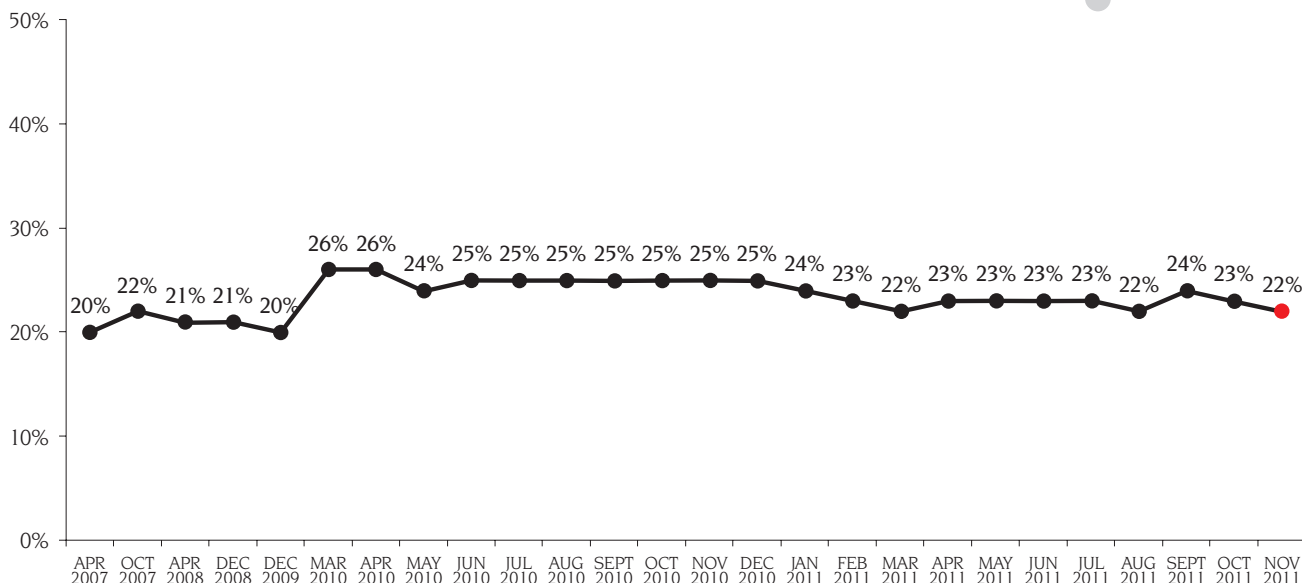


A Whole World of Happiness

by John Wright



CHANGES IN GLOBAL HAPPINESS SINCE 2007



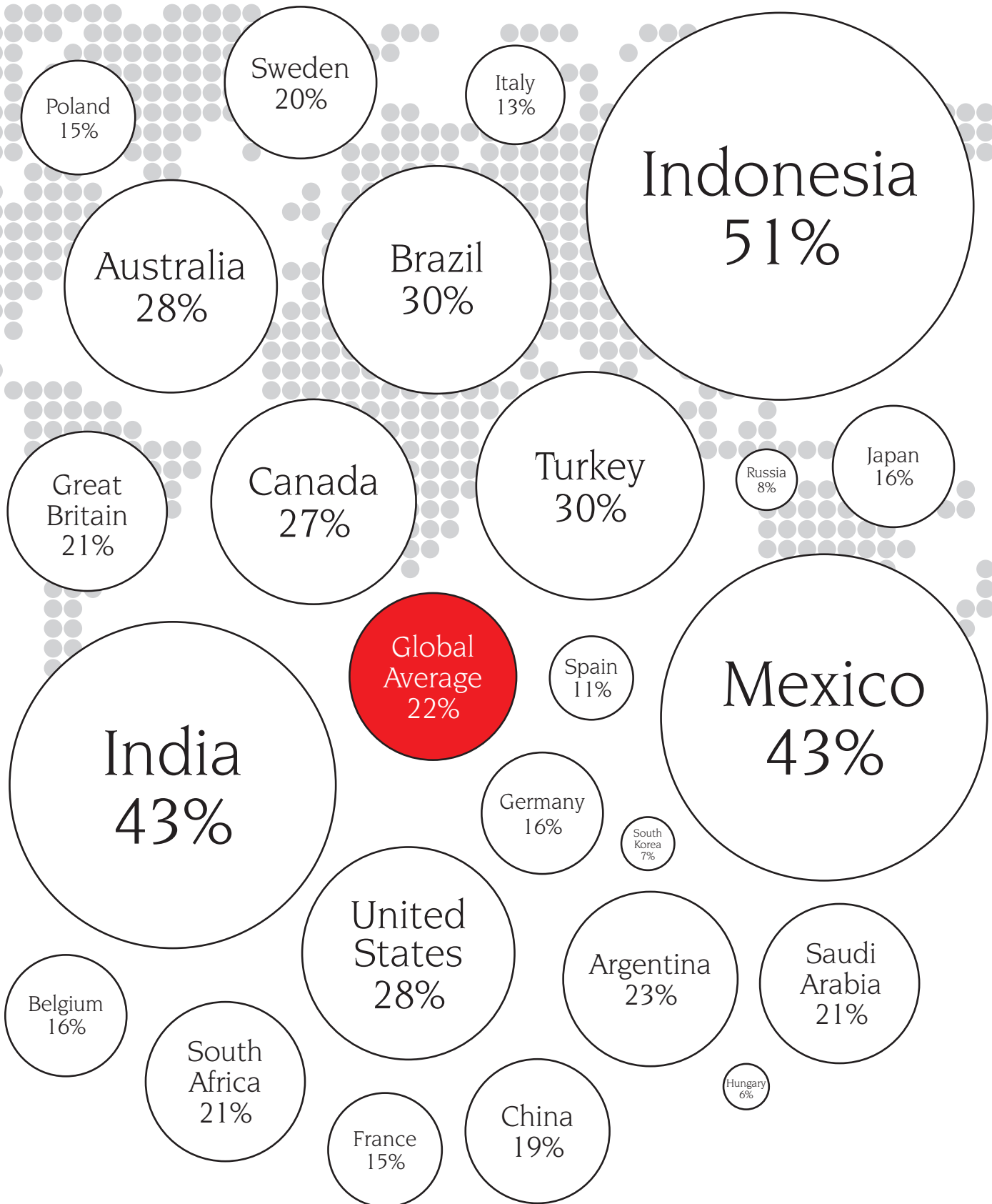
This is the first instalment of a major global study by Ipsos and it is exclusive to What Makes You Happy. Questions arising from the 475,000 responses are as fascinating as the answers.

Believe it or not, there's a web page on Wikipedia that describes "Gross National Happiness" in the same detail as its "Gross National Product" cousin just a few web clicks over. It actually makes for fascinating reading because it takes us back to its coining in 1972 (by Bhutan's then King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, don't ya know) and then brings us forward into the 22nd century in which personal happiness— which some would suggest is a hard thing to find even nowadays, among global financial debacles and collapses, wars, tsunamis, nuclear meltdowns and all other manners of turbulence, tremor and terrorism—cannot only be found, but intellectually sliced and diced

You see, it's actually quite simple.

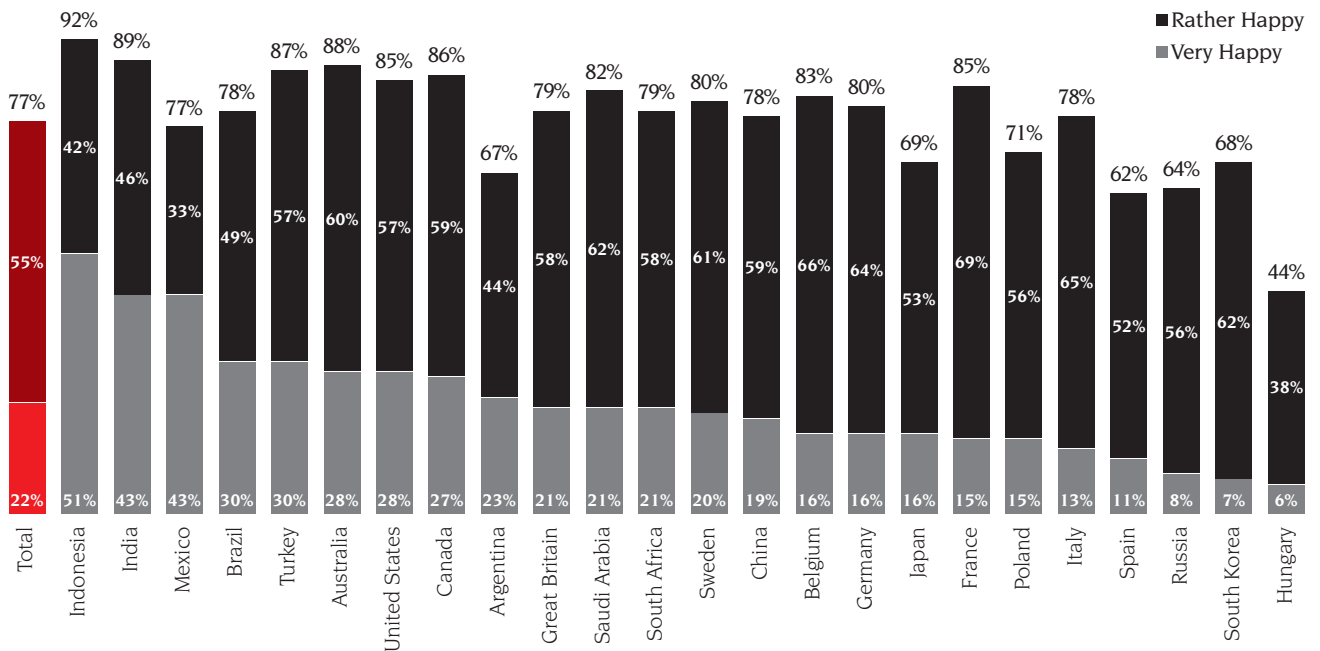
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PERCENTAGE OF POPULATIONS REPORTING TO BE VERY HAPPY IN NOVEMBER 2011





THE INTENSITY OF GLOBAL HAPPINESS



First, let's take it for granted that happiness is all relative. Hey, my happy is because I make lotsa money while your happy comes from just lounging on the beach – that type of thing. But that makes it worth measuring and trying to quantify. And especially for pollster measurers like us at Ipsos, when we see that most people in the world are happy on average (boring yawn) we're really interested in the intensity of that happy feeling, whose really got it and who doesn't and has it changed over time—for better or worse (fascinating stuff, that). In short, if it's something that can be measured, we gotta do it.

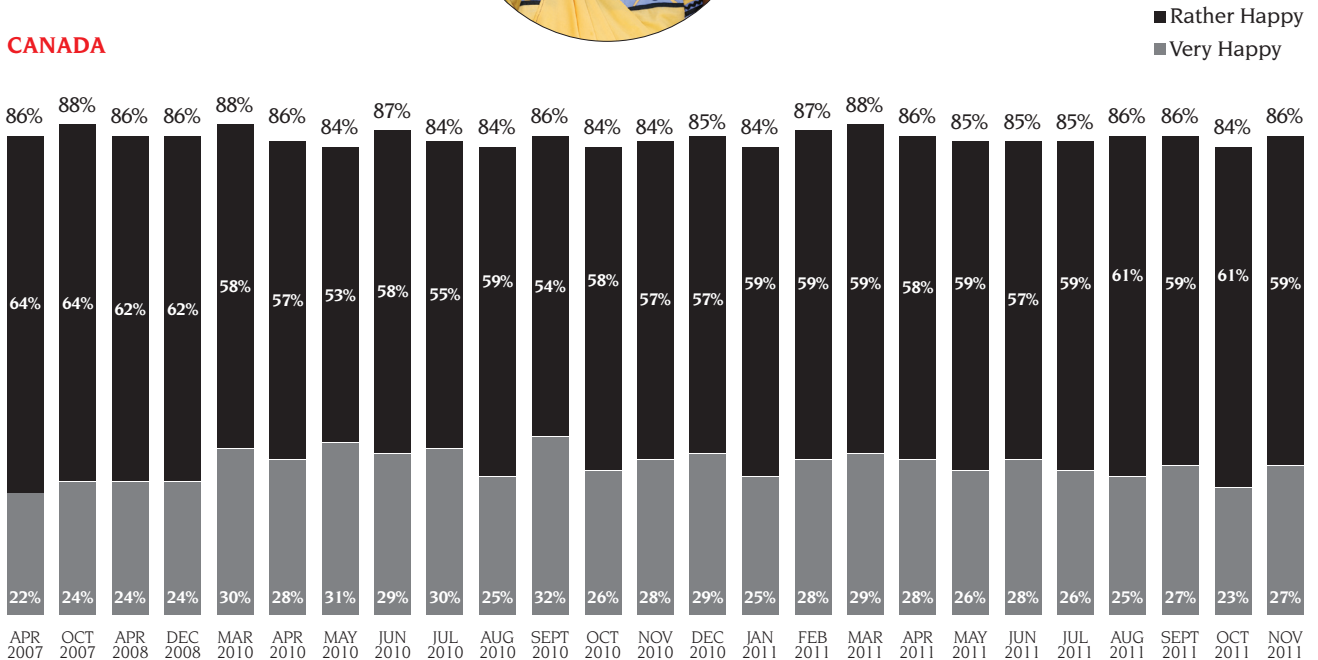
Second, we note that there are other similar surveys on happiness (also, yawn). In fact, a great big one just came out to kick off 2012 and put Canadians 23rd out of 58 on the new Global Happiness Index—they added the question on happiness to respondents for the first time with a group of other questions asked since 1977 and then cross tabulated the demographic and socio-economic findings from the other questions to see just who these happy and not so happy people were.

Then there are other world surveys that are one offs—they ask people if they're happy and then give them a choice from a list of things that might make their lives happy—and then they call this the impact of "subjective well being." Again, as I said at the outset: my happy might be based on a good that you think is not so good but I don't know your good so I'm not into your happy and you can't get into mine.

Then, notwithstanding the multitude of academics, psychologists, psychiatrists, anthropologists and numerous other emotional finders and digger outers, there are foundations, web sites and a host of institutions who now make their raison d'être out of being very serious, and sometimes frustrated, about what makes people happy. On top of that, there are now governments, politicians, bureaucrats and (eventually regulators, no doubt) who are now trying to make this happiness stuff into government policy. Just ask the British Office of National Statistics, who is now conducting surveys on the happiness of its loyal subjects presumably so the said loathed and hated



CANADA



politicians and governments can proclaim that despite all that is being done to taxpayers they could be a lot less happier.

Here's my point: this measuring the happy stuff train left the station exactly 40 years ago from Bhutan and it has created an ever-burgeoning happy analysis and policy wonk industry where every yearly snapshot released to the media has to have some sensational shift or rumble to get coverage and where the industry takes the findings and conjures up white papers, conferences and government policies as to why people feel the way they do given their sometimes incredibly different and diverse living and life conditions.

As a rule, when most people in a survey agree on something—like 70% or more—I pay a good deal of attention to "intensity" in the results. I'm interested in those who feel really strongly about something rather than the more malleable "somewhat" middle ground. After all, if everyone agrees or disagrees on something, it's not the top lines that really matter but rather the group within that top line for

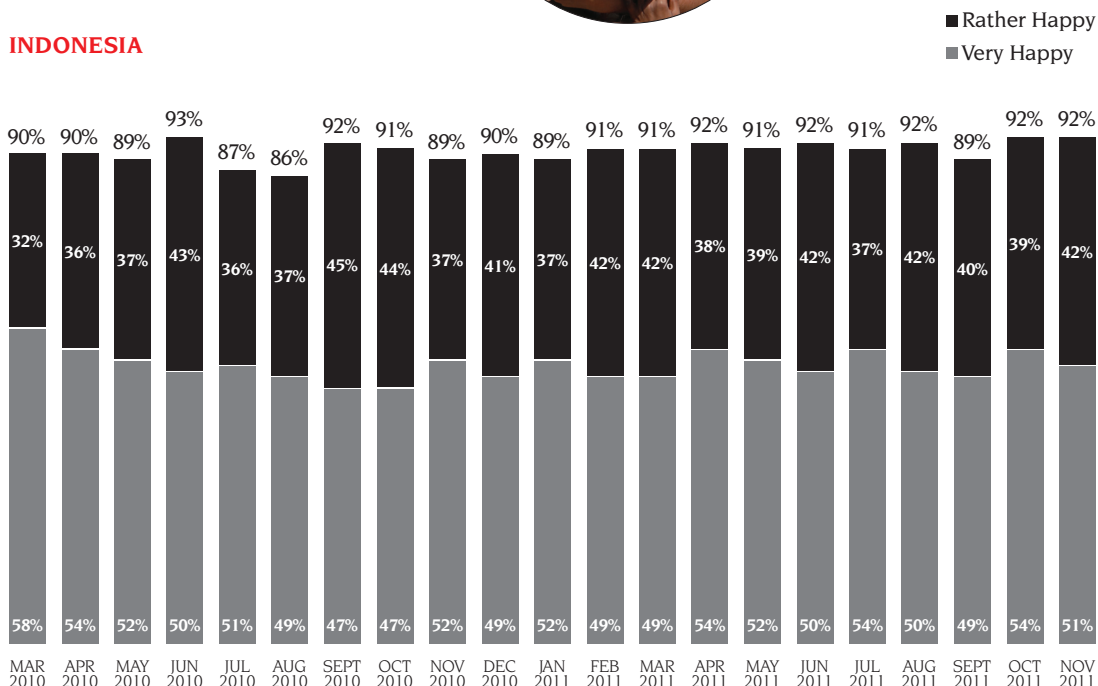
whom the sentiment matters most and who is prepared to give real voice to it if things come to push and shove.

This is especially true when it comes to happiness. Most people measured around the world are relatively happy, pretty much all the time, so it's the bottom line of happy people we need to see movement in if we are to gauge the progress of decline of real happiness. It's a little like this: we can measure the quantity of people who are happy (and that is worth measuring) but we need to focus on the quality or intensity of happiness and see how to grow it.

So at Ipsos we decided to do something radical: we took a benchmark in 2007 and 2008 in those 24 countries with a very simple question which is this: "Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, rather happy, not very happy or not happy at all." Then we asked it monthly—yes every month—since March 2010. So, for those counting, that's 21 consecutive happiness polling questions to this publication and 25 in total—with an astonishing aggregate sample of 475,000 respondents.



INDONESIA



And anyone in this field knows that what's of value is the longevity and consistency of the tracking—the steady drumbeat of the methodology and responses that move through the global population while individual events and things take their daily toll or give people hope and joy. This way, no single influence can shake the results of a snapshot and tilt the picture out askew.

As I said, we are not at the point at which we yet understand what makes happiness trend in one direction or another, but these measurements are a start. It's interesting in the trend lines you will see that there are no apparent large correlations between the fluctuations in the levels of happiness reported and the movements in other indicators such as the Consumer Confidence level, stock market or financial meltdowns or even significant national or international events. Frankly, you'd expect at least some correlations between economic crises, natural disasters, periods of war or peace, and so on. And it should raise some valid questions where events precede changes in happiness, and therefore, presumably have a hand in causing the changes. We'd also like to know what the "output" is in countries that characteristically

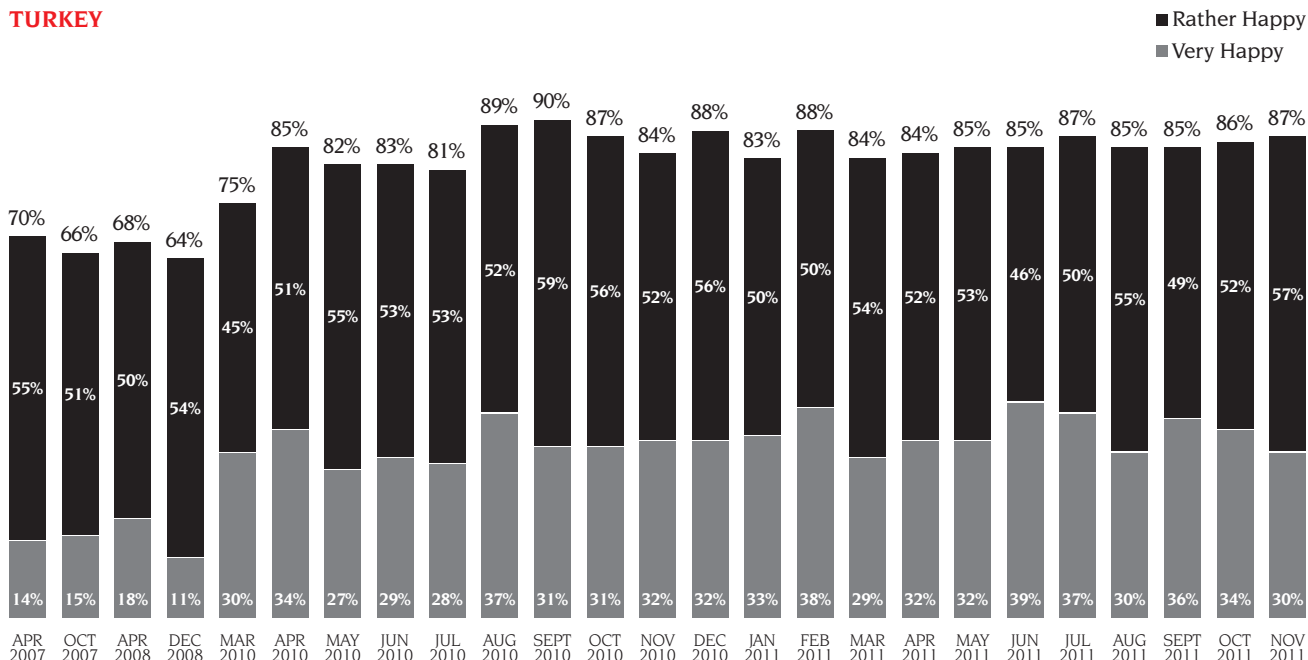
follow changes in happiness, if people are happier, aside from maybe dancing in the streets or more babies being born months later.

Here's an example from our poll: consider the case of the Turks who report that 11% of their population is very happy in December of 2008 and then, in June of last year, showed 39% of its population as being very happy. Comparable figures for Canada are 24% very happy in December 2008, and 28% very happy in June of 2011. A 250% increase in Turkey and a 16% increase in Canada? In May 2010, the Turkish government denounced Israel for landing commandos on a boat headed for Gaza. This was also at a time when the Turkish government made a joint declaration on non-nuclear fuel proliferation with Iran and Brazil. It was also the month the Grand Prix tickets went on sale in the country and the Historic Ship Regatta got underway.

The bottom line: lots of things were going on and the "happy industry" will look into it and get back to us because we want to show you something different and, a bit revolutionary. Let me explain.



TURKEY



Sure there are differences from place to place—and a few are up or down smartly—but on the whole, people on the planet share a great stability in their embrace of the joy gene.

So, what you'll see in this magazine, for the very first time, is the pulse of happiness. And you'll actually be astonished at how little the intensity and overall numbers change among countries and people. Sure there are differences from place to place—and a few are up or down smartly—but on the whole, people on the planet share a great stability in their embrace of the joy gene.

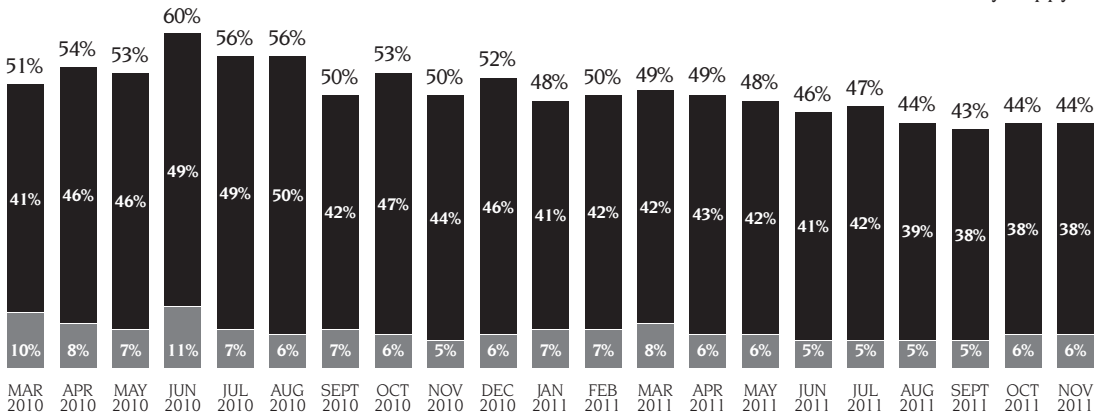
And over the next few issues, you are in for a real treat.

Remember how the happiness industry has made a science out of trying to figure out what makes folks in the world happy? Well, we could have done the same thing too. Every time we have asked the happiness question, we've also asked a set of standard questions—yup, every time—on everything ranging from economic and personal satisfaction to purchase intentions and optimism, from job anxiety to the stock market and retiring. And on and on, along with all those other demographic and station in life questions. Then we could have rolled up all of those results into a hunk of numbers, moulded it into something and said at the very end: based on everything we think might make people happy, well, er, here it is. >



HUNGARY

■ Rather Happy
■ Very Happy



But we didn't do that. Not even close.

Instead, we did something I think you will agree is revolutionary, given all the happy industry pretzel twisting that has been going on: we just asked people what the things are in their lives that cause them, or could cause them, to be most happy.

Imagine that! We asked them. And they told us.

And over the next editions of these cool and happy magazine editions, you'll read some things that the happy industry might be unhappy to see: real people telling you what really makes them happy without an ounce of clay added or even a puff of smoke with a mirror.

Unadulterated happiness. And now in your trembling hands. Who knew coming from Canada?

Don't get me wrong. All those other folks out there trying to find the Higgs boson elementary particle of the joy gene should keep at it. As they say in the Ottawa Valley, "If it makes ya happy, fill your boots".

For us here at Ipsos and for the editor and publisher, going straight to the folks and having them tell us their joy secrets couldn't make us happier.

So, is the world a happier place than it was in 2007? Despite all "troubles" as the Irish would say, the answer is "yes" —in fact it's up three points. And are there some country populations much happier than they were? You betcha, and read on. Enjoy.

More of this study is posted on the News and Polls section of the Ipsos website at www.ipsos.ca/en/news-polls

John Wright is the Senior Vice President of Ipsos, a global market research company and Managing Director of the Public Opinion Polling Division. John is a frequent speaker and author on the subject of trends and public opinion research, and is one of Canada's most influential pollsters.

% CHANGE IN HAPPINESS INTENSITY BY COUNTRY SINCE 2007

GLOBAL CHANGE: +3

Turkey +16
Mexico +10
Australia +7
Japan +6
Canada +5
Germany +5
India +5
Argentina +4
Italy +4

China No change
Sweden No change

France -1
Poland -1
Saudi Arabia -1
South Korea -1
United States -1
Belgium -2
Great Britain -3
Hungary -4
Spain -4
South Africa -5
Russia -6
Indonesia -7
Brazil -9