, includes those such as: standard of living (material situation), health, achievements or productivity, intimate relationships, safety, community, and emotional situation.

For all these reasons, subjective well-being has emerged as an important theoretical-methodological framework in the evaluation of human well-being, and the consideration of life satisfaction even as an indicator of development, since a higher level of well-being can be considered a better performance of societies and consequently progress (Rojas, 2009, pp. 71-78).

The Inter-American Development Bank (BID, 2008), one of the institutions promoting objective social and economic indicators to measure quality of life, has begun to recognize that life satisfaction is a relevant opinion variable to be measured and incorporated into scientific studies, thus providing a more complete perspective of the level of development of countries. The feeling of people, along with objective variables such as income level, age, gender, or marital status, allows for a better estimation of quality of life, as it often contrasts sharply with reality.

In 2011, the United Nations (ONU, 2011) created the document titled "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development" in a general assembly, inviting member countries to formulate indicators that allow for the creation of public policies to increase the levels of life satisfaction of inhabitants.

In Mexico, based on this invitation and according to the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) implemented a statistical project [BIARE modules (Self-reported Well-Being)] starting in 2012, initially classified as experimental, to capture people's perceptions and opinions about their own lives. This exercise, with its last

survey conducted in January 2024, takes into account not only goods and services to measure life satisfaction levels but also intangible assets such as personal autonomy, feelings of achievement, security, affections, family, friends (relational goods), and the sense of purpose in life (INEGI, 2024).

Another study was conducted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM, 2015) through the National Survey on Subjective Satisfaction with Life and Society (ENSAVISO) in 2015. The general objective of this work was to know the levels of life satisfaction of the population, considering specific objectives such as: a) Knowing satisfaction levels in general and in different vital domains (economic situation, work, health, education, family life, city, and neighborhood) and identifying variables associated with these satisfaction levels, and b) Generating information that allows identifying areas for public policy intervention to improve and expand favorable conditions for the well-being of the population.

According to these premises, the work sought to know the level of happiness and life satisfaction of people living in one of the most degraded urban environments, such as the El Conde ravine. It constituted a laboratory where the possible causal interrelation between well-being and variables such as health, safety, and neighborhood conditions derived from the characteristics of the ravine is experimented. The hypothesis is that the conditions of the ravine do not affect the general well-being level of the people.

Methodology

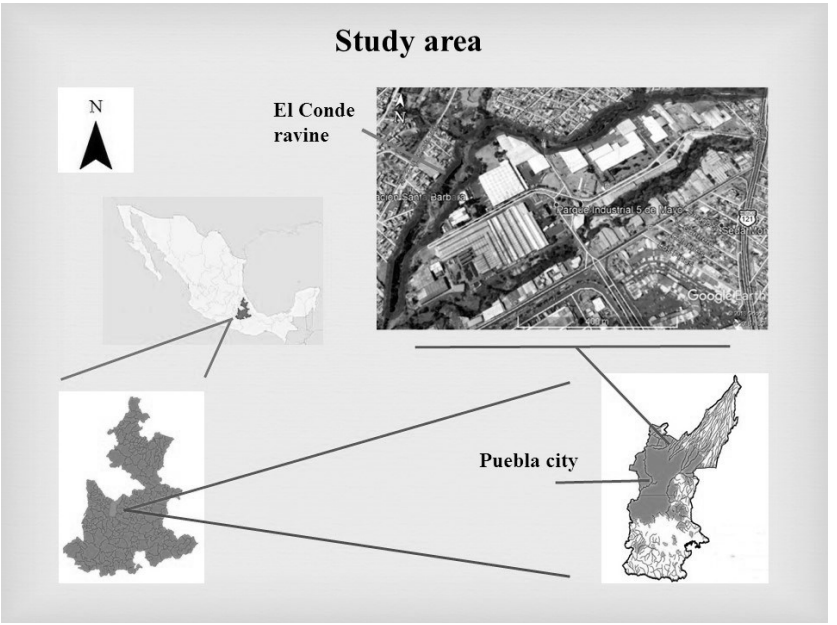
The study was conducted with inhabitants of the El Conde ravine, which is located at coordinates 19°09'80'' north latitude and 98°18'74'' west longitude, at an altitude of 2680 m above sea level. The climate is temperate sub-humid with summer rains, with higher humidity. The average annual temperature and precipitation are 16 °C and 800 mm, respectively (INEGI, 2010).

The ravine is located north of the city of Puebla, on the left side of the short road to Santa Ana Chiautempan in the Puebla-Santa Ana Chiautempan direction, past the Central de Abastos (Figure 1). It is already incorporated into the urban sprawl, has houses in its channel, and receives discharges of domestic and industrial wastewater from the 5 de Mayo industrial park.

El Conde carries runoff from the slopes of La Malinche towards the Atoyac River. The depth varies at different points along its course, ranging from 80 meters in the deepest areas to 0 meters where filling works, the presence of houses on its banks, and the paving of a street that was built in

it have left it at ground level. In terms of width, it varies from 100 meters in some places to 30 meters in others, and it cannot be determined where there are houses as the references have been lost.

Figure 1: El Conde ravine and 5 de Mayo industrial park



Source: own elaboration.

In the ravine, oak forest can be seen, interspersed with clearings planted with grass, as well as exogenous plants resulting from human forestry activity by those living within and on its margins.

Along the southern side of the ravine is the 5 de Mayo industrial park, covering 33 hectares, where small and medium industries from various sectors such as metal-mechanics, textiles, chemicals, and transportation are located, among others. This park is located on Calzada del Conde and Mártires de Río Blanco (short road to Santa Ana Chiautempan) (SIMPPI, 2010).

Methods

The work was carried out using the communication channels of the inhabitants of the study area through two participatory methodological tools. The first consisted of interviews with key informants using an interview guide.

The second involved collecting information through the application of a structured questionnaire to the inhabitants of the ravine.

Fieldwork was conducted through visits to the target population during the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020.

Individuals over 18 years old living in the houses situated in the ravine's channel were considered as study subjects. This is according to the definition that a child is a human being under 18 years old (UNICEF, 1990, p. 10), the recommendations of expert organizations (INEGI, 2024; UNAM, 2015), and that a household is the group formed by one or more people who usually reside in the same dwelling and share common expenses primarily for food, whether related or not (INEGI, 2014).

In order to quantify the information and standardize the interview procedure, the design of the questionnaire validated the report that the person makes of their own level of satisfaction (reported well-being) in response to a direct question such as: "How happy are you?" and/or "How satisfied are you with your life?"

Furthermore, the consideration of domains in the questionnaire was made according to the principles of parsimony (a manageable number of domains without correlation between them), significance (domains related to how people conceive their life), and utility (contributing to the understanding of the phenomenon).

The questionnaire was developed using the simplest possible vocabulary so that the questions were clear and precise, and presented in a concise manner so that the printed format was two pages long.

For the coding of responses to questions about happiness and life satisfaction, the scale proposed by ENSAVISO (2015) was adopted: very happy (10), happy (8 and 9), somewhat happy (5, 6, and 7), and not happy at all (0, 1, 2, 3, and 4).

For coding responses regarding the respondents' feelings about the specific element of the ravine and the life domains, a 4-point Likert scale was used: 1) Totally agree, 2) Agree, 3) Disagree, and 4) Totally disagree (Ospina, Sandoval, Aristizábal y Ramírez, 2005).

A first draft of the questionnaire was processed using the Delphi Method (Reguant-Álvarez & Torrado-Fonseca, 2016), consulting with experts in the field, based on their recommendations and comments, resulting in a more refined version.

This version was subsequently subjected to a pilot test with inhabitants from the same area where the ravine is located, who are parents of students at the Bilingual Primary School "Emiliano Zapata." This was done to ve-

rify: more appropriate questions, whether the wording is correct, if it is comprehensible and of suitable length; correct categorization of responses; psychological resistance or rejection towards some questions; whether the internal ordering is logical and if the duration is acceptable for respondents (Arribas, 2004).

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha method (α), which determines the reliability or homogeneity of the questions or *items* (Corral, 2009). This coefficient produces values ranging from 0 to 1, and a value between 0.7 and 0.9 indicates good internal consistency for a unidimensional scale (Alonso & Santacruz, 2015).

For the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha (α), the variance of the *items* and the correlation matrix were used, through equations (1) and (2) respectively:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1}\left[1 - \frac{\sum Vi}{Vt}\right] \quad (1)$$

$$\alpha = \frac{kp}{1+p(k-1)} \quad (2)$$

Where

k = Number of *items*
Vi = Variance of each *item*
Vt = Total variance
p = Average of the linear correlations of each of the items (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004).

In the field, the questionnaire was applied through direct, face-to-face interviews, and as it is a perception questionnaire, it was done in the first person, without allowing indirect informants. The data from the pilot test and the final test were entered into an Excel database. The methods for calculating Cronbach's Alpha were executed using the statistical package SPSS version 19. The data from the final test were processed using a complementary system of descriptive statistics analysis (Hernández, Fernández y Baptista, 2006).

Results and discussion

Characterization of the unit of analysis

The target population consisted of 33 individuals over 18 years of age, all from the fourteen households along the El Conde ravine.

The composition of the surveyed population included 29 women (88 per cent) and four men (12 per cent). Ages ranged from 23 to 55 years, with an arithmetic mean of 35 years. The majority of the population reported being originally from the state of Puebla (76 per cent), particularly from the capital city (56 per cent).

According to key informants, the human settlements in the ravine are primarily composed of individuals from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, specifically from the Mazateca region, which explains the presence of the Bilingual School "Emiliano Zapata" in the area. The average age of the respondents suggests that most belong to a second generation, having been born in the area or having emigrated as young children, thus they are already rooted in the place. Furthermore, identifying as poblanos may serve as a shield to avoid the marginalization and exclusion historically experienced as "oaxaquitas," a pejorative term.

Only four individuals (women) reported being speakers of an indigenous language; one speaks Nahuatl and three speak Mazateco. The Nahuatl speaker is originally from Cuetzalan, Puebla, and is 53 years old. Among the Mazateco speakers, two are from Oaxaca and one from the city of Puebla, with ages of 29, 32, and 33 years. The case of the 33-year-old woman from the city indicates that she learned the language as part of the cultural heritage passed down by her parents, who were migrants in the area. In this same vein, and in contrast, the director of the Bilingual School "Emiliano Zapata" mentions that there are practically no students who speak an indigenous language, reinforcing the earlier observation that it is common for migrants who speak an indigenous language not to teach it to their children, considering it useless and a sign of stigmatization.

Regarding the number of children in the 14 surveyed households, three do not have minors (22 per cent), while 11 do (78 per cent). Among these, the number of children per household ranges from one to nine, with most households having one to three children (57 per cent). Households with children represent a larger percentage than those without, which could be incubating a potential environmental health problem, as children tend to explore their biophysical environment, likely leading them to interact with the ravine and its pollution conditions.

Seven households reported having domestic animals for human consumption, four of which are kept in pens and three are free-ranging. The latter may be exposed to environmental health risks due to bioaccumulation of toxic substances such as heavy metals, as their animals could be

drinking water from the ravine and consuming plants and small animals from the banks of the stream.

Most of the homes are made of concrete blocks, unfinished, and are in a state of construction. Some homes include rooms made of other materials such as wood and iron, generally second-hand and adapted. The layout of the spaces indicates a lack of architectural planning and construction through self-building. Most have solid floors. They have electricity but lack connection to the municipal potable water supply and sewage system.

General well-being

The questionnaire presented a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = 0\text{-}76$ (SPSS), indicating good consistency and stability of the instrument after adjustments made based on the pilot test.

Regarding the question, "How happy are you?", one in ten people (10 per cent) considers themselves unhappy (not at all and slightly happy), while four out of ten (38 per cent) identify as very happy. Ninety percent of the surveyed population reports being distinctly happy (levels 8-10 on the scale). The average happiness score was 8.5 (Figure 2).

For the question, "How satisfied are you with your life?", the average was 8.6. One in seven people (14 per cent) is somewhat or not at all satisfied with their life. However, the majority of the surveyed population (48 per cent) falls within the range of 8 to 9, which, when combined with those who are very satisfied (38 per cent), results in a majority of 86 per cent of the population being distinctly satisfied with their life (Figure 2).

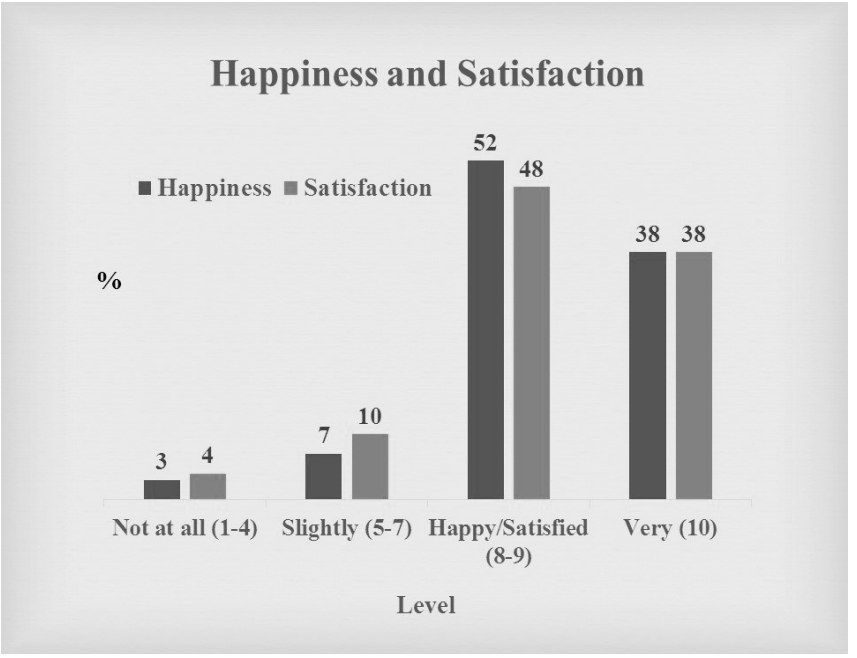
Both averages for the surveyed population are very similar and fall within what is considered a satisfactory level of well-being, according to expert organizations for Mexico: scores above 8 for happiness and life satisfaction (UNAM, 2015), and scores above 7 for life satisfaction (INEGI, 2015).

The average happiness score of the individuals (8.5) is close to and above the average reported for Mexico by the UNAM's ENSAVISO, which is 8.53 (UNAM, 2015).

Likewise, the life satisfaction level of the respondents (8.6 per cent) is close to and above that reported by INEGI in 2024 (8.4) and by ENSAVISO in 2015 (8.53) for the entire country (INEGI, 2024; UNAM, 2015). It exceeds the average reported by INEGI for Mexico City in 2015 (8.45) by one and a half tenths, which, according to the data, is the entity with the highest level of life satisfaction, and is more than one unit above the average for the extreme poverty population (7.27) (INEGI, 2015).

The results contrast with those reported for the community of Yehualtepec, Puebla, which indicate that 40 per cent of households survive at a low quality of life level. This is on a scale of five categories: Very low, low, medium, high, and very high. According to the same researchers, people evaluate the subjective aspects of their own lives well, so the result is due to the assessment given in the study to the objective aspects and material conditions of people's lifestyles (Marcial, Peña, Escobedo y Macías, 2016).

Figure 2: Happiness and satisfaction of the inhabitants of the El Conde ravine



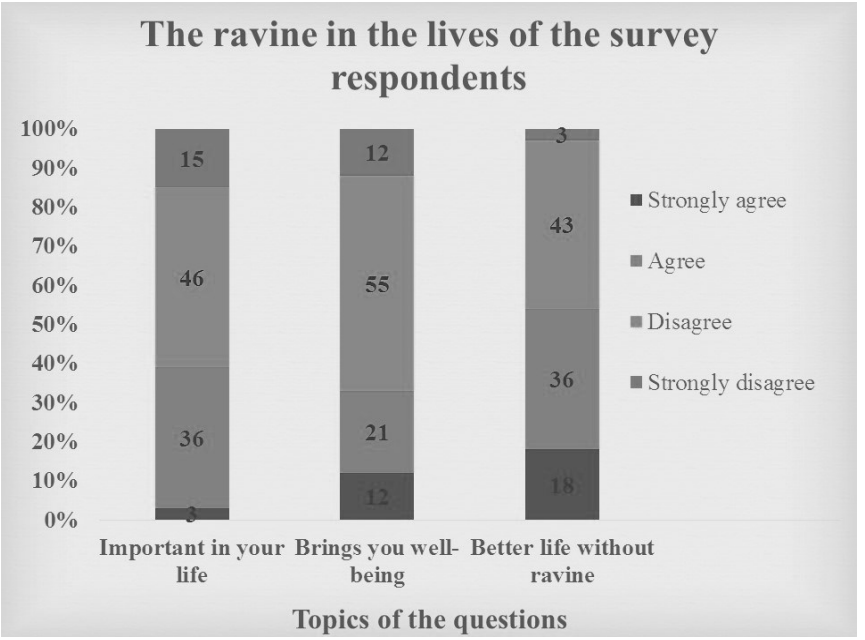
Source: own elaboration.

The questions: "Do you consider the ravine an important element in your life?", "Do you think the ravine brings you well-being?" and "Would your life be better if the ravine did not exist?" allowed for evaluating the respondents' feelings regarding the specific element of the ravine, as shown in the results of Figure 3.

Sixty-one percent of respondents consider that the ravine is not an important element in their lives, in contrast to those who think otherwise (39 per cent). Even those who strongly disagree (15 per cent) that the ravine is important in their lives outnumber those who strongly agree (three per cent). Regarding whether the ravine is an element that brings them we-

ll-being, the opinion remains and increases, as a greater percentage (67 per cent) believes it does not bring them well-being compared to those who think it does (33 per cent), although the percentages of opinions at the extremes balance (12 per cent). Finally, regarding the consideration of whether their life would be better if the ravine did not exist, the opinion shows a slight change, as the percentage of those who agree to some extent with this statement (54 per cent) is still greater than those who think otherwise (46 per cent), although the difference is no longer as marked. Those who strongly agree that their life would be better if the ravine did not exist represent 18 per cent compared to three per cent who strongly disagree with this assertion.

Figure 3: The ravine and its importance in the life and well-being of the respondents.



Source: own elaboration.

These results indicate that for the majority, the ravine is not an important element in their daily lives, likely due to its current conditions, as when asked if it provides them with well-being, an even larger percentage believes it does not. However, when asked if their life would be better without the ravine, a majority still thinks it would be, but the difference compared to those who think otherwise has reduced to nearly equal. This

could suggest that their perception of the ravine as an unimportant element in their lives is precisely because it does not generate well-being due to the pollution conditions it is in, rather than its general condition, leading them to believe that their life would not necessarily be better without the ravine.

When observing the responses of the respondents to the question: "Do you consider that the ravine brings you well-being?", which evaluates the well-being of the inhabitants concerning the ravine in its integral dimension, 67 per cent express in varying degrees that it does not. This result strongly contrasts with what the respondents expressed regarding their happiness and life satisfaction. These discordant results suggest the significant importance the ravine has in their lives as a physical space for coexistence, despite not being expressed as such in the specific question posed above, and would explain the broad consensus expressed by the target population regarding their negative feelings about the well-being produced by the ravine. Similarly, this situation could be explained by the deteriorating conditions in which it is found.

These contrasting results would corroborate the presumption that the feeling of lasting happiness or well-being among individuals is quite stable and relatively independent of the living environment or surroundings (Seligman, 2003, pp. 18-28).

Well-Being in the domains of health, safety, and neighborhood conditions

Regarding satisfaction in vital domains, three were considered that are very directly related to the presence of the ravine. When asked if they consider that "The ravine is a risk to their health?", the majority (73 per cent) believe this to be true, with a high percentage agreeing (40 per cent) or strongly agreeing (33 per cent) with this statement (Figure 4).

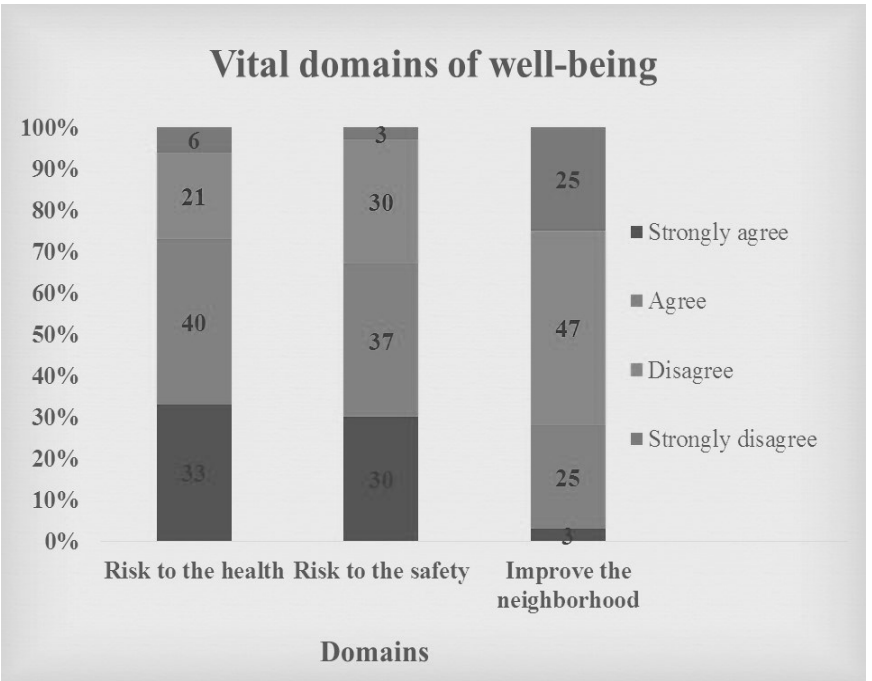
Regarding whether they consider that "The ravine is a risk to their safety?", 67 per cent express agreement with this statement to varying degrees: 37 per cent agree and 30 per cent strongly agree (Figure 4).

As for whether they believe the ravine is an element that improves their neighborhood, a majority (72 per cent) disagree with this statement: 47 per cent disagree and 25 per cent strongly disagree (Figure 4).

Thus, for these three vital domains, respondents show a majority tendency to consider the ravine a negative element for their health (73 per cent), for their safety (67 per cent), and for the image of their neighborhood (72 per cent).

The variables evaluated in these three vital domains exhibit a very similar negative trend among them, with a percentage even higher than the percentage of those who express disagreement (67 per cent) with the question of whether the ravine brings them well-being. This negative trend could be understood by the negative impact they experience in their lives regarding these issues. These perceptions could influence their overall negative consideration of the ravine, which, however, would be partially compensated by other components of the ravine system, explaining a change in the negative trend when expressing their agreement with the question of whether their life would be better without the ravine (54 per cent).

Figure 4: The ravine and health, safety, and neighborhood conditions



Source: own elaboration.

The future

To understand the respondents' feelings regarding what future they would find most convenient concerning the ravine, two questions were included. The first focused on asking them if they would be willing to participate in

a program for the recovery of the ravine, to which the majority responded affirmatively (97 per cent).

In the second question, concerning what they believe should be done with the ravine, a majority (66 per cent) opted to clean and preserve it rather than fill it in (34 per cent).

Although almost all individuals responded that they would participate in a potential recovery program, many contradict themselves when they express that the best course of action regarding the ravine is to fill it in. However, it is encouraging to observe that two-thirds of the participants maintain a consistent line in both questions when they respond that the best course is to clean and preserve it, suggesting that many value the ravine as an urban and neighborhood asset. This would mean an improvement in their neighborhood and likely an enhancement of their sense of well-being.

Although Meyers and Nastasy (1999) argue that preventive interventions should focus on modifying the social environment —more satisfactory socialization— he recovery of the ravine, aside from its importance regarding the ecosystem services it provides, could somehow contribute as a basis for improving that social environment. In this sense, while today's adults maintain a high level of well-being despite the neighborhood conditions and the ravine, in the future, their children may not feel the same as they access a higher level of education. According to van van Praag, Frijters y Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2003), while better education produces happier societies because it allows for more efficient problem-solving and obtaining better-paying jobs, some studies also indicate that education has a negative impact on satisfaction with the environment, as more educated people seem to be more critical of the place where they live and the public services they receive.

The consideration that the inhabitants of the ravine are among the most deprived, according to objective indicators, and therefore experience the least well-being, seems to lead to a fallacy. Often, people feel unhappy because they are told they are poor, and poverty is associated with a lack of material satisfiers. It is constantly mentioned, especially in the media, that rich people are happy. This assertion could negatively influence people's opinions. A person might feel good, but upon reflecting and realizing they have little material wealth, they might then say they are unhappy and/or have little life satisfaction. This would be based on a false premise and, by obviousness, lead to an erroneous conclusion. In this regard, van Praag and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2004) suggest that the aspirational gap between what one has and what one wants has greater explanatory power for subjective

well-being than what one has (for example, income), proposing that needs are endogenous to the factors that enable their satisfaction, as approaching their fulfillment does not necessarily mean being better off.

Despite this, the sense of well-being that individuals report constitutes a positive element in their lives, generating a virtuous circle, as it is well documented that such feelings enhance health, promote personal growth, allow for life satisfaction, generate hope and optimism, and consequently, a greater perception of well-being and happiness. These positive sensations constitute a valuable foundation that modifies their ways of thinking and acting, and consequently, their patterns of behavior in specific situations, especially adverse ones, involving greater and better physical, psychological, and social resources (Fredrickson, 2001; Seligman, 2003).

Conclusions

The results obtained regarding the well-being of those living in the El Conde ravine show that, under current conditions, it is a negative element in the evaluated life domains, as evidenced by the low valuation they give to them. However, these domains have little influence on their overall appreciation of happiness and well-being, confirming the hypothesis that the well-being of the inhabitants of the El Conde ravine is not linked to its conditions. This aligns with Lyubomirsky's (2001) assertion regarding the importance of the subjective interpretation of objective factors in maintaining and creating happiness.

This interpretation could suggest an explanation for why the environment is not a priority for societies—not in reference to what is said, but to the commitment and concrete actions taken for its care. For people's well-being, according to various studies, not all life domains are equally important (Rojas, 2006), with family situation and social and emotional environment considered among the most important within the various vital domains of well-being (INEGI, 2015; 2024). Therefore, if one is well in the family, relational, emotional, and intimate context, the conditions of the biophysical environment are of little relevance or even irrelevant. It is observed and even valued, but it is not significant in the internal and emotional realm of the individual. This makes sense in phrases like: "family is everything," "as long as you are well with your family, the rest doesn't matter," and others. This means that environmental degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and pollution, among many other problems, are all dispensable as long as there is social satisfaction. Perhaps environmental concern is merely a discourse, and genuine concern is limited to just a few.

In this regard, further study and analysis of the causal relationship between people's well-being and their biophysical environment are necessary, which has profound implications for respect for the environment, its conservation, and thus human permanence on Earth.

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