

INSTITUT C.D. HOWE INSTITUTE

COMMENTARY

NO. 354

Breaking the Stereotype: Why Urban Aboriginals Score Highly on “Happiness” Measures

Although poverty and “unhappiness” exist among urban Aboriginals, those conditions are far from the whole story of urban Aboriginal life.

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COMMENTARY No. 354
JULY 2012
SOCIAL POLICY



Finn Poschmann
Vice-President, Research

\$12.00

ISBN 978-0-88806-874-3

ISSN 0824-8001 (print);

ISSN 1703-0765 (online)

THE STUDY IN BRIEF

On average, urban Aboriginals are as “happy” as other Canadians. The fact that the results are similar for Aboriginals and for all Canadians will be surprising to anyone whose image of urban Aboriginals is limited to those living in the poorest neighbourhoods of Canada’s cities. Although poverty and “unhappiness” exist among urban Aboriginals, those conditions are far from the whole story of urban Aboriginal life.

In this *Commentary*, the authors analyze the results of a disarmingly simple question: “Overall, are you happy with your life?”, one of many questions posed in a 2009 survey by the Environics Institute of a large sample of Aboriginals living in 11 Canadian cities. The distribution of answers is very similar to that of responses to a 2006 survey of well-being among a sample of all Canadians. It is also consistent with a third survey, in 2003, that found little difference in average life satisfaction between a national sample and a sample of Prairie Aboriginals.

Many conclusions are similar to those of other surveys in Canada and elsewhere. A positive health assessment increases perceived happiness, as do stable personal relationships. Having a university degree or college diploma and higher income increases happiness. Finally, community life matters. Feeling a close connection to other First Nations people and having friends increased happiness significantly; interestingly, the effect is the same, independently of whether or not the friends were Aboriginal.

The survey seems to show that urban Aboriginals have been anchoring their income expectations on incomes in the rural community from which they migrated, rather than on incomes in the city in which they live. Many respondents referred to past experiences of racism, and a sizable minority (36 percent) either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, “I don’t feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.”

The two most important ways governments can increase urban Aboriginals’ sense of well-being are to increase their successful participation in the labour market and the education system.

C.D. Howe Institute Commentary© is a periodic analysis of, and commentary on, current public policy issues. Barry Norris and James Fleming edited the manuscript; Yang Zhao prepared it for publication. As with all Institute publications, the views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Institute’s members or Board of Directors. Quotation with appropriate credit is permissible.

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On average, urban Aboriginals are as “happy” as other Canadians. For urban Aboriginals as for most groups surveyed about subjective well-being – in Canada and abroad – education, employment, and income matter, albeit to different degrees.

The fact that the results are similar for Aboriginals and for all Canadians will be surprising to anyone whose image of urban Aboriginals is limited to those living in the poorest neighbourhoods of Canada’s cities. Although poverty and “unhappiness” certainly exist among urban Aboriginals, those conditions are far from the whole story of urban Aboriginal life.

In this *Commentary*, we analyze the results of a disarmingly simple question: “Overall, are you happy with your life?” This was one of many questions posed in a 2009 survey by the Environics Institute (2010) of a sample of Aboriginals living in 11 large Canadian cities. The distribution of answers to this question is very similar to that of responses to a 2006 survey of subjective well-being among a sample of all Canadians (WVSA 2006). A third survey, in 2003, found little difference in average satisfaction with life between a national sample and a sample of Prairie Aboriginals (Fay and Johnston 2007).

Human happiness has interested philosophers for centuries, but in the past several decades it has also become a focus of social research that attempts to link economics and psychology. Many researchers are skeptical about the validity of analyzing subjective statements about a concept as

nebulous as happiness. Accordingly, we first provide an informal introduction to this area of research, and make the case that subjective well-being surveys can enrich thinking about policy. We then assess in some detail the factors that influenced reported happiness among Aboriginals in the 2009 survey. We conclude by briefly discussing policies that are likely to increase Aboriginals’ employment prospects and success in provincial school systems.

THE CASE FOR TAKING SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING SURVEYS SERIOUSLY

Economic analysis is based on the general assumption that people maximize their well-being (their “utility” in economics jargon), subject to the constraint of available income, and that a higher income makes an individual better off through the ability to increase consumption of goods and services. This approach does not presume particular goods or activities to be morally superior or inferior. Since individuals’ well-being is not objectively observable, policies aimed at increasing it by stimulating economic growth assume there is a positive link between the two.

A limitation to the traditional economic framework is that it is confined to measuring

We thank the Environics Institute for providing access to the data generated by the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study. In particular, we thank Ginger Gosnell-Myers, Sonya Kunkel, Doug Norris, and Keith Neuman for help in interpreting the sampling methodology and procedures used to generate the dataset. Thanks to Colin Busby and Daniel Schwanen for challenging us to justify use of surveys of subjective well-being. John Helliwell, Andrew Sharpe, and an anonymous reviewer offered comments on an earlier draft. Haifang Huang, John Helliwell, Stuart Soroka, and Richard Johnston enabled us to access unpublished data from a survey of life satisfaction among Prairie Aboriginals. Barry Norris undertook an admirable exercise in copy editing.

well-being through people's financial standard of living. One response to this limitation has been to measure well-being more broadly with indices that are composites of various quantifiable aspects of life. For example, the United Nations Human Development Index, which is used to rank countries of the world, is computed from three components equally weighted: income per capita; adult literacy and the enrolment rates of school-age cohorts; and life expectancy (UNDP 2009). Although an improvement on looking at per capita income alone, this index still captures only limited aspects of well-being. Why include education and life expectancy and not other measurable economic aspects, such as income inequality or poverty prevalence? Furthermore, constructing indices inevitably entails the arbitrary exercise of attributing weights to the various components.

The shortcomings attached to income as a measure of well-being have encouraged the search for other measures. One is to ask people to evaluate their well-being, through a simple, direct question: "Are you very happy, somewhat happy, or not at all happy?" Such a question overcomes the limitations of measuring only quantifiable aspects of well-being and of constructing indices with arbitrarily chosen non-income components. Moreover, analyzing subjective measures of happiness can offer insights into the impact of other factors, especially non-monetary ones, that influence people's sense of well-being. For economists, however, the main concern with this approach is how to determine if such surveys are a reliable representation of well-being. Early studies of happiness focused on the nature of the link between per capita income

(or per capita gross domestic product, GDP) and subjective well-being, in part to evaluate the relevance of income to individuals' welfare. The pioneer in studying this relationship, Richard Easterlin (1973), found the paradoxical result that, within a country, higher income contributes to more happiness for individuals, but, on average across countries, there is little relationship between average income and happiness – at least among the high-income countries that comprise the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Income appears to be just one element in people's well-being and thus can be only a partial measure of "utility."

A survey might ask respondents to state their well-being at a particular time or, as in the Environics survey we analyze, to assess their overall life satisfaction.¹ The simplicity of questions about happiness or life satisfaction has enabled pollsters and academics to generate, at reasonable cost, very large samples of answers across countries and over time.² Such surveys typically measure a range of financial and non-financial aspects of a respondent's life: income, education level, employment status, self-perception of health, whether the respondent lives alone or with a partner, presence of friends, quality of governance in his or her country, and so on. Given the large size and broad coverage of the available survey samples, it becomes feasible to assess with confidence the impact of each aspect on typical individuals' declared well-being – while still taking into account the effect of income.

One major finding of studies in this tradition is that, across countries and cultural groups, broadly similar factors influence subjective well-

1 It must be noted that "happiness" is often used as a general term to characterize questions about "well-being" and "overall quality of life" (see Veenhoven 2012).

2 The World Values Survey, which has been asking questions on well-being since the early 1980s, and the Gallup World Poll are the most commonly used sources of information on subjective well-being (Helliwell 2003; NEF 2009). In Canada, the General Social Survey has been including questions about satisfaction of life since the 1980s, and the Canadian Community Health Survey since its inception in 2001 (Sharpe et al. 2010).

being (Layard 2005; Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh 2011). For example, the quality of personal relationships and self-evaluation of health status have uniformly significant impacts. Within a country, respondents with higher income are happier than those with lower income, but the impact of additional income declines as people become richer. In international comparisons, respondents typically are happier in countries with higher per capita income, but in countries with per capita income above \$25,000 the impact of higher average income is negligible (Easterlin 1973; Di Tella and MacCulloch 2006; Graham 2011). These findings imply that most people in prosperous countries anchor their response relative to some reference group's income, while in poor countries people care more about increments to their own income.³

Nonetheless the analysis of happiness does present intellectual challenges. The fundamental objection to studying subjective well-being is the impossibility of comparing with any precision the meaning of a state of well-being from one individual to the next. What does it mean for a respondent to describe himself as “very happy” or “not at all happy”? An author of a recent survey of the debate on subjective well-being measures poses the objection as follows: “How comparable are the answers of a destitute peasant who reports being very happy, either because he has low expectations or because he has a naturally cheerful disposition, or both, and those of a very wealthy individual in a developed economy who reports being miserable, either because he holds raised expectations related to affluence and opportunity that are held by members of his society in general or because he is

a natural curmudgeon (or both)?” (Graham 2011, 10). It is reassuring to know that income and subjective well-being generally move in tandem and that many factors known to affect utility adversely, such as unemployment, also affect happiness adversely (Di Tella and MacCulloch 2006). There is, however, no completely satisfactory response to this objection, as it is common to all subjective measures based on individuals' self-evaluation. In practice, no government designs policies based solely on the criterion of maximizing some measure of average subjective well-being or income; other arguments – political, paternalistic, ethical, and so on – are invoked to redistribute income, to promote education in the population, or to insure people against various adverse events.

A secondary objection to happiness surveys rests on the bias that might arise from using survey results as opposed to observations of people's behaviour in the market, where they face actual prices and income constraints. For example, responses might vary due to the wording of survey questions, or people's market decisions might vary over time due to changes in convention and taste. In defence of such exercises, surveys are used in many fields and recognized for many purposes as the best technique available.

Interest in subjective well-being has evolved to the point that senior policymakers and politicians in high-income countries have started to pay attention.⁴ In 2008, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy set up a *Commission sur la mesure de la performance économique et du progrès social* (Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress) to identify the

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- 3 On average, between 2000 and 2009, a combination of survey results shows that Canadians were among the happiest people in the world, ranking eighth and scoring 7.8 out of a possible 10 – behind Costa Rica (8.5), Denmark (8.3), Iceland (8.2), Switzerland (8.0), and, Finland, Mexico, and Norway (7.9) (Veenhoven 2012).
 - 4 To date Bhutan is the only country in the world using the concept of gross national happiness, rather than gross national product, to evaluate policies and track its performance. The Royal Government of Bhutan established the index in November 2008 (World Bank 2009).

limits of GDP measures and to study alternatives, such as well-being, as broader measures of social progress (Stiglitz, Sen, and Fitoussi 2009). In early 2012, the British government started to publish the results of various measures of national well-being from surveys undertaken between April and August 2011 (United Kingdom 2012). This follows the launch of the National Statistics Measuring National Well-being Programme in November 2010, the aim of which is to create internationally comparable measures beyond GDP (Beaumont 2011). Numerous international and Canadian surveys now include questions about subjective well-being.

HOW HAPPY ARE ABORIGINALS?

Most research into the conditions of Aboriginals focuses on those who live on rural reserves and are identified as North American Indian/First Nations.⁵ The Canadian census enumerates the Aboriginal population, based on self-identification, as those belonging to one of three groups: North American Indian/First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. In 2006, the date of the most recent available census data, about three in ten of the Aboriginal identity population lived on-reserve, two in ten lived in rural non-reserve communities, and five in ten lived in cities (Statistics Canada 2008a). Yet, little is known about the one-half of Aboriginals who are urban, in part because identifying them statistically is hard to do.

Whereas much news about Aboriginal people portrays desperate social and economic conditions, the most dramatic result of the Environics survey is that most urban Aboriginals do not perceive their condition as desperate. Widely quoted in the national media in the days following release of the survey was this summary by the study's

project manager: "When urban Aboriginal peoples are researched, it's often about problems like homelessness and sexual exploitation. There are hundreds of thousands of us living in cities, and there are a lot of positive things happening in our communities; it's not all crises" (quoted in Richards 2010, 52).

The distribution of subjective well-being among urban Aboriginals in the survey is very similar to that found among all Canadians, with more than 90 percent of both groups declaring themselves to be happy. This is a surprising result for anyone familiar with reports about the conditions of on-reserve Aboriginals or those living in very poor urban neighbourhoods.

The Environics survey is not the first attempt to evaluate Aboriginal well-being or the first to find that most Aboriginal people are rather happy with their lives. In a 2003 survey of Aboriginals living in the prairie provinces, Heritage Canada found that, on a scale from 1 to 10, Aboriginal happiness on average measured 7.9 (see Box 1). A contemporaneous survey using the same questionnaire showed an average satisfaction of 8.0 nationally. Furthermore there was no significant difference in the declared level of happiness between rural and urban Prairie Aboriginals. Although the results of the 2003 survey are not directly comparable to those of the Environics survey because of the 2003 samples specificity and the way the question was formulated, the wider scale it used to evaluate happiness (from 1 to 10 instead of from 0 to 3 in the Environics survey) provides a more complex appreciation of the dispersion of responses. The dispersion is considerably larger for Prairie Aboriginals than for respondents in the national sample. Relative to the national sample, the share of Aboriginal respondents reporting a life satisfaction of 5 or

5 For a survey of 2006 Canadian census data on Aboriginal social conditions, with emphasis on Quebec versus the rest of Canada comparisons, see Richards (2011).

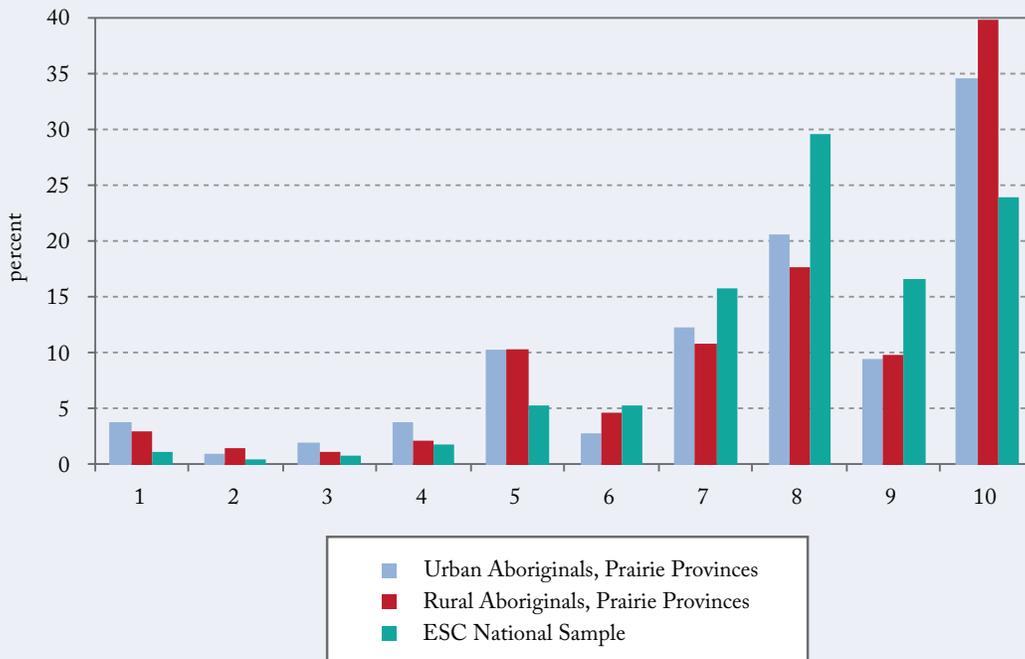
Box 1: The Equality Security and Community Project

Between 1999 and 2003 the Equality Security and Community (ESC) project linked 23 researchers across Canada in the conduct of two waves of a general survey of public attitudes on policy issues. The second wave included approximately 5,600 respondents in a nationwide sample. Heritage Canada conducted a supplement to this second wave, using the same questionnaire, to survey approximately 600 Aboriginals living in the Prairie provinces.^a

Among the ESC questions posed was a “life satisfaction” question that invited respondents to rate their overall satisfaction from “dissatisfied” (scored 1) to “satisfied” (scored 10). The average satisfaction level for the national sample was 8.0 and for the Prairie Aboriginal sample 7.9. For rural Aboriginals, the average level was 8.0, only slightly higher than for urban Aboriginals, at 7.7. Given the sample sizes, neither the difference between the national sample average and the Prairie Aboriginal average nor the difference between average rural and average urban Aboriginal life satisfaction is statistically significant.^b

Although there was no significant difference in average satisfaction among the three groups, the distribution of life satisfaction among Prairie Aboriginals was considerably wider than in the national sample. Among non-Aboriginals, covered by a much larger sample than were Aboriginals, 67 percent reported a satisfaction rate scored between 6 and 9, while 43 percent of Prairie Aboriginals did so (see figure below). Only 9 percent of the national sample expressed a life satisfaction of 5 or below; the proportion for Aboriginals was twice as high, at 18 percent. At the other end of the distribution, 39 percent of Aboriginals reported the maximum score of 10, well above the 24 percent of the national sample.

On a scale of 1 – 10 where “1” means dissatisfied and “10” means satisfied, all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?



a. The survey institute at York University administered the surveys. For results and analysis of the ESC project, see Fay and Johnston (2007). SSHRC provided financial support to the ESC project; Heritage Canada financed the supplementary survey of Prairie Aboriginals.
 b. Of the total Aboriginal sample of 592, 107 were urban and 485 rural. The rural sample includes Aboriginals living on-reserve and in non-reserve rural communities. Only 18 percent of the sample is urban. The sample seriously underestimates the urban share of the Prairie Aboriginal population which, in the 2006 census, accounted for 53 percent of the total.
 Source: Authors’ calculations from unpublished data from a supplement to the Equality Security and Community (ESC) second wave.

below is much higher, as is the share reporting the top score of 10; the share reporting a score in the 6-to-9 range is correspondingly lower. So, although Prairie Aboriginals and Canadians as a whole report similar levels of happiness on average, the extremes are much more populated in the Aboriginal distribution.

One puzzling aspect of these surveys arises with respect to the connection between urban Aboriginals' satisfaction with life and their incomes. The Environics survey found that, although Aboriginals in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) feel as happy as the rest of the Canadian population, their median income is substantially lower than that of non-Aboriginals (\$22,100 and \$28,900, respectively, in 2006).⁶ This finding raises several questions: To what extent does Aboriginals' well-being depend on their absolute income? Why does the Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal income gap not figure prominently in Aboriginals' subjective assessment of well-being? If well-being depends on relative income, what is the reference group? We return to these questions later.

Whether changes in levels of income matter a lot or a little, differences between respondents in other factors are influential in determining urban Aboriginals' happiness. Changes in health status, personal relationships, and education, among other factors, affect perceptions of happiness among urban Aboriginals in ways similar to their impact on other Canadians and citizens of other countries. Although there might be doubts about the representativeness of the Environics sample (see Box 2), it is unlikely that any bias in sampling invalidates the overall conclusion that, in general, urban Aboriginals enjoy a level of happiness similar to that of the Canadian population as a whole, and

non-financial factors are of similar importance for both groups.

MEASURING THE HAPPINESS OF URBAN ABORIGINALS AND ALL CANADIANS

The Environics surveyors interviewed slightly more than 2,600 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people between March and October 2009 (details of the survey are discussed in Box 2). Of that sample, 2,596 individuals answered the following question about subjective well-being: "Overall are you happy with your life?" Respondents were asked to rate their perception of their own happiness on a scale from 0 to 3 (0 = not at all; 1 = not very; 2 = somewhat; 3 = very). Other surveys have used different scales or slightly different wording, which renders direct comparisons difficult. More than half (57.8 percent) of urban Aboriginal respondents to the Environics survey declared themselves "very happy," and the average "happiness" score was 2.5 out of a maximum of 3.0 (see Figure 1). In comparison, in the 2006 World Values Survey of the Canadian population 46.2 percent declared themselves "very happy," and the average "happiness" score was 2.4 on an equivalent 0-3 scale. The lower national share in the top category in the 2006 survey might be due to the different wording of the second category: "quite happy," as opposed to the Environics survey's "somewhat happy." The former might be perceived as a higher level of subjective well-being. Combining the positive happiness responses – the two highest categories – the two survey results are very close: 95.6 percent of Canadians declared themselves "very happy" or "quite happy" in 2006; 94.5 percent

6 Statistics Canada defines a CMA as a city with a population of more than 100,000. All cities included in the Environics survey are CMAs. The statistics cited are median employment earnings in CMAs for those ages 15 and over with some employment earnings in 2005. The data are from Statistics Canada (2008b).

Box 2: Constructing the Sample

The Environics survey interviewed 2,614 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people between March and October 2009 in 11 cities: Vancouver (10.0 percent of the total sample), Calgary (9.5 percent), Edmonton (9.6 percent), Regina (9.4 percent), Saskatoon (9.5 percent), Winnipeg (9.6 percent), Thunder Bay (9.5 percent), Toronto (9.6 percent), Ottawa (5.8 percent), Montreal (9.6 percent), and Halifax (7.7 percent). The 2006 census 20 percent sample data were used to construct a profile of the Aboriginal population in each of ten cities,^a based on four dimensions: identity (North American Indian/First Nation, Métis, or Inuit), age, sex, and highest education level.

In each city, the surveyors used a “snowball” technique to contact Aboriginals, subject to the requirement to construct a sample corresponding as far as was feasible to the census profile of the Aboriginal population in the city. Although they made a considerable effort, the study’s authors acknowledge inadequacies in sampling (Environics 2010, chap. 1). Relative to the 2006 census, the total sample overrepresents North American Indian/First Nations (60 percent) and Inuit (10 percent), while underrepresenting Métis (30 percent). In fact, according to the 2006 census, of the 366,000 Aboriginal identity population living in CMAs, 53 percent identified as North American Indian/First Nations, 46 percent as Métis, and 1 percent as Inuit (Statistics Canada 2008a). Most of the overrepresentation of Inuit is due to that group’s being the only Aboriginal identity population surveyed in Ottawa; the Inuit share of the sample drawn from Montreal is also eight times the census share (25 percent versus 3 percent). The largest underestimation for Métis occurred in Saskatoon and Montreal (about 25 percentage points). As well, the statistics reported in the Environics survey were weighted to reflect 2006 census weights in each city; in our analysis, we use unweighted individual responses. These sampling issues are unlikely, however, to have affected the broad results.

a. Inuit are the least urbanized of the Aboriginal identity groups – the 2006 census estimated their population at 5,600 – and although they are overrepresented in the Environics survey, the total number in the sample is small (10 percent). Furthermore, 56.6 percent of that sample was taken from Ottawa. In that city, the sample included Inuit only.

of urban Aboriginals declared themselves “very happy” or “somewhat happy” in 2009.

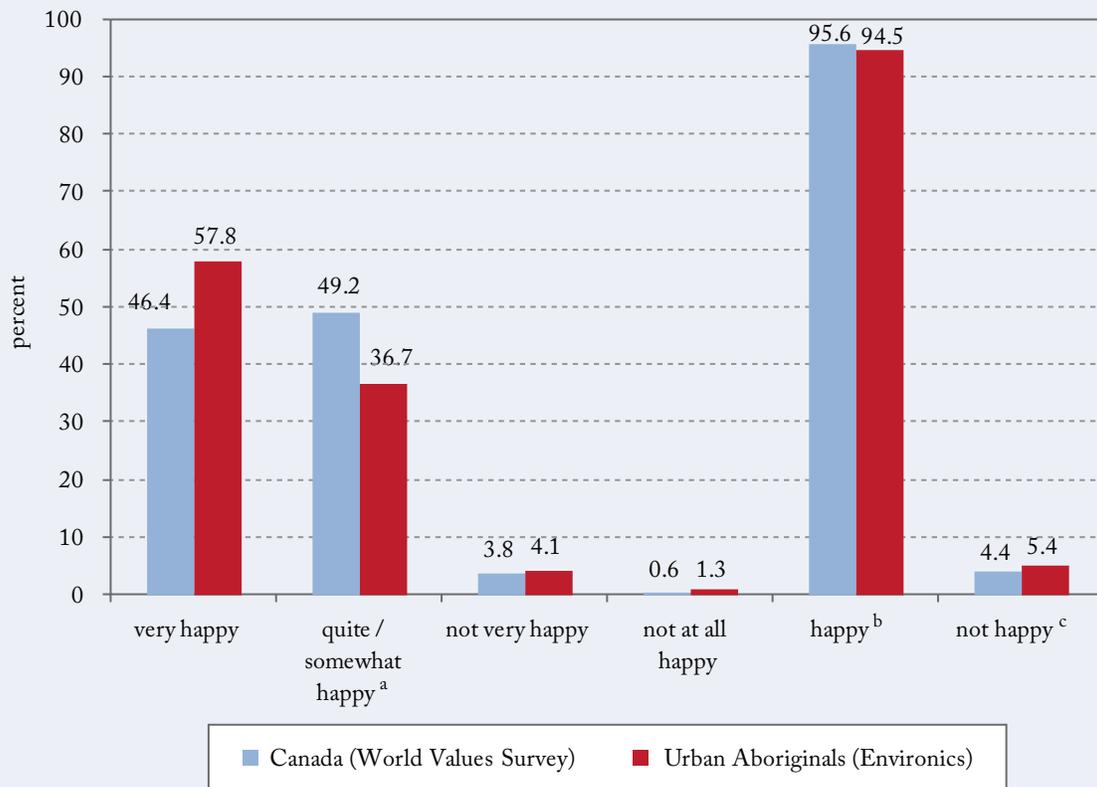
Results vary among the 10 cities in the Environics survey, but the differences are small. As Figure 2 shows, the highest share of “very happy” urban Aboriginals was in Vancouver (65.0 percent) and lowest in Montreal (52.4 percent), but the “somewhat happy” results are negatively correlated with the “very happy” results, and the combined “happy” shares vary little from one city to another. In terms of combined happiness scores, the highest-ranked city is Thunder Bay, with 97.6 percent; the lowest is Saskatoon, with 90.2 percent.

WHAT MAKES URBAN ABORIGINALS HAPPY? A FIRST APPROACH

The literature on well-being has identified a number of factors that contribute to subjective happiness.⁷ Most studies include personal characteristics and economic factors, and then focus on relationships and social networks – how time is spent, attitudes and beliefs, the wider political and economic environment. In examining the results of the Environics survey, we focus on three categories of factors that can be measured by the survey data: personal characteristics, economic characteristics,

7 Dolan, Peasgood, and White (2008) provide an extensive survey of the literature and identify several categories of relevant characteristics.

Figure 1: Distribution of Subjective Well-Being, Canadians and Urban Aboriginals



Notes:

- a. In the World Values Survey, among the respondent choices was “quite happy”; in the Environics survey, the equivalent was “somewhat happy.”
- b. “happy” = “very happy” + “quite/somewhat happy.”
- c. “unhappy” = “not very happy” + “not at all happy.”

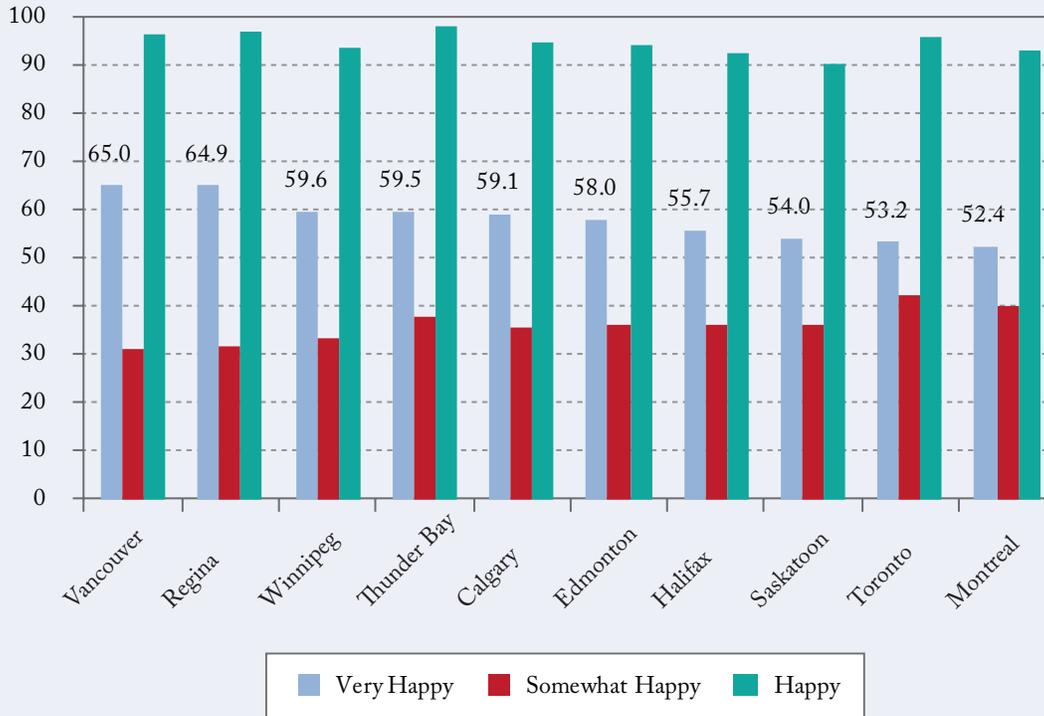
and indicators of social and political integration.⁸

A first insight can be gained by comparing the characteristics of “very happy” respondents (57.8 percent of the sample) with the characteristics of those who chose one of the three other levels.⁹ To that end, Figure 3 and Table 1 compare the prevalence of major personal and economic

factors, as well as factors representing social and political integration, among Aboriginals declaring themselves “very happy” and among those declaring themselves “somewhat/not very/not at all happy” (note that Figure 3 shows only factors whose difference in prevalence between the two groups is statistically significant).

- 8 We describe in detail all factors analyzed in the Appendix. Based on the way the questions were formulated most responses are represented by variables that take the values 0 or 1 depending on the response; age is measured in years, health in perceived levels, and income in classes.
- 9 The conceptual difference between “very happy” and “somewhat happy” is quite large and as a consequence the respondents who declared being in one of the top two levels make up more than 90 percent of the sample. By setting “very happy” as the goal, there is room to improve well-being for about half of the population.

Figure 2: Share of Urban Aboriginals Who Are “Very” and “Somewhat Happy,” by City



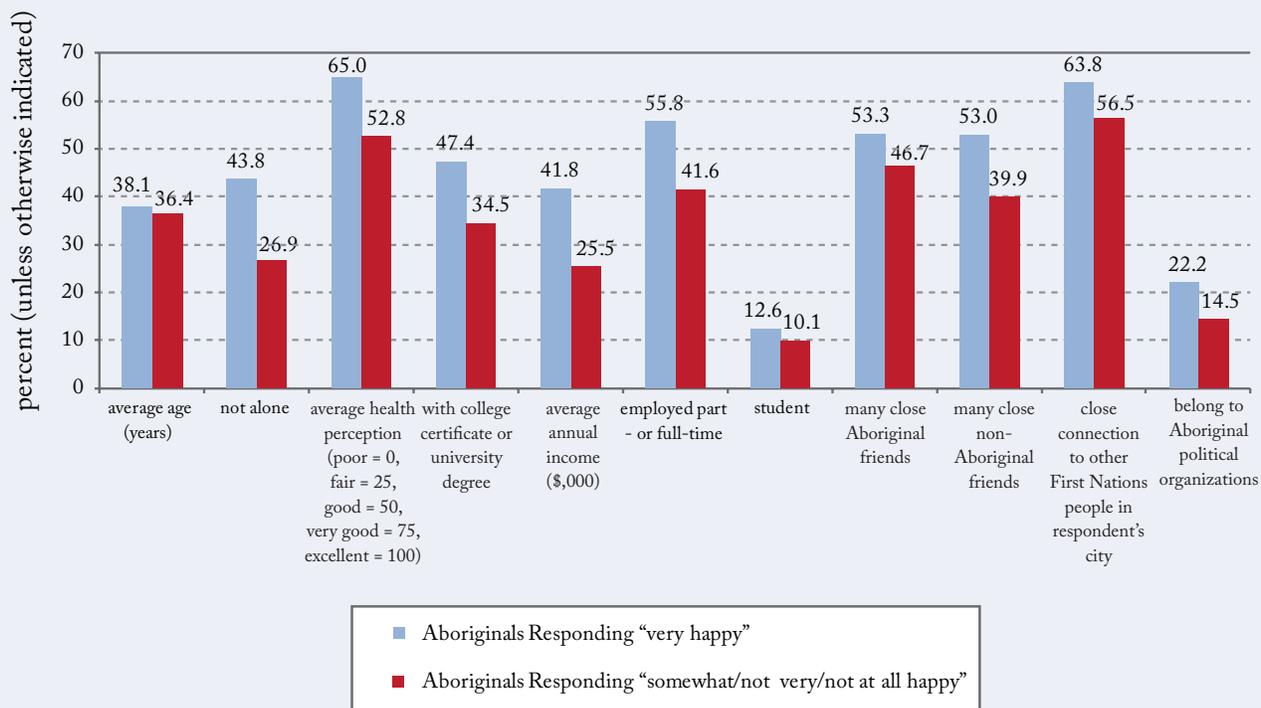
Source: Authors’ calculations from Environics data.

Personal characteristics measured are age, whether or not the respondent is female, is in a relationship – married, common law, or an informal relationship – has children, and the respondent’s perceived quality of health on a ranking from 0 to 4. Economic characteristics measured are income class, highest education level obtained, and employment status. Finally, social integration in the city can be measured by asking if the respondent has friends (Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal) is close to other Aboriginal groups, and participates in Aboriginal politics.¹⁰

Some characteristics – sex and presence of children – did not differ in a statistically significant manner between “very happy” respondents and others. Most other characteristics, however, were significantly different and might have contributed to the different declared level of happiness. The happiest Aboriginals, on average, were slightly older than the less happy ones – by less than two years – and were much less likely to be alone (43.8 percent in a formal or informal relationship versus 26.9 percent). Those who were happiest had a higher perception of the quality of their health.

10 The survey posed other questions regarding social integration, such as “Where is home for you?” but the number of non-respondents is so large that the sample would shrink significantly if used.

Figure 3: Prevalence of Characteristics among “Very Happy” Aboriginals and Among Aboriginals Declaring Lower Levels of Happiness



Source: Authors' calculations from Environics data.

They also were more likely to have a job with a good income and to be better educated or to be students. Finally, the happiest respondents were more likely to have an active social and political life. Specifically, they were more likely to have many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends, and to feel they had a close connection with other First Nations groups; they were also more likely to be involved in Aboriginal politics.

Table 2 shows the average well-being scores across these various labour market states. The picture is very much what one would expect from a non-Aboriginal survey: having a full-time job (mean score = 2.7) or being a student (mean score = 2.6) leads to higher happiness than the overall average at 2.5. Being unemployed or a recipient of

social programs (disability or social assistance) is associated with the lowest score (mean score = 2.3). Being retired (mean score = 2.6) or self-employed (mean score = 2.5) brings more-than-average happiness, while staying at home and having a part-time job generates less-than-average happiness.

These simple statistics provide a broad picture of factors likely to influence the stated well-being of urban Aboriginals, and are consistent with the results found for the Canadian population in general. For example, Sharpe et al. (2010) find that perceived health, a sense of belonging to the community, being employed, and having a partner are major determinants of subjective happiness among Canadians. Income also has a weak positive contribution to happiness.

Table 1: Prevalence of Characteristics among “Very Happy” Aboriginals Relative to Prevalence among Aboriginals Declaring a Lower Level of Happiness

	Mean of Characteristics		
	Very happy	Somewhat/not very /not at all happy	t-value (p-value) for equality of means ^a
<i>Basic personal characteristics</i>			
Age (years)	38.1	36.4	3.2 (0.00)**
Female (%)	57.7	58.5	0.4 (0.67)
Not alone (%)	43.8	26.9	8.9 (.00)**
Health (rank, 0 - 100)	65.0	52.8	12.2 (0.00)**
With children (%)	42.0	45.5	1.8 (0.08)
College or University degree (%)	47.4	34.5	6.6 (0.00)**
<i>Economic characteristics</i>			
Income (interpolated average, \$,000) ^b	41.75	25.5	11.4 (0.00)**
Employed part-time or full-time (%)	55.8	41.6	7.1 (0.00)**
Student (%)	12.6	10.1	2.0 (0.05)*
<i>Signs of integration in the city</i>			
With Aboriginal friends	53.3	46.7	3.3 (0.00)**
With non-Aboriginal friends	53.0	39.9	6.7 (0.00)**
Close to other First Nations	63.8	56.5	3.7 (0.00)**
Close to Métis and Inuit	49.0	47.4	0.8 (0.44)
In Aboriginal Politics	22.2	14.5	5.0 (0.00)**

Note:

a. ** significant at 1%, * significant at 5%.

b. The mean income index value among the “very happy” was 2.87, among the “somewhat/not very/not at all happy” 2.22. The average income for those with an income class index of “2” is \$20,000, for those with “3” is \$45,000. Interpolating generates the figures reported.

WHAT MAKES URBAN ABORIGINALS HAPPY? A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Analyzing differences in averages does not allow for consideration of various factors simultaneously. For that, we resort to regression analysis.¹¹

Table A-2 in the Appendix shows regression results for the complete sample, which includes all three Aboriginal identity groups: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. We first introduce only the basic personal characteristics (column 1), to which we add an identifier for the Aboriginal groups (*First Nation and Inuit*).¹² The results indicate whether

11 The basic descriptive statistics for each variable are presented in Appendix Table A-1.

12 The estimations are done using OLS. However, since the dependent variable takes only four values (0, 1, 2, 3), we also test the robustness of the results using ordered logit. Table A-2, column 7, shows that the results hardly change and, thus, OLS can be considered an appropriate methodology.

Table 2: Average Happiness Scores for Aboriginals with Selected Characteristics

	Employed full-time	Student	Retired	Self-employed	Employed part-time	Stay at home	Unemployed	Social program recipient
Mean	2.67	2.61	2.58	2.54	2.44	2.36	2.28	2.28
Standard Deviation	0.52	0.54	0.71	0.65	0.64	0.71	0.68	0.82

	Number of Aboriginal friends			Number of non-Aboriginal friends		
	Many	Some/few	None	Many	Some/few	None
Mean	2.60	2.44	2.24	2.59	2.45	2.24
Standard Deviation	0.60	0.65	0.86	0.60	0.65	0.85

	Self-assessment of health				
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Mean	2.69	2.62	2.46	2.49	2.48
Standard Deviation	0.46	0.52	0.65	0.67	0.69

being First Nation or Inuit, relative to being Métis, involved a higher or lower level of happiness, independently of the other characteristics. Similarly, results for the three education variables indicate differences in happiness attributable to the respective education levels relative to the reference education level – someone with incomplete secondary school. Finally, in general, subjective well-being studies conclude that, all else being constant, happiness declines as people age, until they reach middle age (between ages 35 and 45), and thereafter rises (see, for example, Helliwell 2003). In the basic model, we find a statistically significant U-shape effect of age on happiness

but the minimum occurred at an earlier age than in other studies – that is, happiness declined until Aboriginals reached age 30 and rose thereafter.

In the second column of Table A-2 we add the economic characteristics.¹³ In the third column we add the indicators of social integration in the city, and in the fourth column political integration. Since for each category some factors are significant in explaining reported happiness, this last is the most relevant.

Personal Characteristics

When we consider all factors simultaneously (in Table A-2, column 4), we find that not being alone

13 We should note that, since income is measured by six classes and not actual levels, the squared income variable captures whether the level of happiness derived from changes in the respondent's financial state, not with his or her position on the income scale.

and perceived good health significantly increased well-being. With respect to education, the results weaken with the introduction of the economic variables, and only higher education clearly raised happiness. Having a university degree contributed significantly to increased happiness, and having a college certificate was fairly close to achieving statistical significance. To the extent that education is valued because it contributes to income and health, the lack of statistical significance for high school completion is not particularly surprising. The age effect becomes insignificant but it is still U-shaped. There was no significant difference in happiness whether the respondent identified as First Nation, Inuit, or Métis.

Economic Characteristics

Among the economic characteristics, being a student increased happiness compared to being out of the labour force. None of the other possible states – in particular, whether employed or not – significantly affected happiness. Income, however, did contribute significantly to happiness.¹⁴ Considering the likely correlation between education, employment, and income, the post-secondary education and income variables may be capturing what would otherwise appear as the impact of employment – as opposed to unemployment – on well-being.

Social Integration

Among the indicators of social integration, having close Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends increased happiness significantly, as did feeling a close connection with other Aboriginals in the city. Finally, being politically involved with the

Aboriginal community was positively correlated with happiness.

Differences across Cities

The next set of results (Table A-2, column 5) includes a fixed effect on the respondent's happiness based on the city in which he or she lives, with Vancouver as the reference city. Interestingly, none of the city effects is significant: respondents did not express a different level of happiness just because they lived in one city as opposed to another. This suggests that differing unmeasured urban amenities (such as climate or availability of services) do not affect subjective happiness.

Because people's happiness is influenced by broader factors than their own situation, and to better understand the role of cities in urban Aboriginal happiness, we added two variables to the model. First, since a higher risk of being unemployed is likely to decrease happiness, we introduced each CMA's unemployment rate in 2009. Second, the literature has extensively shown that, in prosperous countries, economic aspirations measured by relative income are more important than actual levels of income—in other words, they care about their position relative to the “relevant Joneses” (Stevenson and Wolfers 2008; Knight and Gunatilaka 2010). To capture this effect, we introduced each CMA's median income in 2009. Thus, if Aboriginals measure their individual well-being relative to the typical income of non-Aboriginals in their city, we should find a statistically significant negative coefficient for this variable: the higher is the city's median income, then the less happy should be an Aboriginal with any given income. In short, these two variables test indirectly if Aboriginals are economically integrated

14 The coefficient of income squared is negative, suggesting diminishing returns to well-being as income rises, but the coefficient is below the 5 percent threshold level of significance that we report.

in the cities in which they live. The results (Table A-2, column 6) show no significance for either CMA-level variable or for their combined effect.¹⁵ Variations in average local economic conditions across cities did not influence urban Aboriginals' happiness, and the benchmark for their economic aspiration clearly was not the average (median) income in their city.

It may be that, for many urban Aboriginals, their reference group in terms of income is not their urban neighbours but friends and relatives in the rural communities – reserves in the case of registered Indians – from which they migrated. Identification of the reference group also might vary greatly across individuals, as Kingdon and Knight (2007, 70) note: “Candidates for an individual’s reference group are the individual’s own past, her aspiration or desired future, others in her family, her spouse, others with similar characteristics, and others in her residential vicinity or workplace.” Since individuals have different identities in different contexts, they may also have more than one comparator group.” Another explanation could be that respondents’ information about the labour market in their city was incomplete. Both explanations are supported by the fact that only a minority (28.1 percent) of respondents declared having lived their whole lives in the city where the interview took place.

Differences across Identity Groups

Belonging to a particular identity group did not affect the level of happiness in the previous analysis; nonetheless, people in the three groups were not equally happy (see Table 3). First Nations and Métis people had similar average scores; the average among Inuit respondents was significantly lower.

To evaluate these differences, we estimated results for the complete sample and separately for

each Aboriginal identity group (see Appendix Table A-3). There were some differences in the impact of factors determining happiness among the three groups, but the results should be approached with caution due to biases in the survey sample. The Inuit sample is particularly problematic (see Box 2), which might explain the weakness of the results for this group. For it, only two factors contributed significantly to their happiness: women were happier than men, and good health increased their happiness.

Some of the results for the First Nations and Métis respondents diverge. Higher income mattered for Métis but not for First Nations respondents. Being employed or self-employed made First Nations respondents happier but not Métis respondents. Education was a relatively weak contributor to happiness, as only a college degree or certificate affected the happiness of First Nations respondents, while no education variable was significant among Métis. Being unemployed strongly adversely affected the happiness of Métis but not of First Nations respondents. Again, the close relationship among education, employment, and income might explain differences in the statistical significance of these factors between First Nations and Métis respondents. The measures of integration in the city were relevant only for First Nations respondents. Overall, for the two larger identity groups, fundamental factors – health, not being alone, and a combination of education and economic status – contributed most to perceived happiness, as they did in surveys of other Canadians and of people in other countries.

Summing Up the Results

The conclusions we can draw from the results of the Environics survey are similar to those of other happiness surveys in Canada and elsewhere.

15 The F value for the combined effect of the CMAs variables on well-being is 0.2 with a p-value of 0.8, and thus the CMA variables had no significant overall effect.

Table 3: Perceived Happiness of Aboriginal Identity Groups

	Happiness mean score (standard deviation)	Percent		
		Very happy	Somewhat happy	Not very/ not at all happy
First Nations	2.51 (0.64)	57.9	36.8	5.4
Métis	2.53 (0.63)	59.7	35.2	5.1
Inuit	2.43 (0.69)	52.1	41.1	6.8

One is that a positive health assessment increases the respondent’s perceived happiness.¹⁶ Another conclusion is that stable personal relationships enhance happiness. In the case of the Environics survey, among urban Aboriginals, being married, in a relationship, or with a common-law partner significantly increased happiness. Widowed Aboriginals were on average happier than those who were separated or divorced (mean score = 2.5 versus 2.4), which is consistent with evidence in the literature. On the impact of children, the evidence from other surveys is mixed (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008); in the case of urban Aboriginals, children reduced happiness, but the effect is not statistically significant.

Having a university degree or a college diploma increased perceived happiness among urban Aboriginals compared to having a lower level of education. Higher income increased happiness, with some weak evidence of diminishing returns as incomes rise. Both results are in line with the literature. In the Environics survey, however, achieving a high-school certificate did not, by itself, contribute significantly to happiness; in international studies it did (Dolan, Peasgood, and White 2008).

The fact that being a student was the only labour market state that increased happiness for urban Aboriginals significantly might reflect respondents’ awareness of the effect of education

16 For each step increase in health rank, on a five-step scale, happiness increased by 0.13 (Table A-2, column 4). This effect is smaller than that found by Helliwell (2002) in a sample of countries covering all regions of the world. However, the mean of our sample, when scaled to be comparable, is much higher than Helliwell’s (3.39 versus 2.28), implying a fairly positive self-assessment of health status by urban Aboriginals, which mattered for the impact of health changes on happiness. Helliwell presents evidence that improvements in health status have a larger impact on well-being in the pessimistic health range (that is, poor or very poor) than in the optimistic range. So, part of the difference in results might be linked to a much more optimistic evaluation of their health by urban Aboriginals than by those in Helliwell’s sample. Interestingly, the average of happiness indexes for self-assessed health statuses was broadly distributed over two categories: people with excellent or good health showed an average happiness value of 2.69 and 2.62, respectively, while respondents with good, fair, or poor health showed an average happiness value of 2.46, 2.49, and 2.48, respectively.

Also, psychological health has a stronger impact than physical health on subjective well-being, as Dolan, Peasgood, and White (2008) and Sharpe et al. (2010) have found – indeed, according to the latter, the effect on subjective happiness of a shift in mental health and stress is more than 50 percent larger than a shift in physical health. Unfortunately, however, the Environics survey did not distinguish between psychological and physical health.

on higher income and on their prospects for future happiness. This is consistent with the results of survey questions about the aspirations of urban Aboriginals and their reasons for having moved to the city.

Finally, community life matters. Feeling a close connection to other First Nations people and having friends increased happiness significantly; interestingly, the effect is the same, independently of whether or not the friends were Aboriginal. This result is consistent with urban Aboriginals' definition of success: when asked to evaluate the importance of a list of contributors to success, 88 percent stated that being close to family and friends was very important (Environics 2010, 108). Furthermore, being involved in Aboriginal politics is also correlated with happiness.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

When Environics surveyors asked first-generation Aboriginal city dwellers, "what are the most important reasons why you first moved to your city?" (Environics 2010, 32), the three most frequently cited were to be closer to family members, to pursue education, and to obtain a job. In effect, Aboriginals who migrate to a city are "voting with their feet" to take part in mainstream Canadian society. Although Canada has – as it should – committed to enable those living on-reserve to continue doing so, Canada has an equivalent obligation to facilitate the often-difficult transition for Aboriginals who opt to live in a city.

In all our results, income is a significant factor bearing on stated levels of happiness, as is having a university degree. Being employed and having a college certificate or diploma also contribute to stated well-being, but to a lesser degree. The survey seems to show that urban Aboriginals might have been anchoring their income expectations on incomes in the rural community from which they migrated, rather than on incomes in the city in which they live. In fact, the use of such

benchmarks might cause them to lower their income expectations substantially and open the door to discrimination. Many respondents referred to past experiences of racism, and a sizable minority (36 percent) either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, "I don't feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people" (Environics 2010, 79).

In addition to discrimination, other important factors in explaining low Aboriginal incomes are weak education outcomes and limited familiarity with local labour markets. Accordingly, the two most important ways governments can increase urban Aboriginals' sense of well-being would be to increase their successful participation in both the labour market and the education system.

Labour Market Policy

Employment policies for disadvantaged groups have been the focus of numerous studies and discussions in recent years (see, for example, OECD 2009), and several factors have been identified as responsible for the failure of such groups to integrate in the labour market, among them loss of confidence in school and employment market systems that consistently fail them. Nonetheless, most Aboriginals who move to an urban area apparently believe that doing so will improve access to both; thus, lack of motivation is unlikely to be an issue. But motivation is not enough. Of all respondents to the Environics survey, 15.3 percent declared they were unemployed; even among those with a college or university degree, 8.5 percent declared being unemployed, a rate considerably higher than the comparable 5 percent Canadian average in 2009 (Statistics Canada, CANSIM database). Moreover, while 53 percent of respondents who worked were generally content with the type of work they did, 47 percent hoped to move on to something else.

Lack of mobility is often a barrier to employment, as geographical isolation limits job opportunities (Stoll 1999). By moving to the city, urban Aboriginals display a desire to improve their job

prospects, but it might not be sufficient to be located in a CMA with strong economic activity. Our results show that local labour market indicators such as unemployment and median income do not influence the choice of Aboriginal people to move to an urban area, indicating that weak integration might be the result of a lack of information.

An individual's recent arrival in a CMA could be the reason for reporting limited professional connections with potential employers or a lack of contacts with government employment agencies.

Many countries have experimented with strategies to improve job information and links with employers, such as "one-stop shops" developed through the cooperation of various government agencies, and business involvement in training, mentoring, and labour market advice (see, for example, Walther and Pohl 2005; OECD 2009).

A necessary feature of these initiatives is that information about the state of the local labour market must be gathered on a regular basis; another is that local policymakers must have sufficient discretion over the mode of delivery of services. In other words, cities must be able to act in areas that traditionally are under federal or provincial jurisdiction.

Education Policy

It is important to acknowledge the skepticism among many Aboriginals toward formal education – Canada's legacy of residential schools and forced assimilation remains an obstacle to progress.

Nevertheless, among those engaged in Aboriginal education within provincial school systems there exists a consensus on many desirable initiatives, two of which are worth highlighting.¹⁷

First, pre-kindergarten early childhood education (ECE) is a valuable investment for children from marginalized communities, few of whose members have a tradition of formal education; accordingly, there should be easy access to ECE in all neighbourhoods with significant Aboriginal presence.

Second, provincial education ministries should expand existing precedents that enable school districts to undertake discretionary Aboriginal education initiatives. Among the provinces with an Aboriginal population of more than 100,000, British Columbia has the highest Aboriginal high-school completion rate. One aspect of the province's education policy is to encourage independent school district initiatives for Aboriginal education through various strategies. For example, British Columbia:

- collects and disseminates much more detailed data on Aboriginal student outcomes than do other provinces, with the intent of highlighting best practices and problems;
- awards supplemental funding to districts based on the number of identified Aboriginal students, and grants autonomy to districts in the use of these funds, provided they are applied to Aboriginal programs;¹⁸
- and requires school districts to engage local Aboriginal community leaders in drawing up agreements with quantified medium-term targets for Aboriginal education outcomes.

17 The policies discussed in this section are elaborated more fully in Richards (2011).

18 An interesting district-level innovation is contracting with the non-profit society Pathways to Education to offer intense tutoring and counseling in secondary schools with a high share of at-risk students. At present, nearly a dozen school districts across Canada have contracted with Pathways. Several of these districts – in Winnipeg, for example – are targeting schools with large Aboriginal student cohorts. Pathways has enjoyed success, as measured by graduation rates of participating students relative to those of non-participants in the relevant communities; see studies cited at the Pathways website, <http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca/comm-winnipeg.html>. Participation in the program is voluntary, however, and participants likely come disproportionately from families with a below-average risk that their children will drop out. The program is also expensive, increasing the annual per student cost to a school district by nearly 50 percent.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the results of both the Environics survey and the earlier ESC survey, one must conclude, first, that most urban Aboriginals are succeeding, in the sense that most describe their lives as “happy.” Both surveys find that, on average, levels of reported well-being among urban Aboriginals are remarkably similar to those among all Canadians. Second, the factors that influence the well-being of urban Aboriginals – being in an intimate relationship with another, enjoying good health, having a good education, and achieving some combination of employment and decent income – are similar to those that influence the well-being of other people

in Canada and elsewhere. Having friends, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, also matters, as does a sense of connectedness with other Aboriginals in the city.

These results do not mean that urban Canada is the best of all possible worlds for Aboriginals or that all Aboriginals should “go to town” – the reserve should remain an option for those First Nations/registered Indians who opt for it. They do suggest, however, the need for much more policy innovation to facilitate the rural-to-urban transition of Aboriginals who choose to move, primarily by focusing on improved labour force participation and education outcomes.

APPENDIX: VARIABLE DEFINITIONS AND REGRESSION RESULTS

Dependent Variable

Happiness: Degree of happiness such that very = 3; somewhat = 2; not very = 1; not at all = 0, in response to question: “Overall are you happy with your life?”

Independent Variables

Basic Personal Characteristics

Age: Actual age in years.

Female: Binary variable, 1 if female; 0 otherwise (male).

Not alone: Binary variable, 1 if not alone (married, common law, in relationship); 0 otherwise (single, separated, widowed, other).

With children: Binary variable, 1 if yes; 0 otherwise, in response to question: “Do you have children 17 years of age or younger?”

First Nation: Binary variable, 1 if declared identity is First Nation; 0 otherwise (Métis, Inuit).

Inuit: Binary variable, 1 if declared identity is Inuit; 0 otherwise (First Nation, Métis).

Health: Degree of perceived quality of health such that 4 = excellent; 3 = very good; 2 = good; 1 = fair; and 0 = poor, in response to question: “Overall would you say your health is....”

High school: Binary variable, 1 if high school certificate; 0 otherwise.

College: Binary variable, 1 if college certificate; 0 otherwise.

University: Binary variable, 1 if university degree; 0 otherwise.

Economic Characteristics

Income: Total annual income of all household members before tax in 2008, defined by income classes such that 1 = <\$10,000; 2 = \$10,000–\$30,000; 3 = \$30,000–\$60,000; 4 = \$60,000–\$80,000; 5 = \$80,000–\$100,000; 6 = >\$100,000.

CMA Income: Median earnings for full-year, full-time earners in CMAs, all occupations, both sexes, in 2005 dollars, 20 percent sample data, adjusted for inflation using the consumer price index until 2009 (Statistics Canada 2008c, 2011).

Employed: Binary variable, 1 if respondent worked full- or part-time; 0 otherwise (unemployed, self-employed, stay at home, student, retired, disability, social assistance).

Self-employed: Binary variable, 1 if respondent was self-employed; 0 otherwise.

Social program recipient: Binary variable, 1 if respondent was a welfare recipient or on disability; 0 otherwise.

Student: Binary variable, 1 if respondent was student; 0 otherwise.

Unemployed: Binary variable, 1 if respondent was unemployed; 0 otherwise.
CMAUnemp: Labour force indicators by age group, both sexes, unemployment rate (2006) for Canada and CMAs, 20 percent sample data (Statistics Canada 2008d).

Indicators of Integration in the City

With Aboriginal friends: Binary variable, 1 if many; 0 otherwise (some, a few, none), in response to question: “Do you have close friends in the city who are Aboriginal?”

With non-Aboriginal friends: Binary variable, 1 if many; 0 otherwise (some, a few, none), in response to question: “Do you have close friends in the city who are non-Aboriginal?”

Close to other First Nations: Binary variable, for First Nation respondents, 1 if very/fairly close; 0 otherwise (not too close, not at all close), in response to question: “How close a connection do you feel to the members of other First Nations in the city?” The question was asked of everybody regardless of their declared identity.

Close to other Métis and Inuit: Binary variable, for Métis and Inuit respondents, 1 if very/fairly close; 0 otherwise (not too close, not at all close), in response to question: “How close a connection do you feel to other Métis/Inuit in the city?” The question was asked of everybody regardless of their declared identity.

In Aboriginal politics: Binary variable, 1 if yes; 0 if no, in response to question: “Do you belong to any aboriginal political organization?”

Table A 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Explanatory Variables

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Standard deviation	Number of valid answers
<i>Basic personal characteristics</i>					
Age	37.400	89	18	13.30	2,574
Female	0.581	1	0	0.49	2,596
Not alone	0.366	1	0	0.48	2,576
Health	2.390	4	0	1.05	2,580
With children	0.435	1	0	0.50	2,543
First Nation	0.596	1	0	0.49	2,594
Inuit	0.102	1	0	0.30	2,594
<i>Economic characteristics</i>					
Income	2.590	6	2	1.41	2,340
High school certificate	0.313	1	0	0.46	2,587
College degree	0.234	1	0	0.42	2,587
University degree	0.186	1	0	0.39	2,587
Employed	0.498	1	0	0.50	2,540
Self-employed	0.063	1	0	0.24	2,540
Social Program recipient	0.104	1	0	0.31	2,540
Student	0.116	1	0	0.32	2,540
Unemployed	0.153	1	0	0.36	2,540
<i>Signs of integration in the city</i>					
With Aboriginal friends	0.506	1	0	0.50	2,587
With non-Aboriginal friends	0.475	1	0	0.50	2,587
Close to other First Nations	0.607	1	0	0.49	2,510
Close to Métis and Inuit	0.483	1	0	0.50	2,509
In Aborig. Politics	0.190	1	0	0.39	2,557
<i>CMA variables</i>					
CMA Income	46,159	53,265	41,249	3,985	–
CMA Unemployment (rate)	5.73	7.40	4.00	1.05	–

Source: Authors' calculations.

Table A 2: Full Sample Estimations

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
	Basic Model	+ Economic Characteristics	+ Friends Connections	+ Political Involvement	+ Cities' fixed effect ^a	+ CMA's effect	Ordered Logit
<i>Basic personal characteristics</i>							
C	2.13** (39.7)	1.88** (13.6)	1.77** (12.7)	1.76** (12.5)	1.77** (12.1)	1.62** (6.0)	–
Age	-.012* (2.2)	-.010 (1.6)	-.008 (1.2)	-.007 (1.0)	-.006 (0.9)	-.007 (1.1)	-.019 (0.9)
Age squared	.0002** (2.6)	.0001* (2.0)	.0001 (1.7)	.0001 (1.5)	.0001 (1.4)	.0001 (1.5)	.0004 (1.4)
Female	.017 (0.7)	.011 (0.4)	.018 (0.7)	.019 (0.7)	.015 (0.5)	.019 (0.7)	.039 (0.4)
Not alone	.217** (8.7)	.174** (6.3)	.173** (6.2)	.167** (6.0)	.161** (5.7)	.167** (6.0)	.671** (6.3)
Health	.149** (10.6)	.134** (9.9)	.128** (9.3)	.127** (9.1)	.130** (9.4)	.127** (9.1)	.455** (9.6)
With children	-.040 (1.5)	-.029 (1.0)	-.019 (0.6)	-.021 (0.7)	-.025 (0.8)	-.020 (0.7)	-.110 (1.1)
High School	.128** (3.7)	.047 (1.2)	.043 (1.1)	.045 (1.1)	.048 (1.2)	.045 (1.2)	.065 (0.5)
College	.124** (4.9)	.075 (1.8)	.080 (1.9)	.073 (1.7)	.080 (1.9)	.072 (1.7)	.193 (1.3)
University	.239** (6.3)	.106* (2.4)	.104* (2.4)	.096* (2.2)	.104* (2.3)	.100* (2.2)	.304 (1.9)
First Nation	.021 (0.8)	.035 (1.2)	.029 (1.0)	.040 (1.3)	.046 (1.5)	.039 (1.3)	.126 (1.2)
Inuit	-.022 (0.5)	.042 (0.8)	.018 (0.3)	.021 (0.4)	.007 (0.1)	.010 (0.2)	.047 (0.3)
<i>Economic characteristics</i>							
Income	–	.103** (2.6)	.108** (2.7)	.110** (2.7)	.106** (2.6)	.109** (2.7)	.242 (1.6)
Income squared	–	-.008 (1.4)	-.009 (1.7)	-.009 (1.6)	-.009 (1.6)	-.009 (1.6)	-.006 (0.3)
Employed	–	.139* (2.1)	.125 (1.8)	.109 (1.6)	.108 (1.6)	.109 (1.6)	.301 (1.3)
Self-Employed	–	.075 (0.9)	.089 (1.1)	.065 (0.8)	.064 (0.8)	.064 (0.8)	.139 (0.5)
Student	–	.222** (3.0)	.217** (2.8)	.205** (2.7)	.214** (2.8)	.205** (2.7)	.660** (2.6)
Soc. prog. recipient	–	.036 (0.4)	.044 (0.5)	.032 (0.4)	.026 (0.3)	.031 (0.4)	.170 (0.7)
Unemployed	–	-.067 (0.9)	-.081 (1.0)	-.098 (1.3)	-.098 (1.3)	-.099 (1.3)	-.401 (1.7)
<i>Indicators of integration in the city</i>							
Close to other First Nations	–	–	.073* (2.3)	.069* (2.2)	.073* (2.3)	.069* (2.2)	.223* (2.0)
Close to Metis and Inuit	–	–	-.026 (0.9)	-.025 (0.9)	-.022 (0.7)	-.024 (0.8)	-.108 (1.0)
Aboriginal friends	–	–	.069* (2.5)	.060* (2.1)	.050 (1.8)	.060* (2.1)	.210* (2.1)
Non-Aboriginal friends	–	–	.063* (2.3)	.061* (2.2)	.065* (2.4)	.061* (2.3)	.260** (2.6)
In Aboriginal Politics	–	–	–	.073* (2.3)	.067* (2.1)	.073* (2.3)	.304* (2.3)
CMAIncome	–	–	–	–	–	.0000 (0.7)	–
CMAUnemp.	–	–	–	–	–	.004 (0.3)	–
n	2478	2200	2077	2052	2052	2052	2052
Adj.R ²	.114	.141	.149	.151	.154	.151	–

a. None of the city dummies have p-values smaller than 12 percent; hence none are significant.

White-heteroskedasticity-consistent standard error except for the ordered logit for which the z-statistic is reported;

** significant at 1 percent, * significant at 5 percent.

Table A 3: Estimations, by Individual Aboriginal Groups

	1.	2.	3.	4.
	Canada	First Nations	Métis	Inuit ^a
<i>Basic personal characteristics</i>				
C	1.76** (12.5)	1.77** (9.5)	1.82** (8.4)	2.01** (3.4)
Age	-.007 (1.0)	-.011 (1.3)	.002 (0.2)	-.027 (0.9)
Age ²	.0001 (1.5)	.0002 (1.7)	-.0000 (0.1)	.0004 (1.0)
Female	.019 (0.7)	.009 (0.2)	.006 (0.1)	.250* (2.2)
Not alone	.167** (6.0)	.158** (3.8)	.138** (2.7)	.192 (1.6)
Health	.127** (9.1)	.125** (6.6)	.130** (5.8)	.145** (3.1)
With children	-.021 (0.7)	-.026 (0.6)	-.087 (1.7)	-.138 (1.2)
High School	.045 (1.1)	.092 (1.7)	-.060 (0.9)	-.052 (0.4)
College	.073 (1.7)	.116* (2.0)	.044 (0.6)	-.005 (0.1)
University	.096* (2.2)	.088 (1.4)	.076 (1.0)	-.023 (0.1)
<i>Economic characteristics</i>				
Income	.110** (2.7)	.073 (1.2)	.141* (2.0)	.115 (0.6)
Income ²	-.009 (1.6)	-.003 (0.3)	-.011 (1.2)	-.015 (0.6)
Employed	.109 (1.6)	.238* (2.5)	-.058 (0.6)	0.179 (0.8)
Self-Employed	.065 (0.8)	.283* (2.4)	-.246 (1.8)	0.214 (0.8)
Student	.205** (2.7)	.297** (2.8)	.078 (0.6)	0.488 (1.8)
Soc. prog. recipient	.032 (0.4)	.135 (1.3)	-.079 (0.6)	.167 (0.7)
Unemployed	-.098 (1.3)	.069 (0.7)	-.414** (3.4)	.216 (0.9)
<i>Indicators of integration in the city</i>				
Close to other First Nations	.069* (2.2)	.064 (1.4)	.070 (1.3)	.018 (0.2)
Close to Metis and Inuit	-.025 (0.9)	-.013 (0.3)	.007 (0.1)	-.054 (0.5)
With Aboriginal friends	.060* (2.1)	.094* (2.3)	-.016 (0.3)	.065 (0.6)
With non-Aborig. friends	.061* (2.2)	.077* (1.9)	.057 (1.2)	-.051 (0.5)
In Aborig. Politics	.073* (2.3)	-.041 (1.0)	.053 (1.0)	.180 (1.4)
n	2052 (2,596)	909 (1,545)	651 (785)	190 (264)
Adj.R ²	.151	.146	.182	.062

a. In Ottawa, the survey covered only Inuit and the results are similar. White-heteroskedasticity-consistent standard error;
 ** significant at 1%, * significant at 5%.

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