



The determinants of subjective well-being in rural Algeria

محددات الرفاهية الذاتية في الريف الجزائري

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Abstract.

- It is reasonable to accept that a poor person is a person with low well-being; thus, poverty depends on the specific notion of human well-being. It is therefore imperative to study human well-being before measuring poverty and policy development for its reduction. What makes us happy? Here is a question often asked in international surveys. Subjective well-being is a central theme in society and is at the centre of public policy debates. This study aims to explore the subjective determinants of well-being and provide answers to the essential question of the nature and causes of happiness among households in the rural world in Algeria.

Key words:

subjective well-being, quality of life, public policies, rural households, Algeria.

الملخص:

ومن المعقول قبول أن يكون الشخص الفقير شخصاً من ذوي العافية المتدنية؛ وبالتالي فإن الفقر يعتمد على المفهوم المحدد لرفاه الإنسان. ولذلك لا بد من دراسة رفاه الإنسان قبل قياس الفقر ووضع السياسات من أجل الحد منه. ما الذي يجعلنا سعداء؟ هنا هو السؤال الذي كثيراً ما يطرح في الدراسات الاستقصائية الدولية. والرفاه الذاتي موضوع رئيسي في المجتمع وهو محور مناقشات السياسة العامة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف المحددات الذاتية للرفاه وتقديم إجابات على السؤال الأساسي للطبيعة وأسباب السعادة بين الأسر الريفية في الجزائر.

الكلمات الدالة: الرفاه الذاتي، نوعية الحياة، السياسات العامة، الأسر الريفية، الجزائر.

1. Introduction

The search for the well-being or happiness of individuals has always been at the centre of the concerns of international organizations and states. These concepts are currently the subject of the greatest number of studies, discussions, conferences and are at the centre of public policy debates. For a long time, happiness has captured, and continues to capture, the interest of so many people. They never doubted that happiness is very important; it should be noted immediately, that the terms “subjective happiness” and “well-being” are often used as synonyms.

The issue of well-being remains a topical topic that is addressed in particular by psychologists, philosophers, sociologists and economists. Most studies on the subject are part of a much broader field of

research, commonly referred to as "quality of life." (Veenhoven, 1997) Thus, well-being appears to be a new economic, social questioning in line with politics. It depends not only on the level of income or consumption but also on other factors. Lucie Davoine has focused particularly in the empirical literature on the question of the determinants of subjective well-being "What makes us happy? Love? The wedding? Going out with friends? Going on vacation? Get a pay promotion? Feeling like you've done your job well? To be healthy? » (Davoine, 2012).

Since the emergence of this field more than five decades ago, the literature of the SWB has progressed. Recent surveys by economists and other social scientists have taken enormous steps in understanding the factors that influence people's subjective well-being. Rural households have the difficulty of finding adequate solutions to the various problems that arise in socio-economic life such as food, clothing, comfort of feasts, marriage, etc. Unlike households in the urban area who do not find it very difficult to cope with its problems.

The objective of this study is to analyze the factors that influence the well-being of rural households. The methodological approach used is arranged as follows: the theoretical foundations on the theme of subjective well-being and the basic concepts to better conceive the problem. As a result, experiments and research carried out on subjective well-being in the rural world. Finally, the empirical study (survey), which describes the history and overall situation of rural households in Algeria and in order to give value to our research we did a local study in a well-defined and detailed area of all components (official, shepherd, etc.) with their well-being.

2.- Concepts and theoretical basis of subjective well-being.

Before we begin our study, we must distinguish between objective and subjective well-being so as not to confuse the two concepts.

2.1.- Definition of objective well-being

According to Breda-Goyverts, the notion of objective well-being is linked to the notion of prosperity, abundance, development and wealth. The overview of prosperity draws mainly the material aspects of life. The concept of objective well-being is explained as having "sufficient resources to achieve satisfactory living conditions according to one's own preferences. Here, well-being is therefore seen as a situation of positive freedom: it is the possibilities that everyone has to make choices about the organization of their life." This is to say that the concept of objective well-being studies not only "the material aspects of life but also the non-material aspects" such as autonomy and participation in economic, political and environmental life.

After seeing the definition of objective well-being, we must see that of the SWB explained by some authors.

2.2.- Definition of subjective well-being

According to the OECD, "Subjective being refers to the notion of satisfaction with life, the presence of positive experiences or feelings, and the absence of negative experiences or feelings. Each of these three elements, which constitute a distinct component of subjective well-being, is subject to a whole series of determinants." (OECD, 2011) Also, "The notion of subjective well-being reflects the idea that quality of life depends on the impact of a set of specific circumstances on the need of individuals in their own lives, and presupposes that the

person best placed to judge the quality of a life is the person concerned himself." (OECD, 2011)

Yamamoto believes that Subjective well-being is based on needs that are universal conditions for human functioning and that play a big role on the SWB. (Yamamoto, 2008)

We conclude that SWB can be defined as the satisfaction process that must take into account personal, cultural and contextual conditions.

3.- History of subjective well-being theory.

The happiness economy is a branch that emerges from the economy and bases its analyses on subjective well-being (happiness) not on objective well-being, which differentiates it from the economy of well-being. As Lucie Davoine confirms in her report "Can the Economy of Happiness Renew the Economy of Well-being?": "The branch of the economy that studies subjective well-being is now called the economy of happiness that should not be confused with the economy of well-being." (Centre d'études de l'emploi, 2007) And to go to the front of the search; take the perception of economists Frey and Stutzer, who is quoted by Carlo Klein and Monique Borsenberger, that subjective well-being, happiness and satisfaction are considered synonyms. (Borsenberger, 2010) An ancient philosophical thought considers that it is the individuals themselves who are best placed to judge their own situation. Only in economics, this approach is closely linked to the utilitarian tradition which is with the idea that the quality of life is indicated only in the subjective situations of each. To have a human existence, there is a common goal that is to give everyone the opportunity to be "happy" and "satisfied" in life. (Pierre, 2009)

In traditional times, economists think that more wealth equals more well-being which means more happiness. According to Davoine quoted by Gaucher, at present, the economy of happiness is a

fundamentally experimental approach that seeks to "measure happiness and estimate the determinants of satisfaction or declared well-being." (Gaucher, 2014)

4.- The determinants of subjective well-being.

4.1.- The explanatory factors of subjective well-being

Subjective well-being is not only determined by income level, knowing that if there is an increase in income, it does not lead to an increase in the level of happiness. Other areas help determine subjective well-being such as health, education, employment, etc. as Gaucher quotes in his book "Happiness and Economy": "If happiness were only money, then it would be enough to have more and more money to be ever happier. However, the factors that influence happiness are many and diverse: love, friendship, family, culture in which we live, personality, leisure, work and many others. ». (Gaucher R. , 2009) There are several areas on the determinants of subjective well-being used in several reports of the Organisation for Economic Development Cooperation (OECD). These areas are: income and wealth; Jobs and wages; Housing work/family life balance Education and skills social connections; civic commitment and governance; environmental quality and personal security. (Boarini, 2012)

4.2.- Recent debates about the relationship between income - the SWB

According to Andrew E. Clark and Claudia Senik, the relationship between income and happiness is one of the most important, but also the most criticized, questions of literature based on subjective well-being. (Clark, 2011) In this field of research, there is a very broad consensus (Herrera, 2006) on three striking 'stylized facts'.

4.2.1.- Easterlin paradox

Regarding the correlation between subjective well-being and income levels, a lot of probabilities were highlighted. The one that is generally most chosen is that subjective well-being is not only determined by the level of income, knowing that in 1974, Richard Easterlina gave birth to a paradox that bears his name today (Easterlin Paradox): the happiness of all, is not done in relation to the growth of the economy. (Davoine, 2012) Giving the example of Frey and Stutzer cited by Gaucher the increase in wealth of the United States, Japan and the countries of the European Union, in recent decades, has not increased happiness. (Gaucher R. , 2011) Other areas help to determine subjective well-being such as health, education, employment, etc. This list is not exhaustive: other studies such as those of Frey and Stutzer cited by Javier Herrera, Mireille Razafindrakoto and François Roubaud, also include family situation such as divorce and widowhood, governance, democracy and social capital. (Herrera, 2006)

4.2.2- The comparison

The second stylized fact is the fact of comparing to each other, It tries to explain that: when individuals compare their income to that of others. That is, when an individual's income increases, but the income of other people around him also increases, so he will not be happier than before. As a result, income will no longer be correlated with subjective well-being or there will be a decline in this correlation. (Herrera, 2006) After Claudia Senik and Andrew Clark quoted by Pauline Gandré analyzed the question: Who is compared to in particular? This study led them: that each compares or refers to a group that belongs to its environment. It turns out that money has an impact on the well-being of the individual only if it has more than his neighbor.

4.2.3- Addiction or adaptation

The third fact stylized, is the fact that at the end of a new situation, everything becomes usual and loses its power of novelty; this phenomenon tries to explain why individuals look to the past and view it with bitterness and the future with optimism. (Herrera, 2006) With this phenomenon Andrew Clark quoted by Pauline Gandré understands that the person quickly gets used to having a high income, thus there is a provocation of a drop in satisfaction after a certain time than in the early years. (Gandré, 2009)

5.- Democracy and subjective well-being.

The relationship between democracy and subjective well-being has been explored in depth, and at first glance may seem to be a direct relationship: the creation and maintenance of democratic institutions promotes well-being. According to Diener et al quoted by Amitava Krishna Dutt and Benjamin Radcliff, people in democratic societies have higher levels of happiness than those in authoritarian societies. As Inglehart and Klingemann argue, Dutt and Radcliff argue, "adopt democratic institutions and live happily ever after." (Dutt, 2009)

This is the case with the Tavits study cited by Dutt and Radcliff, using data from the European Survey which finds that voters are significantly happier than non-voters, regardless of their choice. Frey and Stutzer in "Happiness prospers in democracy" have an influential piece that illustrates this approach, which the authors focus on the sake of 'direct democracy', for example, the process by which citizens decide on political issues through initiatives and referendums. According to the authors, direct democracy gives the power to "verify and challenge the political class" to the citizens themselves, and may be leading to "political decisions more in line with preference voters" than in "representative democracy" alone. In turn, quite simply, this should lead to a higher level of subjective well-being of citizens.

Using an analysis of survey data from 6,000 citizens in 26 cantons of Switzerland, the authors note that such measures, such as direct democratic rights meetings and citizens, have a powerful and positive effect on life satisfaction regardless of wealth levels and education.

Two of the additional findings of interest stand out: foreign residents who do not have the same participatory benefits also show lower levels of subjective well-being even where direct democracy is more widespread. In addition, the procedure as well as the usefulness of the results of direct democracy is shown to positively influence life satisfaction. (Frey, 2000) In his article « Quality of Life and its impact on alienation expatriate teachers in some educational governorates in the sultanate of Oman », Saud bin Mubarak al-Badri stated that quality of life is a multidimensional and relative concept, different from one person to another in theory and in practice according to the criteria adopted by individuals to assess life and its requirements, which are often influenced by many factors that control the determination of the elements of life ability to think and make decisions. And the ability to control, to manage the surrounding conditions, physical and psychological health and economic conditions, religious beliefs, cultural values, through which individuals determine the important things that give them life happiness. (albadri, 2019)

The clear implication here is that the very act of participating in a democratic process, whatever the outcome, increases levels of subjective well-being. This joins the broader question of the quality of democracy, rather than whether a list of democratic institutions is sufficient to increase individual and societal happiness.

6.- Literature review on subjective well-being in the rural world.

Subjective well-being was the focus of several global researches in urban and rural areas, knowing that our study focuses on the rural

area, which is designated as the set of cultivated spaces inhabited by a small population; its concepts are quite the opposite of the city or the urban environment.

The word "rural" has been applied almost in every country in the world for a long time to determine distributional agglomerations or agrarian social organizations. The concept was and remains in part the important fractional foundation in the social sciences such as history, geography, sociology or economics; rural area is an image of social facts that is widely present in political debates and in public action for the development of the territory.

According to Mathieu N. The rural environment, also called the countryside or rural environment, refers to all inhabited cultivated spaces; its concepts are quite the opposite of the city or the urban environment.

Responses to an OECD rural data survey and an assessment of other sources led to the following observations:

- ❖ Typically rural areas are defined as those with low population density and small settlements; not to mention agricultural areas that are often rural.
- ❖ An official definition of "rural" does not always exist. The definitions used vary considerably. In most cases, they treat rural as a residual category. In this case, it is defined negatively in the sense of not being "urban" or "aggregated," rather than being explicitly specified by its own properties.

Several essays and theological literatures have been interested in this thorny subject; major global experiences have looked at the well-being of several different world populations. also studies and research on subjective well-being have been carried out, we mention the most important:

6.1.- Experience the impact of rural electrification programmes in sub-Saharan Africa

According to Tanguy Bernard, 27% of the world's population in 2002 or 1.6 billion people live without electricity, the majority of these people who mean 80% live in rural poor countries. The rate of rural electrification (ER) is a problem in sub-Saharan Africa, a shutdown has been observed for more than thirty years, at less than 10%, while developing countries reach the average of 50%. Africa's rural environment contains 226 million people without access to electricity. Knowing that electricity is considered fundamental to have an opening to the developed world. The non-existence of electricity includes the absence of several services and comforts. (Bernard., 2010) According to Tanguy Bernard, rural electrification programmes are very important to improve the well-being of connected households. The household-level analysis of electrification "measured indicators such as the income or educational achievement of household children, so it made it possible to differentiate between the wealth category of rural households." Because the cost of connecting electricity in housing is high, the wealthiest households come first. Taking the example of Benin, studied by Wantchekon, which shows that children in households connected to electricity do better in school because they are more advantaged than their peers. This may have affected their academic success, without calling for other factors such as better nutrition or easier access to books. (Bernard., 2010)

6.2.- Study of "Subjective well-being and its determinants in rural China

A survey of rural Chinese households in 2007 by John Knight, Lina Song and Ramani Gunatilaka who wondered Why people living in rural areas in China seem to be relatively happy despite their modest poverty and socio-economic status? More than 60% of the rural

population say they are "happy" or "very happy", which is why the authors proposed to explore the determinants of subjective well-being in rural China. They found evidence that public property, the possession of a phone, the satisfaction of the village clinic, and the view that its spokesmen who represent the interest of the village increase happiness. (Knight, 2009)

6.3.- Study of "Subjective well-being in rural India: The cursor of conspicuous consumption"

Using data on the 697 people from 375 low-income rural households in India, the authors test the effects of relative income and ostentatious consumption on subjective well-being. The results show that people who report ostentatious consumption have moved to lower levels of subjective well-being. Surprisingly, an individual's relative income position does not affect a sense of well-being. Motivated by positional concerns, people do not accept their relative rank, instead of consuming visible goods, they consume more than their needs, in order to make their neighbours believe that they have a high social status. (Linszen, 2011)

6.4.- Study of "The Determinants of Household Monetary Well-being in Lower Kabylia: A Regression Analysis."

A study of households in lower Kabylia between April and May 2005 examined the determinants of household monetary well-being in Lower Kabylia in relation to per capita spending. Author Abdoune Benallaoua has tried to assess monetary poverty in Lower Kabylia, analyze its contours and profiles, and identify its determinants in a survey on household living standards. According to Abdoune Benallaoua, the results show that "the food line is in the order of 17796.55 DA for rural areas. The upper line, on the other hand, reaches 25775.92 DA in rural areas." However, the study showed that there are results that highlight the importance of poverty in rural

areas, in large households and with a low-educated, unemployed or manoeuvring householder. The most important factors in well-being were identified by the decline in per capita spending. The result showed that, on the one hand, household size and residence in rural areas have negative effects on living standards. Other shares, the possession of physical assets, the source of transfers from abroad, and the occupation of members, contribute to the improvement of the standard of living. (Benallaoua, 2008)

7.- The determinants of subjective well-being in rural households (Case Study).

Algeria's rural population has declined since independence and ceased to be predominantly rural in 1987, in contrast to the rapidly growing urban populations. This was done in relation to the attractiveness of the city and the emergence of phenomena that marked the history of Algeria as the throes of terrorism that destroyed society in general and rural people in particular resulting in an exodus of rural populations. Thus, terrorism has led to the destruction of a way of life of a society that only wanted peace and well-being. According to the ONS quoted by Zaghib Mohamed "The share of sparse populations in the total population rose from 44% in 1966 [41.5% (1977) to 29.2%(1987)] to 19.2% in 1998. In 2004, Algeria had 32.3 million inhabitants, the rural population was about 13 million people, of whom 6.5 million (50%) living in isolated and scattered dwellings (mainly hamlets, mechta, douars, ksours). and 6.5 million (50%) live in clumped environments."

In recent years, the State has highlighted a policy of agricultural development programme of rural areas to promote social stability in these areas, the State has put various development programmes namely the FNDA, the PNDA and the PPDRI to which are granted huge investments in the strengthening of collective and individual facilities (health, schools, rural housing, infrastructure, roads, water,

energy and sanitation). Through these programmes, rural populations move less to establish themselves in urban areas by finding improvements in quality of life and well-being within households. In addition, we will do a study on the determinants of subjective well-being among rural households in Algeria (Case: County of Mascara) to mark the theoretical approach with results.

7.1.- Research field

The County of Mascara is part of the Beni Chougrane mountains, it is located in the northwestern region of Algeria. According to Souidi Zahira and Bessaoud Omar, the County of Mascara "has a rural rate of around 70% (32 rural communes out of 46), a rate higher than the national average." (Souidi, 2011) The data are from a survey of rural households in fourteen municipalities in the County of Mascara between January and October 2015. Two in Zone 1 (the Sig and Habra plains to the north), three in Zone 2 (the Beni Chougrane Mountains upstream), four in Zone 3 (the high plains in the centre) and five in Zone 4 (the Saida Mountains to the south). We wanted to reach 250 questionnaires but we only reached 150 households, because we had difficulties with heads of households especially with women (compared to conservatism).

Figures



Fig1. The map of the Mascara County (bendena)

Source: <http://habib-bendena.e-monsite.com/medias/images/wla-mascara-2.jpg>, consulted in 05/02/2015.

7.2.- Questionnaire structure

The content of the questionnaire can be divided into five categories of information:

7.2.1.- The first category: the socio-demographic characteristics of the head of household

The household is a group of individuals who live together and put in common all or part of their resources to meet their basic needs. We have established in the first category: the commune whose household resides, the age, the sex, the marital status of the head of household,

the number of members of the household and the level of education (none, primary, middle, secondary and university).

7.2.2.- The second category: standard of living

We identified in the second category: the activities of the head of household (active, non-active, occupation, industry), the household manager's savings (income adequacy, duration of income relative to month, estimate of minimum monthly income/family needs, and amount of savings).

7.2.3.- The third category: quality of life

We have established in the third category: housing (housing type, occupancy status, room number, running water supply, drinking water supply, electrical connection, type of fuel and rural subsidy in development). In relation to the quality of education our concern was that of the problems that troubled the head or household members in the institutions attended. In relation to the quality of health (type of illness of household members, type of facility for treatment, provision of insurance). Finally, we discussed access to public services by assessing the quality of services offered by public institutions (Hospitals), the evaluation of the services offered by (The Town Hall, The Department, The County...), estimating the problems of administration (human, material, etc.), participation in elections, knowledge and evaluation of the elected representatives of the commune of residence and the satisfaction of the management of (tarring or asphalt) lighting, security, etc.

7.2.4.- The fourth category: property ownership indicators

In the fourth category, we discussed the goods and their values that the household possesses such (a refrigerator, television, stove, computer, private telephone, sewing machine, means of transport). We challenged in the possession of urban land the layout and the area, the

same was for agricultural land but adding the value of production (annual average/hectare), the quality of the land and the satisfaction of irrigation. Also the possession of country animals (disposition, type and quantity).

7.2.5.- The fifth category: subjective well-being

In this category, we addressed the problems of the daily life of the household, the satisfaction of life, the source of the household, the importance of a few factors and the determination of four of these factors that change the perception of life of the head of household and by ending our questionnaire with the concern of increasing income if it has a relationship in the change of life towards the best or the worse.

8.- Definition of the purpose of the investigation.

We conducted a questionnaire survey on the theme "Determining Factors of Subjective Well-being in Rural Households (Case Study)" and addressed the defining characteristics of the standard of living, quality of life and subjective well-being of the target population.

9.- Population and sample determination.

We chose the random sampling method to give the public an equal opportunity to participate in our survey. A sample of 150 households was selected (men, women, with/without dependent children, with/without income...).

10.- Conducting the survey.

In terms of how the questionnaire is administered, we have been responsible for writing down the answers provided to us by the subjects, in order to make it easier for them (some people do not understand the French language) in addition so as not to lose the

questionnaires knowing that we have no relationship with the subjects. The data processed was done by the "SPSS" version 20 software.

11.- Descriptive analysis.

The purpose of this study is to provide a quantified picture of the characteristics of survey respondents residing in the County of Mascara. The questionnaire was to be completed by the person who is the main financial support of the household (head of the household). In addition, if there were several individuals who were supporting the household financial support, the oldest individual had to complete the questionnaire.

Figures

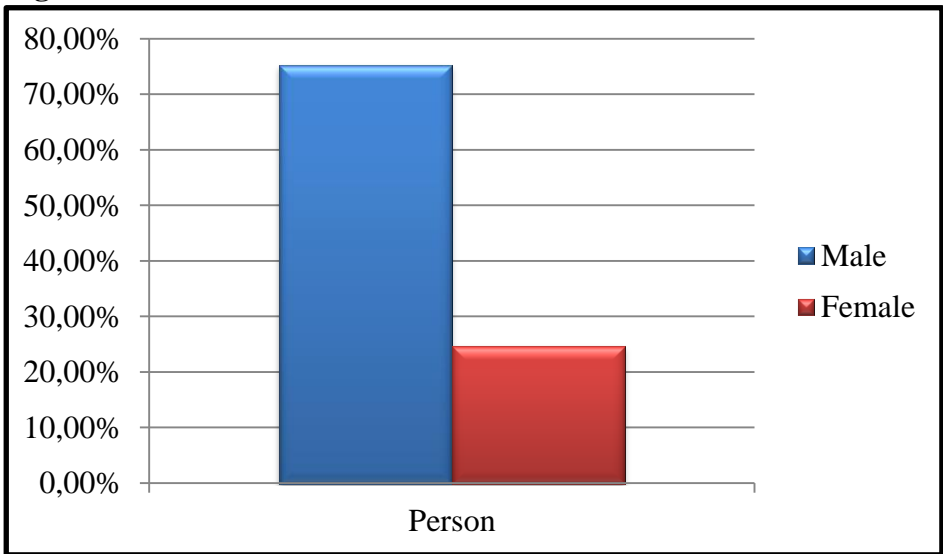


Fig2.- The sex of the head of the household.

Source: Made by authors.

Analysis of the figure above shows that more than 3/4 (75.3%) respondents are male, a quarter (24.7%) only is female, this accurately reflects the reality of a conservative society, protective of the female gender leaving a very limited field to women's freedom of expression.

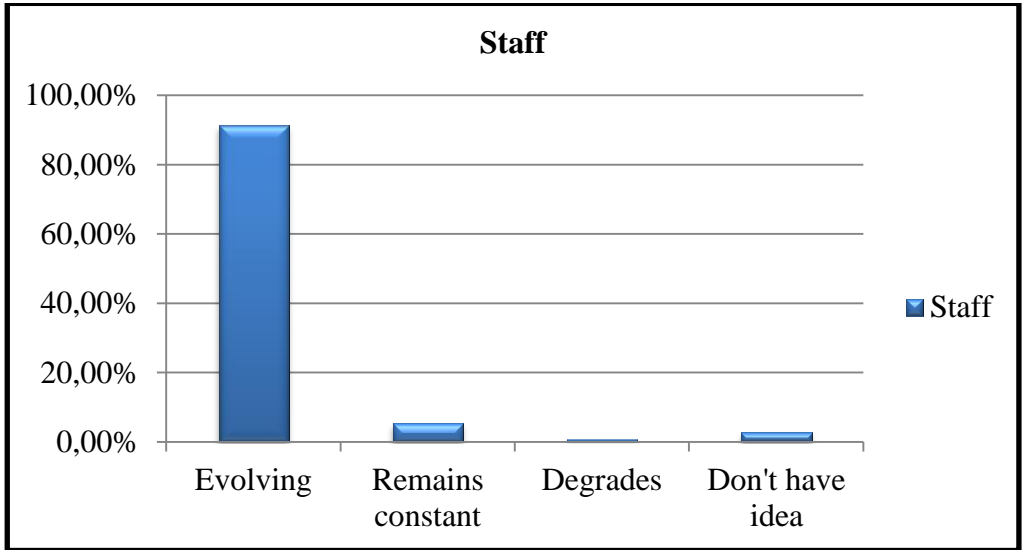


Fig3.- Changing the life of the head of the household in relation to the increase in income.

Source: Made by authors.

91.3% of respondents say that income has a direct influence on their life changes, they are convinced that if their income increases, their lives will also change, it has a bilateral relationship between the two points, the change of life following the change (increase) of income.

12.- In-depth analysis.

Figures

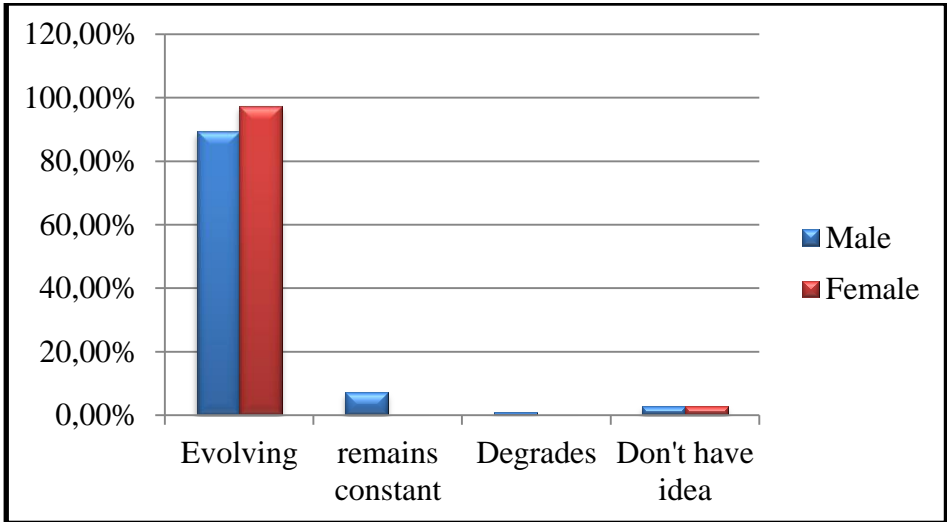


Fig4.- Relationship between "The change in the life of the head of the household versus the increase in income - The sex of the head of the household".

Source: Made by authors.

It is remarkable that a natural parity stands out in this picture, indeed whether the head of household is male or female, the observation is obvious, they both have almost the same attitudes and certainties (almost percentage), regarding the change of life following the increase in income!! For 97.3% of women and 89.4% of men their lives change if their incomes increase, however no woman has said that the life of her household remains constant if their income is revised upwards, unlike 7% of men who say that it will not disturb their lives in any way. No man or woman has claimed that rising incomes are hurting their lives quite the opposite, for a male and female category (2.7% equal) they have no idea about the impact of

rising income on changing their lives. Income plays a prominent and linear role in the standard of living of men and women. As income increases, their lives evolve.

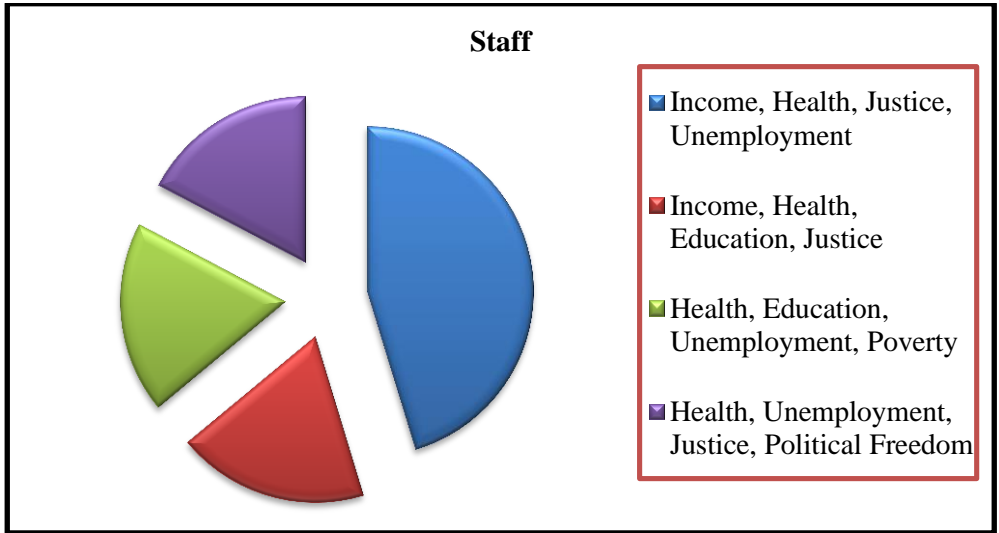


Fig5.- The four factors that change the perception of life

Source: Made by authors.

This figure shows that 45.3% of citizens say that the four determinants of their perceptions of life are: income, health, justice and unemployment. Income and health are the most basic factors in their lives.

13.- Conclusion

The pursuit of happiness is the ultimate goal of every being on earth, where every human being has his own vision of happiness which led us to the reflection and elaboration of this modest work. After analyzing the data, the study reveals that the subjective well-being of rural households in the County of Mascara is correlated with income level, which means that the higher household income, the more their

subjective well-being increases; this leads us to infer that there is a strong and positive influence between income and subjective well-being. The results also indicate that there are other factors that create positive emotions in rural households in the County of Mascara. According to the latter we were able to observe and list the factors that positively influence the subjective well-being of the households surveyed (men and women), we cite: work, education, marital status, housing and health.

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