

Canadian Life Satisfaction over Time

Chris Barrington-Leigh (University of British Columbia)

Abstract

Self-reported life satisfaction is increasingly measured in Canadian national surveys and around the world by national statistical agencies, the Gallup corporation, and other organisations. Life satisfaction questions have not, until recently, been asked in a consistent manner over time in Canada, but the accumulated set of data since at least 1986, along with recent surveys with repeated structure, now facilitate an analysis of regional changes over time. In this paper I investigate regional changes in life satisfaction over two and a half decades, including a significant increase in Quebec as compared with the rest of the country. Using the 2003 and 2008 General Social Surveys on "Social Engagement", I analyse the evolution of covariate factors, including incomes and measures of the social context, and assess the consistency of estimated relationships in order to account for regional changes in life satisfaction.