

with both the law and popular appreciations of ‘justice’. A recent review of AusAID programs comes to much the same conclusion as have a HIIL (Hague Institute for the Internationalisation of Law) program and the reviewer.<sup>1</sup> In short, Armitage provides a convincing and unusual set of arguments for revising judicial reform strategies whether or not one accepts his bottom line about ‘justice’.

## Note

1. The AusAID evaluation, although begun in 2010, is apparently not yet released, but a preliminary view is found in Cox, Marcus, Emele Duituturaga and Eric Scheye (2011). *Discussion Paper: Emerging Findings from the ODE Law and Justice Evaluation*. AusAID, Office of Development Effectiveness. While still not available on the AusAID Web site, related papers are. See [www.ode.usaid.gov.au/publications/documents](http://www.ode.usaid.gov.au/publications/documents). The HIIL report ‘Toward Basic Justice Care for Everyone: Approaches and Innovations’ can be found at [www.hiil.org/data/sitemanagement/media/TrendReport\\_Part1\\_020412\\_DEF%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.hiil.org/data/sitemanagement/media/TrendReport_Part1_020412_DEF%20(2).pdf). My own work is best summarized in Hammergren, Linn (2007). *Envisioning Reform: Improving Judicial Performance in Latin American*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

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## Adaptation, Poverty and Development. The Dynamics of Subjective Well-Being

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*Palgrave Macmillan, Great Britain, England, 2012, 229pp., £57.50 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-0-230-36056-3.*

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It has been argued that non-user-friendly theories are usually unsuccessful. One can similarly assert that books that are not easy to read will have no important impact. This, however, should not be the case of *Adaptation, Poverty and Development: The Dynamics of Subjective Well-Being*, which has been recently published by Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 978-0-230-36056-3. Its editor, David Clark, has provided us with 229 pages organized into eight chapters, each devoted to a specific aspect of the key topic of the book. The book is of clear interest to a wide audience, as none of its chapters is too technical to discourage non-academic readers. In fact, all chapters are clearly written and accessible, even for non-specialists. This book also covers interesting themes that are of importance to those interested in the dynamics of subjective well-being (SWB), whether from a theoretical, empirical or policymaking perspective, which is a great achievement indeed.

The book starts with an introduction (Chapter 1) in which the editor explains the goals of the research and provides a brief summary of the content of each chapter. The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 is mostly concerned with conceptual and theoretical issues. Part 2 is devoted to empirical analyses of adaptation in which quantitative and qualitative methods are used, such as standard econometric techniques for different case studies in China, South Africa and India. Part 3 focuses on the relationship between adaptation and specific topics such as disability, class, migration and gender.

The second chapter titled ‘*Utilitarianism, “Adaptation” and Paternalism*’ and written by Mozaffar Qizilbash examines some of the differences between the notions of ‘adaptation’ in Elster’s and Sen’s critiques on utilitarianism. The author starts with Layard’s revival of Benthamite utilitarianism and summarizes some of the differences between the notions of adaptation used in the recent literature on happiness, in particular, in Economics and Psychology. Qizilbash then explores an interesting discussion on different philosophical approaches that can lead to very different policy implications.

In Chapter 3 (*Adaptation: Implications for Development in Theory and Practice*), David Clark focuses on the implications of adaptation for development ethics. This chapter explains very clearly the influence of Amartya Sen’s capability approach in economics and social Sciences as well as in philosophy on development during the last few years. After discussing the idea that people adapt to poverty and deprivation by restraining their wants, hopes and aspirations, the author claims the importance of analyzing the different forms of adaptation and its implications for well-being and development. Finally, the author stresses that even though there is broad empirical evidence related to adaptation, it is not easy to interpret as they cannot be used to identify causal relationships.

Chapter 4, by John Knight and Ramani Gunatilaka, is concerned with *Aspirations, Adaptation and Subjective Well-Being of Rural-Urban Migrants in China*. The authors explore the role of aspirations of the migrants and its relation to happiness. Two important issues in this chapter are the speed and extent to which their aspirations adapt to circumstances. Next, they estimate happiness functions and decomposition analyses to provide new empirical evidence in this context.

Abigail Barr and David Clark are the authors of Chapter 5: *A Multidimensional Analysis of Adaptation in a Developing Country Context*. They analyze ‘adaptation’ in two senses: first, the individuals’ subjective well-being depends not only on their current circumstances but also on their aspirations and, second, these aspirations depend on their own past circumstances, because of a process of habituation, and on the circumstances of those in the reference group, because of a tendency to make social comparisons. Next, the authors discuss data and measurement issues when using the Essential of Life Survey and, next, they analyze the income, education and health aspirations of the surveyed individuals and how they adapt in a partial way or tend to appreciate one well-being dimension more than another (that is, good health).

In Chapter 6 (*Adaptation, Poverty and Subjective Well-Being: Evidence from South India*), Daniel Neff stresses the importance of two processes in which adaptation to poverty may involve resignation or optimism. He analyzes qualitative and quantitative information in two villages (Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh). Taking people’s subjective perceptions as a starting point, they use subjective well-being measures to analyze to what extent people adapt despite living in poverty and what kind or form of adaptation takes place.

In chapter 7 Marcel Fafchamps and Bereket Kebede analyze *Subjective Well-Being Disability and Adaptation: A Case Study from Rural Ethiopia*. The emphasis of this chapter

is on the link between welfare, disability and adaptation and on the use of cross-section data collected from rural areas of Ethiopia in 2004. The empirical results pose in utter contrast to the notion of hedonic adaptation found in the psychology literature. However, the available evidence does not support the idea that people adapt to ill health and disability.

The book concludes with Chapter 8 in which Bhim Reddy and Wendy Olsen look at *Adaptation of the Rural Working Class in India: A Case Study of Migrant Workers*. The authors review different types of adaptation of migrant workers and they also argue that the adaptation is a passive response to new conditions introducing the concepts of strategies, time and resistance to change of the migrants. In their review of concepts, they frame the analysis under the notions of agency and structure typically used in development studies. Reddy and Olsen conclude that a change in a broad strategy is one form of adaptation, whereas acting on a desire to change one's own social class does not necessarily successfully change the class structure. In consequence, the adaptation to the circulatory migration that involves raising economic and social expectations is not expected to change the gender regime.

Following this short review of its various chapters, in my opinion, the book has reached the main goals that the editor mentions in the introduction: (i) it has identified and clarified the abstract concept of adaptation and has considered its relevance for development theory; (ii) while adding to the relatively small number of empirical studies that investigate adaptation in poor countries by reviewing the contributions drawn on cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data, some manage to get at the causal processes and mechanism behind adaptation; (iii) the obtained evidence suggests that adaptation in poor countries can take many different forms, which is not always consistent with prominent notions of resignation advocated by philosophers and social theorists; (iv) the occurrence of adaptation is also consistent with the tentative findings from international studies on happiness; and (v) it contains an integral work in the analyses on the formation of values, attitudes and norms with changes in strategic behavior that involves either adapting to or resisting elements of change in order to improve the quality of life.

There is no doubt that anyone can learn a lot from reading this book. The range of topics covered is so broad that even experts in the field can enhance their knowledge as they also add new insights and open up novel perspectives for future research. As I previously mentioned, the editor is certainly to be lauded for having succeeded in publishing a book that may also be read by non-specialists. For all these reasons, I expect *Adaptation, Poverty and Development. The Dynamics of Subjective Well-Being* to be well received by its readers.

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