CITIES, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING NOVEMBER 2011

Philip Morrison

Professor of Human Geography, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington

Subjective Well-Being and the City

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Philip S. Morrison

School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences Victoria University of Wellington

Cities, health and well-being. Urban age Hong Kong 16-17 November 2011

> Reflections on measuring quality of life Wednesday, 16 November





City of the mind

Subjective Internal



City on the ground Objective External



Subjective well-being

'Happiness' 'Satisfaction' 'Quality of life'

Qn: Taking everything into account, how <u>satisfied</u> or dissatisfied are you with your life in general these days?

Ans: Very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, very satisfied?



A geography of subjective well-being?

- Yes, because ...
- 1. Places differ
- 2. People differ
- 3. People place interactions differ
- 4. People have limited choice of place



How to estimate the effect of place on subjective well-being?

Subjective well^{to} Subjective well^{to} City of resident solutions City of resident solutions<math>People S = F(L | X, E)

Reference: *Regional Studies* 45 (8) 2011 "Local expressions of subjective well-being...."⁷



KNOWOUSSION OR



Fixed place effects range from a probability of **p(H)** being Very Happy (p(VH) of 0.28 to 0.44, suggesting that where people live may have marked p(VH) effects on how they report their well-being. p(N)p(U, VU)



Why are people 'happier' in some places than others?

Very high density (relative) -

Accessibility to services +

Social capital (and trust) +

Other (unknowns).....





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Defining wellbeing for research and policy making Subjective vs objective measurement Evidence on policies that improve wellbeing

Email: wellbeingandpublicpolicy@gmail.com



Are single measures of wellbeing enough?

Martin Seligman 2011 *Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and wellbeing* New York: Free Press

Positive emotion: taking all things together, how happy would you say you are? **Engagement, interest**: I love learning new things Meaning, purpose: I generally feel that what I do in my life is valuable and worthwhile **Self-esteem:** In general, I feel very positive about myself **Optimism**: I'm always optimistic about my future **Resilience**: When things go wrong in my life, it generally takes me a short time to get back to normal **Positive relationships:** There are people in my life who really care about me

An integrated model for assessing well-being



People's characteristics in context



http://www.wellbeingpathways.org

The probability of reporting low satisfaction with life by age in New Zealand's main cities, 2006



Source: Quality of Life survey, 2006.

Which places? 'Cities' in New Zealand



- 1. Rodney -82k 2. North Shore – 195k 3. Waitakere – 177k 4. Auckland - 386k 5. Manukau – 306k 6. Hamilton – 122k 7. Tauranga – 97k 8. Porirua – 48k 9. Hutt -96k 10. Wellington – 171k 11. Christchurch – 332k

 - 12. Dunedin 116k

Greater Auckland

Greater Wellington

