Citizen satisfaction with public goods and government services in the global urban south: A case study of Cali, Colombia☆

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we present data from a recent survey of residents' satisfaction levels with a range of urban public goods and government performance in Cali, Colombia. The more affluent report higher levels of satisfaction, especially with regard to security, public space, utilities and government performance, compared to the poor. The low scoring on satisfaction with civic norms and government performance, especially amongst the poor, undermines the notion of an aspirations paradox, suggests a lack of social capital and distrust of government, and indicates a social capital deficit. Our survey results indicate that strengthening the bonds of social capital, improving urban public space and working to improve public safety should be important areas of concern for urban and national governments.

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1. Introduction

In this paper we present data from a recent survey of residents' satisfaction levels with a range of urban public goods and government performance in Cali, Colombia. The paper draws upon and contributes to three distinct bodies of work.

First, this paper seeks to test, in one city, some of the findings emerging from the burgeoning literature on measuring happiness and life satisfaction. This large and growing body of work is based on surveys of subjective testimony on peoples' levels of satisfaction with life in general and with more specific domains such as housing, public services and the effectiveness of public policy (David et al., 2013; Delle Fave 2013; Layard & Layard, 2011; Van Praag and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2008). Although the term 'satisfaction' is often used, fundamentally, the work is an attempt to measure and quantify that most basic, yet elusive of human attributes, happiness. There are substantial critiques of this approach ranging from the philosophical (Nussbaum, 2012) to a certain disquiet expressed with terms employed, variables chosen and methods used (Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2014). Despite the criticisms,

there is a consensus now that life satisfaction can be measured reliably, because the research shows that individuals are able and willing to express their satisfaction on a cardinal scale (Graham and Lora, 2010; Van Praag and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2008). Although there are some case studies of individual cities (Fang, 2006; Insch & Florek, 2008), most of this research is conducted and codified at the level of countries. These are big aggregations.

Second, and very much related, is a concern with how surveys of citizen concerns can better inform public policies. A good example is the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s "better life index" for individual member countries (OECD., 2013). The inclusion of life satisfaction as a key variable in this index is based on the general agreement that improving the life satisfaction of individuals is a desirable goal of government endeavors. Measures of subjective wellbeing-using life satisfaction as a proxy-informs policymakers about the direction and efficacy of policy programs. Bok (2010) explores in more detail how the results can inform public policies. There are also more highly focused concerns; Knight and Gunatilaka (2011), for example, try to answer the more specific question of whether economic growth in China increases happiness in that country.

Third, there is a growing concern in urban studies with the role of affect. Affect, to be distinguished from effect, is commonly used as a verb to signify influence, meaning to impress or to move: it implies change and alteration. In the contemporary urban literature

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the term is used most often used as a derivative form of affect theory by which a range of emotions are identified, from the positives ones of 'happiness', 'enjoyment' and 'excitement' through the more neutral 'surprise', on to the more intense and negative ones such as 'anger', 'disgust', 'anguish', 'fear' and 'shame'. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick encouraged a concern with affect, emotion and socio-spatial orders (Sedgewick & Frank, 2003). There is now a burgeoning literature on affect in urban studies. Kobayashi, Preston, and Murnaghan (2011) look at how affect is produced from and through the experiences of people in place; they explore the sense of place produced by migrants from Hong Kong into Vancouver and Toronto. Bomfim and Urrutia (2005) investigate the feelings and emotions of a sample of people in Barcelona and Sao Paulo about their city. The responses, qualified by metaphor, identify dominant representations of feelings of a "city of contrast", "city of attraction", "city of destruction", "city of surprises", city of movement" and "pleasant city". There are also comparisons of empirical rankings of cities with the satisfaction levels of individuals (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2013). In this paper we examine people's happiness levels with a range of goods and services.

Drawing upon the findings emerging from the literature on life satisfaction, our purpose is to discover if similar conclusions can be reached when the analysis is conducted at the city level. We are concerned here with how residents rate a range of public goods and government services. In this analysis we report citizen satisfaction levels in Cali along five dimensions: security, public space, utilities, civic norms and government performance disaggregated by socio-economic status and by neighborhood type. Results can shed light on the discussion of how life satisfaction perception changes based on the unit of analysis used (national aggregated data vs. city data).

2. Previous work

The work that we draw upon emerges from previous work on life satisfaction, public goods and drivers of inequality.

2.1. Life satisfaction

There are now many surveys of levels of satisfaction that codify measures of happiness along a variety of dimensions (OECD, 2013). The surveys of life satisfaction tend to ask two sets of question: one relating to levels of satisfaction with one's own life and another to satisfaction with the more public realm. There are at least two consistent findings. First, there is relationship with income and reported levels of satisfaction with life. In a classic paper, Easterlin (2001) noted that happiness increases with income. However, aging over the life cycle, while it tends to increase income, also expands aspirations that tend to undermine the positive effect of income growth. As people get richer their expectations also increase. Also, satisfaction in older age groups is more intimately connected to state of health. Second, people tend to be more positive about their private life than about the collective, identified as neighborhood, city or country. In this paper we will refer to this as a 'neighborhood effect'. We will test some of these findings by using socio-economic status as a proxy for income and comparing results for high and low socio-economic status respondents and for richer and poorer neighborhoods.

There is a cultural bias to the findings. South Asia and Western Europe have greater biases towards optimism, for example, than do Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. Lora (2008) provides a detailed summary of work on Latin America and shows that Latin America falls midway in global ranking on life satisfaction between the higher ranking North America and the lower ranking sub-Saharan Africa. Within this 23-country group, Colombia ranks seventh for satisfaction with one's own life and eighth for satisfaction with situation of the country. In other words, Colombia is roughly in the middle of the middle, with neither the optimism of the rich world nor the pessimism of the very poor world. An even more recent paper finds that for the period 2010–2012, Colombia ranked 35th out to 156 countries in the world on ranking of happiness higher than Italy, Japan and Spain (Helliwell et al., 2015). At the top were Denmark, Norway and Switzerland, at the bottom Togo, Benin and Central African Republic. All of Latin America showed significant increase in reported happiness between 2007 and 2012 and now ranks similar to Western Europe, a result perhaps of improved life chances.

Lora found that poorer people, especially in Latin America, tend to be more positive than richer people about their level of satisfaction with public goods and services. This is termed the aspirations paradox. Aggregate studies find that the poorer groups in Latin America tend to express a more optimistic assessment of the government in the public realm. We test this finding explicitly through comparing results for higher and lower socio-economic status groups.

2.2. Public goods

The classic economic work on public goods is the Tiebout model that assumes efficient allocation of public goods based on consumer mobility and competition between local jurisdictions (Tiebout, 1956). In reality, of course, residential mobility is constrained and public service provision is marked by externalities. Urban public goods are an integral part of the political process. Hirschman's (1970) influential work exit, voice and loyalty suggest possible scenarios for residents faced with poor or declining public service. They can either exit or voice concern with the decision dependent on the degree of loyalty. In practice in many cities in the global South the exit choice is limited so the political process is dominated by the voicing of concern and the extent to which government can promote loyalty. In this paper we highlight the underlying voice element.

2.3. Inequality in South American cities

The ability to have your voice heard is dependent on position in the socio-economic hierarchy. The extent of residents' ability to have their concerns taken seriously or embedded into the fabric of political discourse varies by socio-economic position. This is particularly evident in the cities of South America, long marked by severe inequality with the richest living separate lives from the poor in cities. The rich minority have effectively ruled for decades reinforcing and protecting this inequality. In the past thirty years, however, a more marked democratization has taken hold, in part a response to the punishing effects of the neoliberalism of the 1980s and early 1990s and there is mounting evidence of declining income inequality (Tsounta & Osueke, 2014). Across the continent more democratic governments, at both the state and local level, have inaugurated more redistributional policies with greater emphasis on the universal provision of urban public goods and services (Gwynne & Cristobel, 2014). Cities in South America are becoming more contested spaces (Koonings & Kruijt, 2007). This study reports on one city in one country, with a long and sustained history of inequality that is beginning to move towards a more egalitarian mode. Our survey results refer to, if not quite a moment of full democratization, then at least on a changing trajectory towards a higher provision of urban public goods and service. The results record public sentiment at an interesting time.

3. The city

The paper is based on a survey conducted in the city of Cali, the third largest city in Colombia, with a population of approximately 2.3 million. The Spanish founded the city in the sixteenth century and for centuries it was a quiet backwater with a very small population. As late as 1800 the city had little more than 7000 inhabitants. During much of the nineteenth century it was the center of a sugar plantation economy and the largest landowners controlled the levers of economic and political control. Industrialization in the twentieth century led to a more rapid urban growth. Today, it is one of the main industrial centers of the country with national and multinational companies involved in a range of sectors including chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The city became internationally known in the 1980s because of the 'narco economy' when murder rates escalated, making Cali one of the most violent cities in the world. The narco trade also infected civil society as social trust gave way and led to a decline of social capital (Otero, 2012). The drug trade and drug money permeated the city to such an extent that the borderline between legal and illegal sectors became compromised and social capital was devalorized (Betancourt & García, 1994; Duncan, 2009; Salazar, 2001).

An economic crisis in the mid-1990s, shared with cities across South and Central America, yielded more recently to a slow yet prolonged economic growth aided by the decline of the narco influence, a reduction in violence and consequent greater inflow of national and international capital. A more pronounced democratization was introduced with the direct election of city mayors in 1988. As with most cities in the Global South, Cali exhibits marked social segregation along race and class lines with the very wealthiest inhabiting gated communities and the very poorest in slum dwellings. As the armed conflict in Colombia escalated between the government and the guerrilla movement known as FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) and also between peasants and mining and landowning interests, Cali became a major destination for those in the countryside displaced by these conflicts (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013). As a consequence, social and racial segregation has been accentuated, urban crime has increased, new slums settlements have emerged and informal work now constitutes close to fifty percent of total employment.

Local government is becoming more involved in responding to crime, displacement and job opportunities. However, although there is a marked improvement in security, there is less significant improvement in social issues of attention to the displaced population, segregation or job opportunities. This is in part due to the low investment on social policies. The bulk of public resources are invested in the implementation of mass transit solutions and infrastructure, since mobility is one of the major challenges of the city. Government investment is also directed at the creation new public parks and upgrading of existing urban spaces but the important urban renovation projects are still in the planning stage (Alcaldía de Cali. 2015).

4. Data and methods

Most studies that conduct analysis on life satisfaction present analysis at the level of countries. In this study we limit the scale of the analysis to a single city. This control will allow us to test if commonly reported findings at the national level persist at the level of an individual city. While a range of indicators can be used including education, employment, health and income, we will concentrate on urban public goods, including urban space, security, public space, utilities and government performance, because part of our concern is to evaluate and inform the policies that generate and allocate these goods.

For this analysis we use secondary data collected by the Cali Como Vamos (CCV) survey during 2013. CCV is part of a wider national survey of cities, that began in Bogota and now extends to nine other cities, in order to track and measure satisfaction levels with a range of items including education, health, access and quality of utilities, neighborhood security, public services, civic engagement and transportation. CCV is financed by the private sector and its independence from the government allows a more critical assessment of policymaking and policy formulation. On average, 1200 surveys are collected each year in Cali, and are statistically representative by gender and socioeconomic strata. The survey has been conducted annually in Cali since 2005, as an annual event, building on the experience of previous surveys in cities and regions around the world. Commonly used survey questions and standardized research design are employed and tightened by successive applications. This is a robust survey, part of a wider national and international effort at gauging life satisfaction and creating standardized measures. Table 1 presents general information on respondents to the most recently available 2013 survey, which we use in this paper. When the survey data are compared to the aggregate data for Cali as a whole, it is clear that the survey is statistically representative of the city.

In this paper we use several constructs that deserve explanation. First, we focus on explaining how public satisfaction is rated across five dimensions: security, public space, utilities, civic norms and government performance. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction on those domains using a 1-5 scale where 1 is very unsatisfied and 5 is very satisfied. For ease of presentation we transformed the 1-5 scale into a three-part scale to highlight the more extreme areas of very unsatisfied and very satisfied and one neutral category.

For two domains, security and public space, the data allows us to compare respondent's levels of satisfaction with the city as a whole and with their own neighborhood. Since research on life satisfaction has found that people tend to value what is closest to them (Lora, 2008; Van Praag and Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2008), we wanted to test this hypothesis in the case of Cali.

Another dimension that we use to disaggregate results is the distinction between "rich neighborhood" and "Agua Blanca". In order to compare contrasting neighborhoods we use results for Agua Blanca, one of the poorest parts of the city, with those for the three richest districts that we group together as one rich neighborhood. Agua Blanca is the general and commonly used name of neighborhoods in three districts of the city and is home to 27 percent of the city's population. Agua Blanca is a poor area and an important site for organized crime (Alcaldía de Cali 2015; Semana, 2015). The rich neighborhood is an amalgam of neighborhoods and home to 11 percent of Cali's population. The comparison between the two contrasting neighborhoods and the city as whole, in terms of socio-economic status, income, employment and crime rates are

Table 1
CCV data and Cali, 2013.

	CCV		Cali	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Observations	1203		2,319,655	
Gender				
Men	604	45%	1,109,545	48%
Women	599	55%	1,210,110	52%
Socio-economic status (SES)				
Low	511	44%	983,741	44%
Medium	541	43%	1,010,291	45%
High	151	13%	259,765	12%

Data for Cali are from the official local government statistics.

shown in Table 2. Agua Blanca has a third of the income and roughly 50 percent more unemployment and crime rates than the richer districts of the city.

Lastly, we also use socioeconomic strata (SES) as a dimension to report our results. The survey adopts the 6 strata socioeconomic scale used by the Colombian government. Households located on 1 and 2 are the poorest, 3 and 4 represent the middle income and 5 and 6 constitute the richest. The scale was adopted initially to subsidize utility rates and is now used to distribute a wide range of government subsidies (DANE, 2015). We use the same SES categorization to present the results.

5. The survey results

5.1. Security

We use two questions from the survey. On a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most positive, respondents were asked to rate how safe they felt in their neighborhood and also in the city. The satisfaction levels with security, the terms 'security' and 'public safety' are used synonymously, are broken down by SES (Fig. 1). Consistent across the higher and middle socio-economic status groups is the finding that people tend to be more satisfied than dissatisfied at both the neighborhood and at the city level. The higher socio-economic status groups consistently rate themselves more satisfied. In some respect this reflects lived experience. Living in gated communities, in better-policed and safer areas, their satisfaction records a different objective experience. Although Cali's crime rates are high, they are significantly lower in the more affluent areas (see Table 2). Crime rates are highest in the poorer areas, almost a third more than the city average and double the rate in the richer areas. Accordingly, the lower socio-economic status groups are the most dissatisfied at both the neighborhood and city level. Although lower socio-economic groups rate the city's security more unfavorably than the highest socio-economic group, all groups rate satisfaction with security at the city level, lower than their satisfaction with security in their neighborhoods. It is clear that dissatisfaction with security is most pronounced amongst lower socio-economic status groups especially at the city level.

It is important to highlight that local government has made an important effort on improving security in the city. In 2012 police recruitment was increased and, according to official data sources, homicide rates declined by 27 percent from January to July in 2013 to the same period in 2014 (Policía Metropolitana de Cali, 2014). It may take some time before improvements in public safety are recorded in increased satisfaction levels.

We broke down the security issue even more by comparing respondents from Agua Blanca (the poorest district of the city) and three high-income districts, combined into one rich neighborhood. Table 2 shows the clear differences between the rich and the poor in the city. When we compare the responses we find a similar
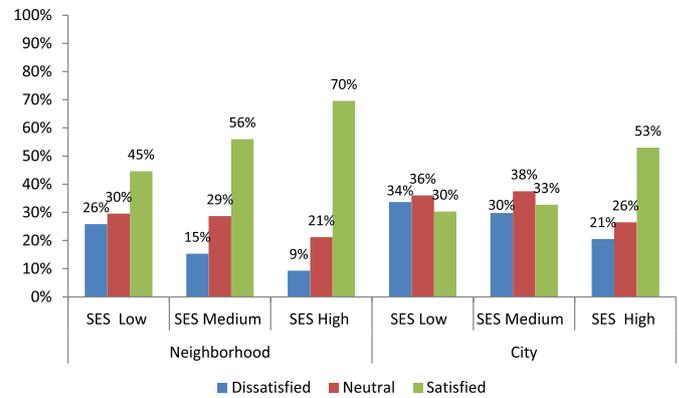

Fig. 1. Satisfaction with security in neighborhood and city.

pattern to Fig. 1. People in the rich neighborhood were more satisfied with security at both the neighborhood and city levels (Fig. 2). And again, respondents from the poorer- and more violent-area of Agua Blanca consider themselves more satisfied with security in their neighborhood than in the city. And again this may be due to feelings of relative safety in the local barrio, where people are known and social ties are forged, compared to a the wider city where residents of Agua Blanca may feel more vulnerable.

The survey results show that, even in a city with a history of violence and high homicide rates, people feel more satisfied than dissatisfied with security in their local neighborhood. This is particularly marked for the higher socio-economic status groups and those living in richer neighborhoods. The lower social-economic status groups and people in the poorer neighborhood feel more satisfied with security in their neighborhood than the city as a whole.
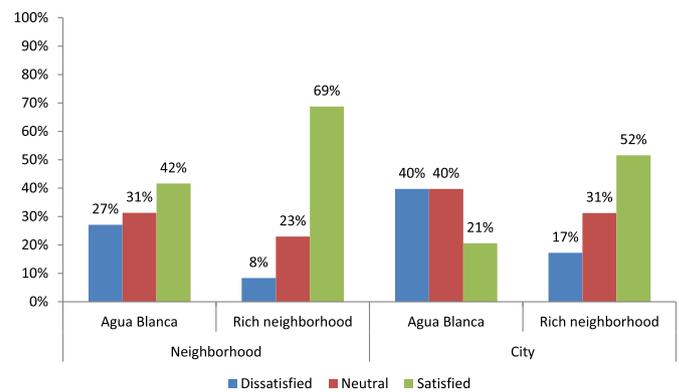

Fig. 2. Satisfaction with security in Agua Blanca and rich neighborhood vs. city.

Table 2
Characteristics of Cali, Agua Blanca and high-income neighborhood.

	Cali	Agua Blanca	High income neighborhood
Population	2,319,655	607,323	254,668
Percentage of city population	100%	26%	11%
Monthly average income (US dollars)[a]	437	309	898
Unemployment rate	15%	18%	11%
Crime[b]	22%	30%	16%

Source: Employment and Quality of Life Survey for Cali. Department of Labor, (Nov. 2012–Jan 2013).
  [a] Calculated on an exchange rate of 2000 pesos Colombian to 1US$.
  [b] Percentage of population who in the last year were victims of theft, homicide, kidnappings, physical violence, sexual violence and extortion. From a survey conducted in 2013 of 8300 households.

5.2. Public space

A similar pattern emerges from questions on satisfaction with public space. Fig. 3 shows the results of respondent's satisfaction with public space when asked about their own neighborhood and the city as a whole, discriminated by SES. Fig. 4 in contrast, shows the results of the same question comparing responses of Agua Blanca residents with rich neighborhood residents. Higher socio-economic groups and those living in richer neighborhoods, report highest satisfaction levels especially with public space in their neighborhoods: again, a reflection perhaps of objective experience since they tend to inhabit neighborhoods with better provision of quality public space. As a matter of fact, 22 percent of trees in the city are located in richer neighborhood, whereas only 6 percent of trees planted in the city are located in poor neighborhoods (Alcaldía de Cali, 2006).

However, one distinct difference from the security data set is that the lower socio-economic status groups report slightly higher levels of satisfaction with public space in the city as a whole compared to their neighborhood. This suggests also a connection with objective experience since much of the wider city and especially the richer neighborhood has a better provision of public space than the poorer neighborhoods. There is also the notion that they may be comparing the poor quality of urban public space in their neighborhoods with the more formal and better-maintained public space of the central city. The results may reflect the simple fact that the poor have little public space in their neighborhood but they can access parks and public space in other parts of the city.

Comparing respondents from the rich neighborhood with those from Agua Blanca reveals a similar pattern (Fig. 4). Residents of the slum feel more satisfied with public space in the city as whole than in their own neighborhood. In other words a 'neighborhood effect' does not apply to lower socio-economic status groups and their feelings about the relative satisfaction with public space in their neighborhood compared to the city as a whole. They reverse the neighborhood effect, insofar as they are more satisfied with the quality of public space in the city than their neighborhood.

The richer people and people living in the richer neighborhoods report highest levels of satisfaction with urban public space in their neighborhoods and lower levels for the city as a whole. The poor and slum residents report the opposite response: they are happier with the public space of the city than with that of their own neighborhood. This set of findings is important because it shows that there is a capacity for people to distinguish between the city and the neighborhood; they can identify when their neighborhood is deficient compared to the rest of the city.

5.3. Utilities

To measure satisfaction with utilities we created a composite index based on response to questions asked about satisfaction with sewerage, water supply, energy supply, waste collection and telephone service. The survey did not ask respondents to distinguish between neighborhood and the city as a whole as respondents experience these things at their neighborhood level.

Fig. 5 presents satisfaction levels by SES and Fig. 6 shows the responses of Agua Blanca and the rich district. The results are consistent across socio-economic status and neighborhood types. Most people are very satisfied with the level of utility provision, the most satisfied category receiving the highest numbers of any of the
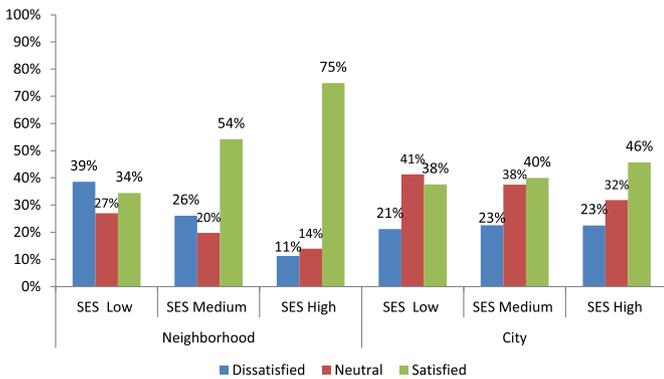

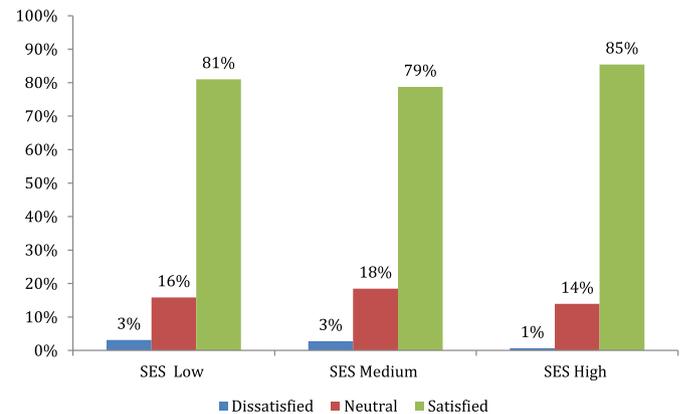**Fig. 3.** Satisfaction with public space in neighborhood and city.

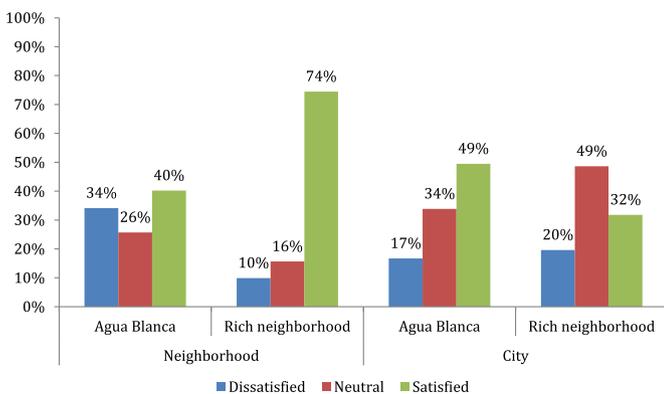**Fig. 5.** Satisfaction with utilities by SES.

Fig. 4. Satisfaction with public space in Agua Blanca and rich neighborhood *vs.* city.
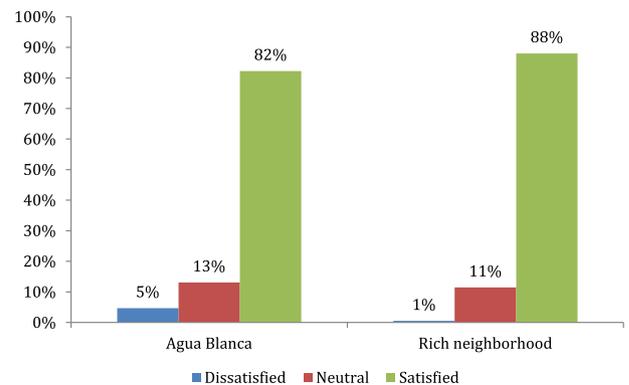

Fig. 6. Satisfaction with utilities in Agua Blanca and rich neighborhood.

domains we discuss here, and the results display remarkable similarity across the three socio-economic status categories. However, a caveat needs to be made. There are several slums in the city that do not have access to utilities and are not included in the survey. Although Agua Blanca is one of the poorest districts, it is one of the older slums with more government provision of services than the more recent slums. The informal barrios that have least access to utilities are not covered in the survey.

5.4. Civic norms

Civic trust and the importance of social capital are identified as important elements in creating a more livable and attractive city (Ferragina, 2013; Putnam, 2000). To proxy this dimension we created an index in which respondents rated their perception of compliance with different social norms in the city. More specifically, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1—5 (where 1 is non compliance and 5 is complete compliance) to what extent Cali residents complied with a different set of social norms including care and respect for public spaces, respect for traffic laws, respect of norms and laws of land use planning.

Compared to other questions, this one provoked the most negative response, with more people recording very unsatisfied than for any other of the dimensions evaluated in this paper. Fig. 7 disaggregates results by SES and Fig. 8 compares responses from Agua Blanca resident's with those of rich district residents. Clearly people are dissatisfied with the adherence to good civic norms. This is a sign of lack of social capital and civic trust. Lower socio-

economic groups and people in the poorer neighborhoods are more dissatisfied than higher socio-economic groups and people living in the richer part of the city. The social capital deficit is experienced most severely by the poor and those living in the poorer neighborhoods. We also discovered that people living in poor neighborhoods are very dissatisfied (66 percent) in the way that garbage is disposed of by neighbors. This can be taken as a proxy that residents feel that others do not comply with the schedules of trash collection and leave their trash in public spaces. This important finding indicates that issues of social capital need to be addressed as an integral part of urban public policies: it has received much less attention than access to utilities and employment in the standard literature on the urban Global South. Our survey results indicate it is an important though often overlooked issue.

5.5. Government performance

Contrary to other studies, we found higher rates of dissatisfaction with government performance amongst lower socio-economic groups (Fig. 9) and people in the poor neighborhood compared to higher socio-economic groups and people living in the richer neighborhoods (Fig. 10). This contrasts directly with Lora (2008) who found that higher satisfaction levels were recorded by people of lower social-economic status and who goes on to explain this aspirations paradox with reference to governments' ability to buy off lower-income groups with public goods and services. In fact, we found the reverse, with higher socio-economic groups and people
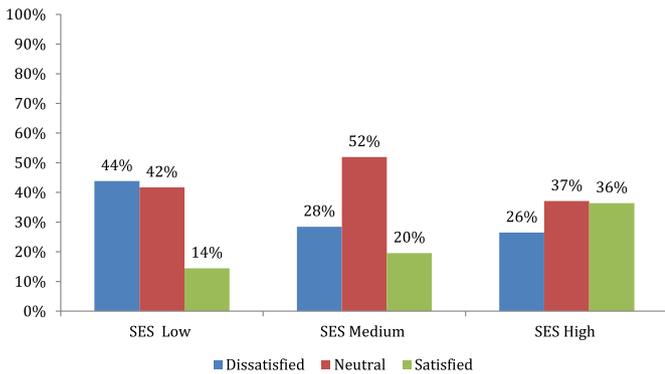
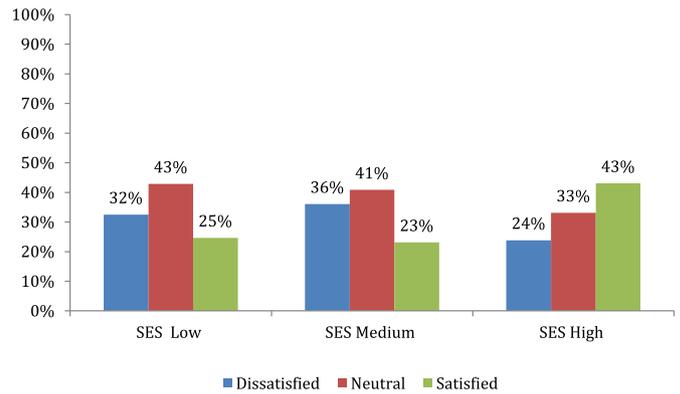**Fig. 7.** Satisfaction with civic norms by SES.

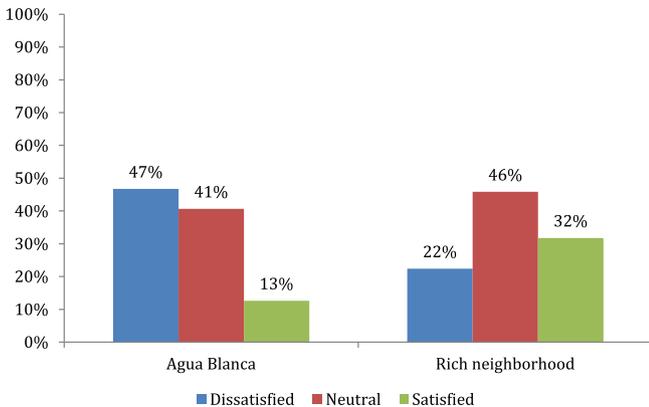**Fig. 9.** Satisfaction with government performance by SES.

Fig. 8. Satisfaction with civic norms in Agua Blanca and rich neighborhood.
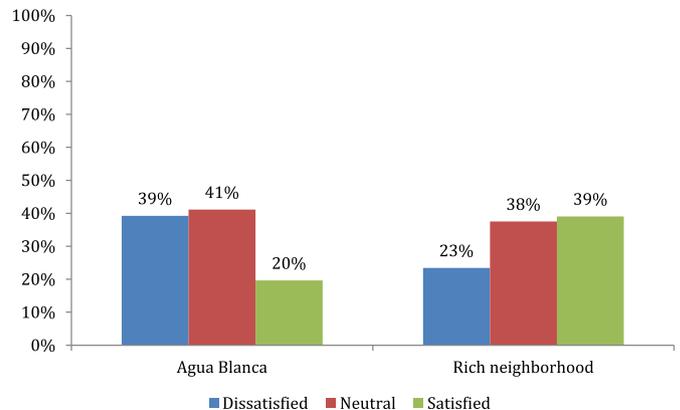
Fig. 10. Satisfaction with government performance in Agua Blanca and rich neighborhood.

in the richer neighborhood expressing greater satisfaction with government performance. Rather than a paradox we uncovered a critical awareness of government performance more marked amongst the poorest. Perhaps the findings reflect different cycles in economic growth. Lora reports on work during economic crisis whereas our survey is conducted at a time of relative upturn especially in the formal economy, when things are getting better for the wealthier groups and richer neighborhoods, and this may spillover into a more positive satisfaction with government performance. For the poorest, however, their relatively stagnant position may be expressed in lack of satisfaction with government performance. Clearly this finding needs further testing and analysis. The timing of satisfaction surveys with cycles of economic growth and contraction especially in the formal and informal economies may explain some of the differences. Whatever the actual and exact combination of factors, the aspiration paradox, in this survey at least, is less of a paradox. The poor are least satisfied with government performance; a finding that points to the perceived failure of city government to meet the needs and aspirations of the poor.

6. Conclusions

We report the results of a survey of citizen satisfaction levels in the city of Cali, Colombia. A number of specific conclusions from the survey work may be drawn. First, the results show a surprising robustness in people's ability to distinguish between different domains. The varying results reveal a textured reply to the different questions and the ability to make subtle distinction between public goods, government performance and civic norms. Our work confirms the ability of people to express levels of satisfaction on a cardinal scale for a range of important issues. The survey also records appreciable differences between how people rate their neighborhood and the city as a whole. A less robust survey would not have been able to pick up these subtle differences.

Second there are the 'to be expected' results. In line with Easterlin's work, the more affluent reported higher levels of satisfaction especially with regard to security, public space, utilities and government performance. These levels are reflective of the underlying realities of life in a segregated city where the rich live in more secure, greener and better-serviced communities and very suggestive of the close connection between levels of satisfaction and external realities of life in the city.

Also to be expected from previous work is the operation of a neighborhood effect. The most positive evaluation of the neighborhood is apparent when respondents rate security in their neighborhoods higher than in the city as whole. What is less expected, based on the result from previous work, is that this neighborhood effect does not apply in all cases. Lower socioeconomic groups and people in the poorest neighborhoods rate satisfaction with public space in the city as a whole higher than in their neighborhoods. The neighborhood effect is overwhelmed by the objective reality of lower quality public space in the poorer parts of the city compared to the city as a whole.

There are unexpected results. The high level of satisfaction with utilities even in the poor neighborhood is perhaps partly explained by the non-survey of the more recent, less well-connected informal settlements. Nevertheless, the higher levels of satisfaction with utilities than with security, suggest that public policies need to be devoted more to security concerns to improve the happiness of people in the poorer parts of the city. What is disappointing, especially compared to satisfaction levels with utilities, is the poor scoring on satisfaction with civic norms and government performance. The result suggests a lack of social capital and distrust of government. Cali, as with many cities in South America and around the world, has a social capital deficit. This is the result of decades of government neglect, social dislocation and high crime rates. This is not an easy thing to fix; there are few panaceas of urban public policy. However, the low scoring, especially in relation to other domains such as utilities, suggests that we need to look at the valorization of social capital and the improvement of government performance to improve the happiness of citizens. And this brings us to a very important point. Much of the urban development literature emerging from the Global North, from academics and non-government agencies, tends to focus on issues of employment and service provision. There are innumerable studies of the 'problems' of the informal economy and slum dwellings. While we do no wish to minimize the importance of employment, housing and service provision, it is clear from our survey results that the poor are also concerned with issues of social trust, public space and public safety. These are important domains of satisfaction with urban living. If we want to improve peoples' level of happiness, it is clear from our survey results that strengthening the bonds of social capital, improving urban public space and working to improve public safety should be important areas of concern for urban and national governments. To some extent the results reflect the particularity of Cali. However, we would argue that this city highlights, perhaps in exaggerated form, a pressing concern for other cities, not only in South America but also throughout the Global South and beyond.

There are also more general conclusions for urban policies in the global South. It is clear that socio-economic status is an important predictor of life satisfaction. The richer residents report higher levels of satisfaction with civic norms, government performance, security and quality of public space. Future research and policy experimentation should be concerned with four things. First, security is not simply a concern of the wealthy. In fact our result show that problems with security are felt more by the poorest. We need to combine debates about security and public safety with a focus on the poor and the poorest parts of town. In much of the literature the poor parts of the city are seen only as the source of criminal activity. But they are also the scene of criminal victimization. Threading policing issues with social justice, too long considered separate and antithetical concerns, is an important avenue for research and action. Second, we need to look at ways to improve the performance of city governments. We need to actively explore the use of benchmarks and metrics to gauge government performance with a more explicit accountability of performance in the poorer areas. Third, public space is not an insignificant part of city resident's view of the quality of life. Urban public space needs to be more equally allocated across the city to provide a righting of the imbalance in income and resources. The provision of urban public space is a significant item for creating a just city. It should be part of suite of polices aimed at improving the quality of life for all urban residents. Finally, the study results reveal the role of social capital. A particularly striking feature was the lower levels of satisfaction with civic norms expressed by the poorest. This is suggestive of the importance of building social capital and civic trust as part of public policies and specific urban programs. Areas of social capital deficit need to be identified and ways of building up and enhancing social capital need to be explored. The notion of social capital tends to be marginalized in debates about improving the quality of urban life but as these result shows, improving the social capital of cities should be an important topic of future research and policy practice.

Achieving a more just and fair city requires fashioning more redistributional programs directly concerned with improving security, enhancing the efficacy of government performance, raising the quality of public space and the amount of social capital. All of these goals need to be pursued actively for the poor and the poorest areas in the city, if we are serious about creating a more just, humane and fair city.

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