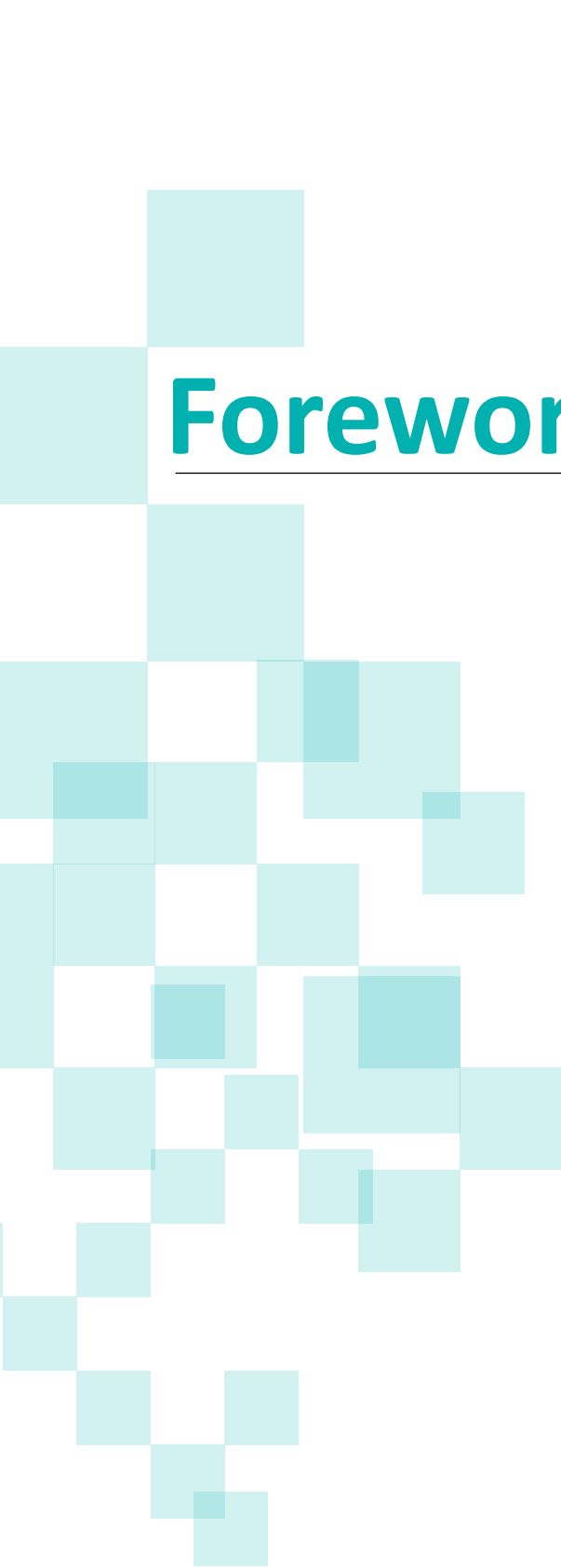


One world, many places

CITIZENS' VIEWS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT
AND LOCAL AREAS ACROSS THE WORLD



Foreword

Amid all the focus on national and international news, particularly talk of the global economic meltdown, it is easy to forget that it is often people's local area that has most impact on their day-to-day quality of life.

The Ipsos Social Research Institute specialises in providing a better understanding of this vital area of social policy across the world. This includes research to identify local priorities, develop key communications messages, involve citizens more directly in decisions and track perceptions over time to evaluate the impact of policies and demonstrate value for money.

Our research and expertise goes further than simply exploring basic perceptions. We cover broader issues that shape the delivery of local public services and the underlying relationship between government and citizens. Indeed, a key difference in our analysis is the careful consideration of a number of background factors that influence public perceptions, such as affluence, diversity and other population characteristics; as a public service, who you serve is often as important as what you do.

This short paper, based on data from Ipsos' Global @dvisor survey¹, provides a snapshot of the relationship between attitudes towards municipal government and key social outcomes across the world. We look at how satisfied people are

1 An online survey of 23,673 members of the public across 23 countries and five continents: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Great Britain, United States, Turkey. Approximate sample size in each country is c. 1,000, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. Fieldwork was conducted between November 2009 and January 2010.

with their local area and their municipal government, what drives this satisfaction and what local services can do about it.

Of course, the findings discussed here are necessarily broad. Global @dvisor collects data at the national level, and therefore does not take account of local or regional variation. We know from our detailed work in individual countries that satisfaction levels vary hugely between areas and really understanding local circumstances is vital. However, we still think this international analysis provides useful context for our local work – it paints a picture of differing national concerns and priorities that local areas can be compared with.

And finally, a quick note on the sample. The Global @dvisor survey is conducted online and, in more developed countries we can be confident that our sample provides a good picture of the population. However, in some developing countries, where a minority of the population has access to the internet, the sample should be seen as representing a more affluent and connected segment of citizens. In our private sector work we analyse these groups as “brand influencers”, and we believe their value for studies on perception of public services is similar. We hope this paper provides a different, global perspective, to help you understand these very local issues.

Bobby Duffy

Director, Ipsos Social Research Institute

Executive Summary

Introduction

Municipal research is a key step towards understanding citizens' attitudes to their local area and, ultimately, improving their quality of life.

As we often find, satisfaction with local area is high, but local and municipal governments do not get much credit for contributing to this.

This report from the Ipsos Social Research Institute sets out some factors that influence citizens' quality of life and what local and municipal governments can do to improve it.

Who's happiest?

- Citizens in the Netherlands, Canada and Australia are the happiest with their local areas, while people in Hungary and Russia are particularly likely to be dissatisfied.
- People are less satisfied with their municipal government than they are with their local areas (as we might expect), but there is a clear relationship between the two measures: if local government wants to be highly rated by its citizens, they should play close attention to what makes people happy about their areas.

So what does influence quality of life?

- First of all, it is important to understand that quality of life is, to some extent, affected by contextual factors out of the control of municipal government – the more developed a country, the more satisfied residents tend to be.
- Despite a focus on empowering people, there is no clear link between feelings of influence over local decisions and satisfaction with local area. A very high proportion of citizens in Latin American countries feel they can influence decisions, for example, yet they have low levels of satisfaction.
- Understanding the local context is key in explaining municipal research. So, in Latin America feelings of influence may be high because there are established processes for involving citizens in decision-making, but satisfaction may be lower because of a high level of perceived corruption in those countries.
- Perceptions of community cohesion are important. Citizens in countries where people from different backgrounds are perceived to get on well together tend to be more satisfied with their local area – particularly in more developed countries.

But there remains much that local and municipal government can do...

- One simple thing local and municipal government can do to improve quality of life is to ask citizens what matters to them.
- Some priorities are consistent across the world: job prospects, clean streets, the level of crime and public transport are all important.
- But, priorities also differ from place to place and understanding regional variation is vital. Some concerns are specific to individual countries. In Britain activities for teenagers are the number one issue. In Brazil it is health services that citizens are most concerned about, while in China it is pollution.
- Ultimately, it is important for local and municipal authorities to understand what they can control and what they can't, and then focus on the most important factors they can affect. Ipsos has built a flexible model showing that overall service quality, value for money and corruption, 'liveability' services (clean, safe and strong communities) and, crucially, communications are all important in forming perceptions of local government. By asking citizens what they want, delivering it and keeping citizens informed, municipal authorities can both improve citizens' quality of life and raise perceptions of their own performance.

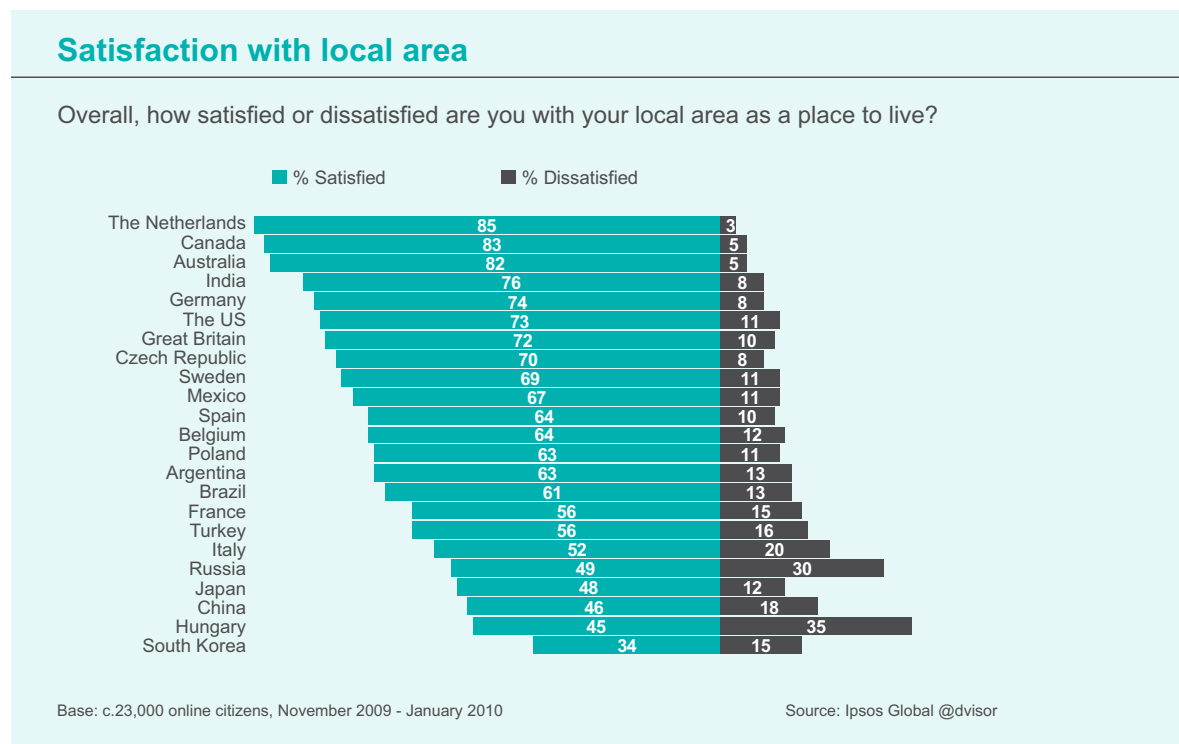
Satisfaction with local areas and local government are closely related...

We have found in previous research² that residents from a quartet of countries – Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden – are consistently among the most positive about their lot in life. They tend to be the most satisfied with the way their country is run and have the highest level of personal happiness. It is, of course, no coincidence that they also have the highest level of GDP per head of the population among the Global @dvisor countries.

This pattern is continued when considering local public services. As the following chart shows, more than four in five residents in the Netherlands, Canada and Australia are satisfied with their local area (although here Swedes are only in the top half).

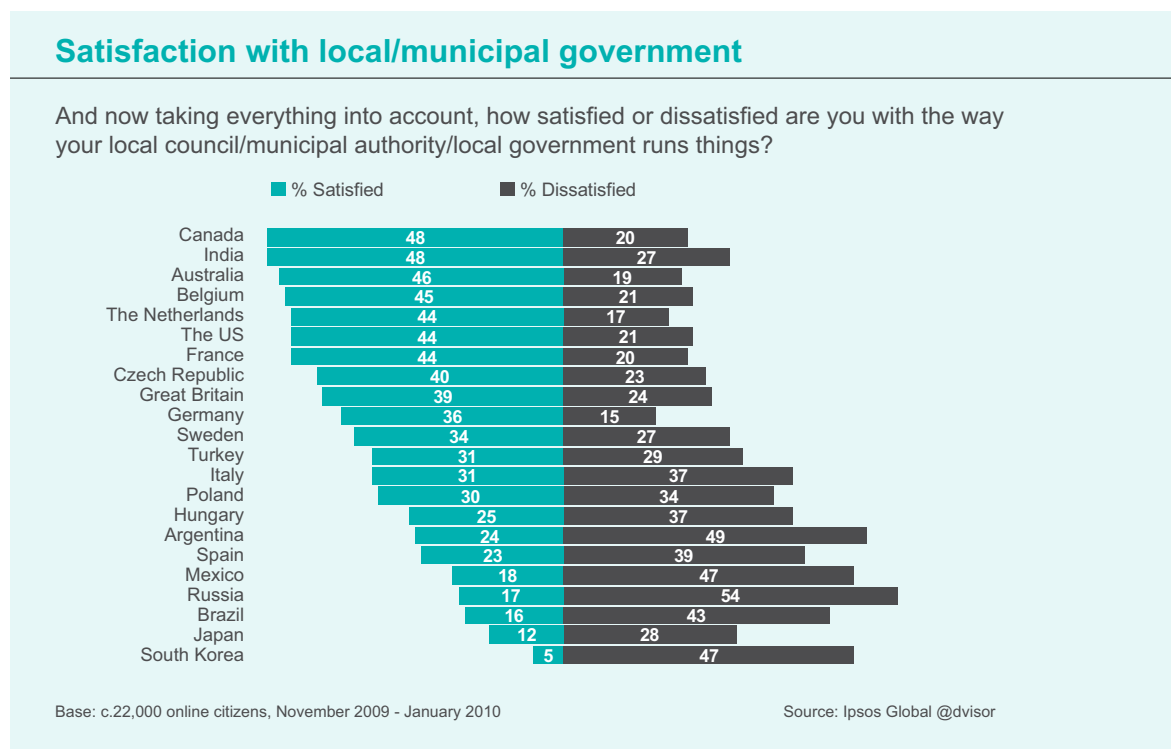
Overall, residents in Western Europe and Latin American countries tend to be most satisfied with their local area as a place to live, while those in the Asia Pacific region are the least (although as we will see, this tends to be because they are more neutral rather than actively dissatisfied).

However, looking at the results on a continental basis hides some big differences by country (and, as we mentioned in the foreword, we would expect to find big differences within countries too). There is a particular spread within Europe, where satisfaction ranges from 85% in the Netherlands to 45% in Hungary, as shown below.



2 *World Public Opinion: The Gathering Storm*, Ipsos: March 2009
<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/publication.aspx?oltemId=1279>

In Great Britain, Ipsos Social Research Institute research shows that local government often does not get the credit for local quality of life³: while satisfaction with the local area is high and rising, satisfaction with local government is falling. To a certain extent, this also appears to be true globally: satisfaction with people's local or municipal government is much lower than satisfaction with the area in which they live, as shown below.

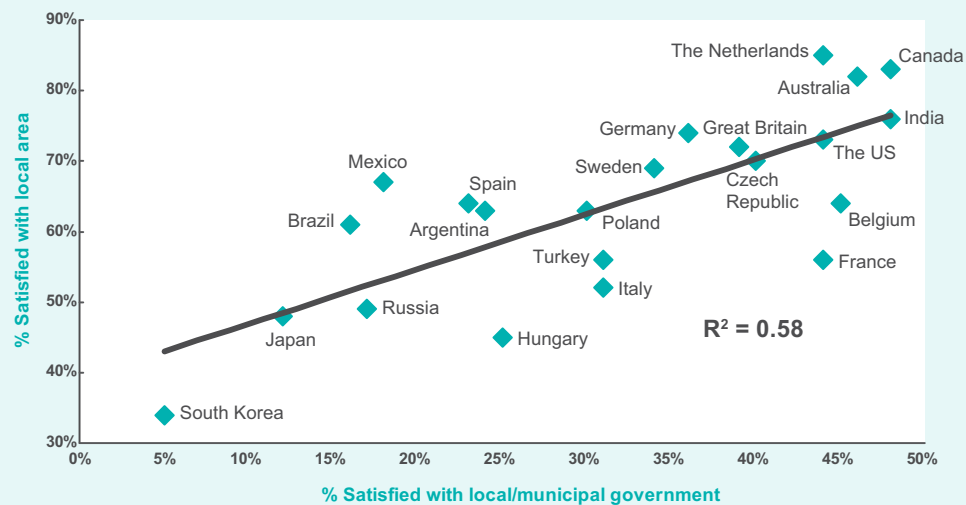


However, although local or municipal government is perhaps not getting all the credit it deserves for shaping local areas, it is clear that happiness with the area and views of municipal government are closely related. This is demonstrated in the next chart: countries with high satisfaction with their area tend to also have higher satisfaction with their municipal government. There are some areas further from the trend line, such as France, where citizens are more satisfied with their municipal government than we might expect from their level of satisfaction with their area – but overall the relationship is clear.

Establishing cause and effect from these types of simple patterns is not possible, as either one could be influencing the other, and both can be affected by other factors (as we will see). However, the point remains that there is a close inter-relationship, and if local government is interested in how their citizens view them, they should be focused on what makes people happy with their local area.

3 Bobby Duffy and Debbie Lee Chan, *People, Perceptions and Place*, Ipsos MORI: 2009
<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/publication.aspx?oItemId=1270>

Satisfaction with local area and local/municipal government is linked



Base: c.22,000 online citizens, November 2009 - January 2010

Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor

...but happiness in local areas is affected by factors beyond local governments' control

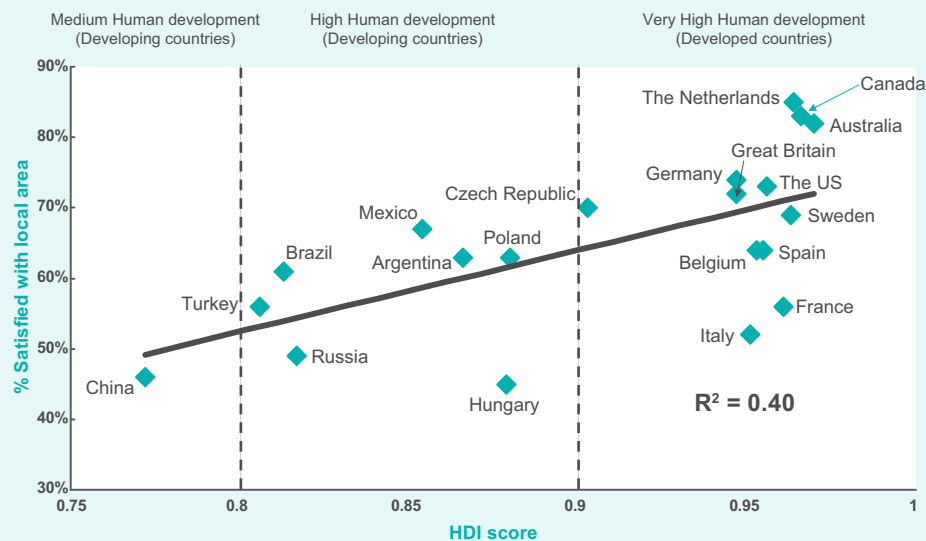
Perceptions of quality of life are related to contextual factors that are not always in the direct or easy control of municipal government and local services. When we compare citizen attitudes across countries or localities and try to explain the differences we see, it is therefore vital to take these background characteristics into account.

There are only a few sources of consistent international data available to do this, but to illustrate the relationship we have used one widely cited measure - the Human Development Index (HDI). This is a composite statistic compiled by the United Nations that includes measures of life expectancy, education and GDP.⁴

And as the following chart shows, there is a fairly strong relationship between satisfaction with area and levels of development. More developed countries – those classified by the UN as having 'very high human development' – tend to be more satisfied with their local area. Some countries – France, Italy and Hungary – are rather less satisfied with their local area than we might expect from their HDI score. On the other hand, countries like Canada, the Netherlands and Australia are even happier than we would expect from their high HDI score. But overall the relationship between the two factors is strong.

⁴ United Nations Development Programme 'Human Development Report 2009. Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development' http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Complete.pdf

Satisfaction with local area is higher in developed countries (minus India, Japan and South Korea)



The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic used as an index to rank countries by level of "human development" and separate developed (high development), developing (middle development), and underdeveloped (low development) countries. The statistic is composed from statistics for Life Expectancy, Education, and GDP collected at the national level.

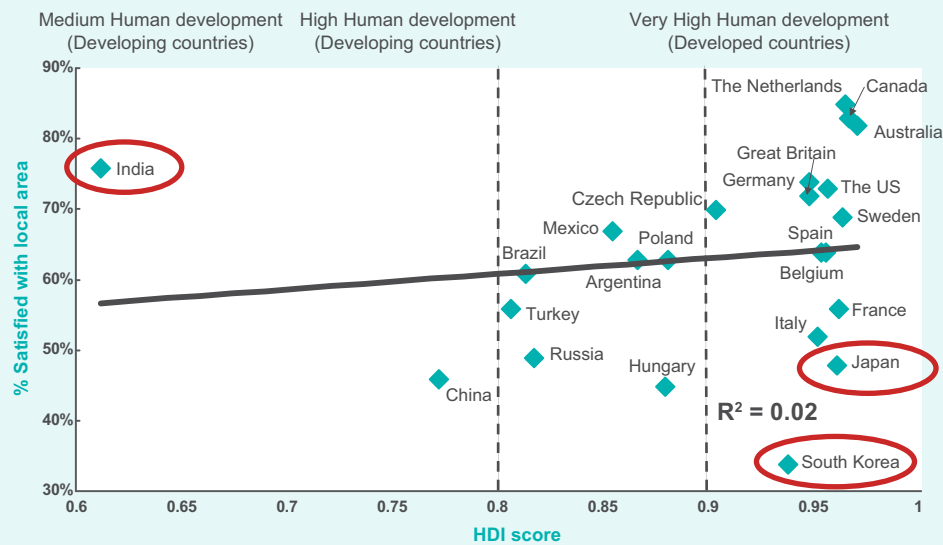
Base: c.19,000 online citizens

Source: "Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development".
(United Nations, 2009)

However, there are some even clearer exceptions to this rule that are included in the second version of the chart overleaf. India, for example, has a very low HDI score, but the proportion of its online population satisfied with their local area is comparable to that of developed countries such as Great Britain, Germany and the United States. The explanation for this is straightforward – the composition of the Indian online population is significantly more affluent than the rest of the Indian population, and so it should be no surprise their views are more akin to those seen in more developed countries.

Japan and South Korea, meanwhile, have high HDI scores yet the proportion of residents satisfied with their area is lower than in Western countries with similar HDI scores. This is likely to be explained by a greater tendency in these countries for residents to be neutral when expressing an opinion on their local area, rather than higher levels of dissatisfaction. Indeed, although the proportion of those saying they are satisfied with their local area is lower than in other developed countries, the levels of dissatisfaction are broadly similar.

Satisfaction with local area against Human Development Index



The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic used as an index to rank countries by level of "human development" and separate developed (high development), developing (middle development), and underdeveloped (low development) countries. The statistic is composed from statistics for Life Expectancy, Education, and GDP collected at the national level.

Base: c.22,000 online citizens, November 2009 - January 2010

Source: "Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development". (United Nations, 2009)

Clearly, it will be difficult for local or municipal government to have a significant impact on many of the measures included in the HDI, at least in the short term. We therefore need to interpret satisfaction levels carefully to take account of their context, and should not unfairly expect all municipal authorities to be able to achieve the same satisfaction ratings, when they are all working in very different circumstances.

This is seen even more clearly in our local work in individual countries, where satisfaction with areas and municipal government are very closely related to local characteristics. For example, in England we have shown that we can explain the majority of variation in satisfaction with local government and local areas from knowing only simple background factors like levels of deprivation or poverty, ethnic diversity, urbanity, population churn and region⁵. This is vital to bear in mind when comparing satisfaction levels between areas or setting targets in individual areas.

5 Bobby Duffy and Debbie Lee Chan, *People, Perceptions and Place*, Ipsos MORI: 2009 <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/publication.aspx?oItemId=1270>

So what else has an impact on perceptions?

The fact that these types of perception measures are related to background characteristics does not mean municipal government is powerless to affect the views of their citizens – our work also points to some clear factors they should focus on. Here we look at three aspects that are often held to be important: feelings of influence, corruption, and community cohesion.

In each case we find that while they may have some impact on satisfaction ratings, none of them tell the whole story, and the role they play varies in different countries across the world. For example, influence and community cohesion seem to play a much stronger role in explaining ratings of local government in the developed world than they do in Latin America. This again emphasises the importance of understanding local characteristics when interpreting these findings, but it also suggests that we can start to build a model to explain what drives perceptions of local areas, so long as it is flexible enough to take account of different national and local circumstances.

A. Does giving citizens greater influence increase satisfaction?

One factor that is often claimed to be important in increasing satisfaction with areas and local government is giving people a sense of empowerment over local decisions. As well as being seen as a good thing in its own right, the rationale for giving people more direct control is that this will result in better decisions and more sustainable outcomes.

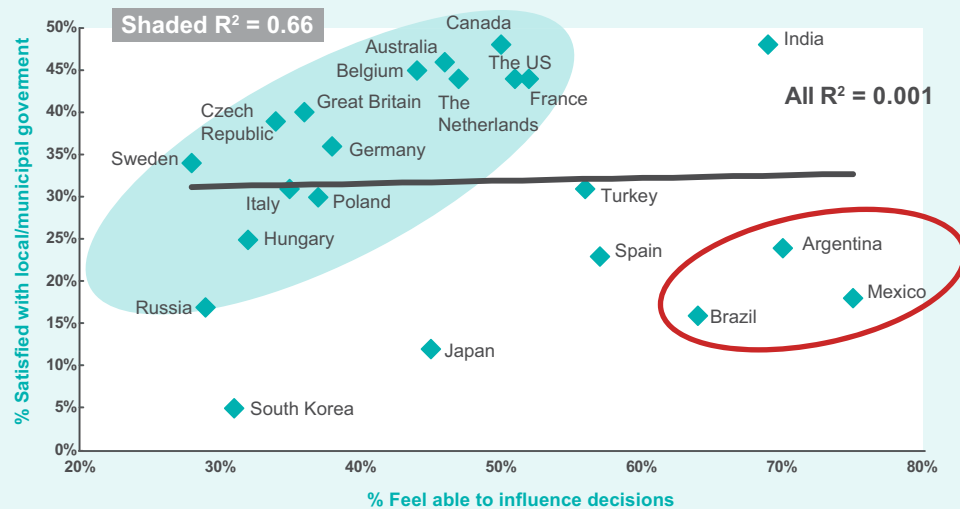
However, as the chart overleaf demonstrates, there is actually little correlation between feeling able to influence decisions and satisfaction with municipal government when we look across all countries.

Of course we need to be careful in how we interpret a single, relatively simple question on such a complex subject as feelings of influence, as it might mean different things in different countries. But the pattern does seem believable. In Latin America we might expect higher proportions of residents to feel they can influence decisions as they have better established processes for involving ordinary people in decision-making, with probably the most famous example being Participatory Budgeting. This was developed and first implemented by the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre in 1989, as part of a number of innovative reforms designed to overcome severe inequality in living standards amongst city residents⁶. The same or similar models have since been adopted in hundreds of Latin American cities.

However, while this involvement of citizens has clearly had benefits for feelings of empowerment, it has not necessarily led to high levels of satisfaction. Of course we cannot test whether satisfaction would have been even lower in Latin America if these more active engagement approaches had not been used. And, looking at the chart overleaf again, if we only included North America and (most) European countries the relationship between influence and satisfaction with municipal government would be much more convincing. But overall the case for a direct link between the two measures remains to be proven.

6 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/14657_Particip-Budg-Brazil-web.pdf

Varied relationship between satisfaction with municipal government and perceptions of influence



Base: c.22,000 online citizens, November 2009 - January 2010

Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor

B. Are perceptions of corruption related to satisfaction?

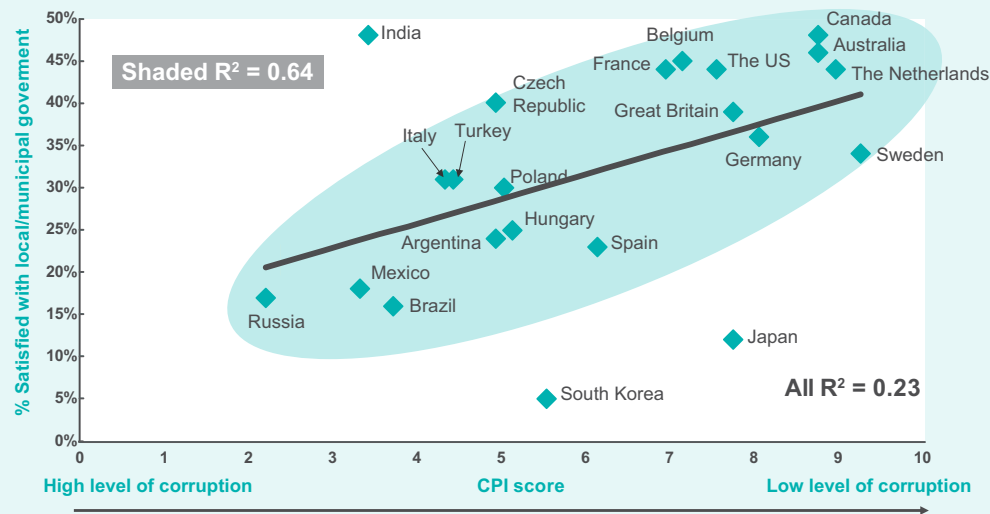
The importance of other reputation factors may also provide some of the explanation for the lower levels of satisfaction with municipal government we have found in Latin America. It may be that residents in this region have a generally higher level of distrust of any form of state involvement in their lives (which in fact was one of the factors behind the push for greater participation mentioned above). In particular, it is possible that high profile instances of corruption or governmental failure may have reduced confidence in political and official institutions more generally. Indeed, this pattern of lower enthusiasm for democratic state structures in Latin America has been noted recently in analysis of 2005 *Latinobarometro* survey data.⁷

This seems to be confirmed by the chart overleaf, which compares satisfaction with municipal government with scores from the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) – a composite index compiled by Transparency International⁸. The lower the CPI score, the higher the level of perceived corruption. Although CPI is a fairly subjective measure, it does demonstrate that the less corrupt a place is seen to be, the more satisfied residents tend to be. As we have seen, satisfaction is high in Canada, Australia and the Netherlands, and these countries have very low levels of corruption, while satisfaction is much lower in Latin America, where there is a higher level of perceived corruption, according to Transparency International. Again, as with the HDI, this relationship is stronger if we remove India, South Korea and Japan.

7 'Barrios and Bodyguards: Security and Democracy in Latin America', paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference, The Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL, April 02 2009, Dorothy Lund.

8 For more information see: http://transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009

Satisfaction with municipal government rises as perceptions of corruption fall



Base: c.22,000 online citizens,
November 2009 - January 2010

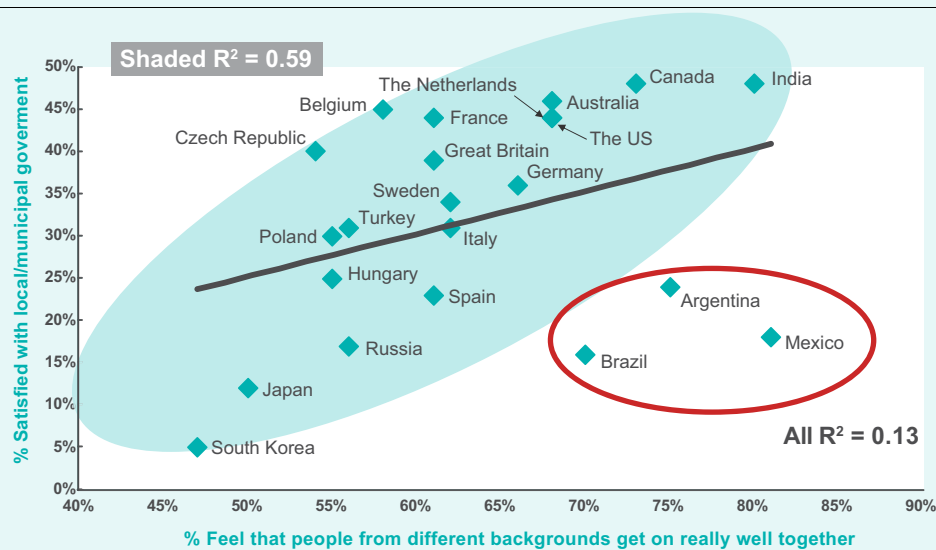
Source: Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2009
http://transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table

C. Does community cohesion have an impact?

Community cohesion – a sense that people from different backgrounds get on well together – also seems important to perceptions of local areas and municipal government, at least in some countries. Broadly speaking, residents in countries where there is a high level of perceived community cohesion are more likely to be satisfied with their local area.

The Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) again stand out. They have relatively high levels of community cohesion, but much lower ratings of municipal government. If these three countries are excluded, the relationship between community cohesion and satisfaction with local government is much higher.

Some link between satisfaction with municipal government and community cohesion



Base: c.22,000 online citizens, November 2009 - January 2010

Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor

As in any international research of course, it is also important to be sensitive to differing interpretations of the question. For example, in areas (especially in Europe) where there has been significant recent immigration, 'people from different backgrounds' is likely to be mainly taken to mean people from different ethnic or racial groups, while in other areas people may be thinking of different backgrounds by social class or income.

What are global citizens' priorities for their local quality of life?

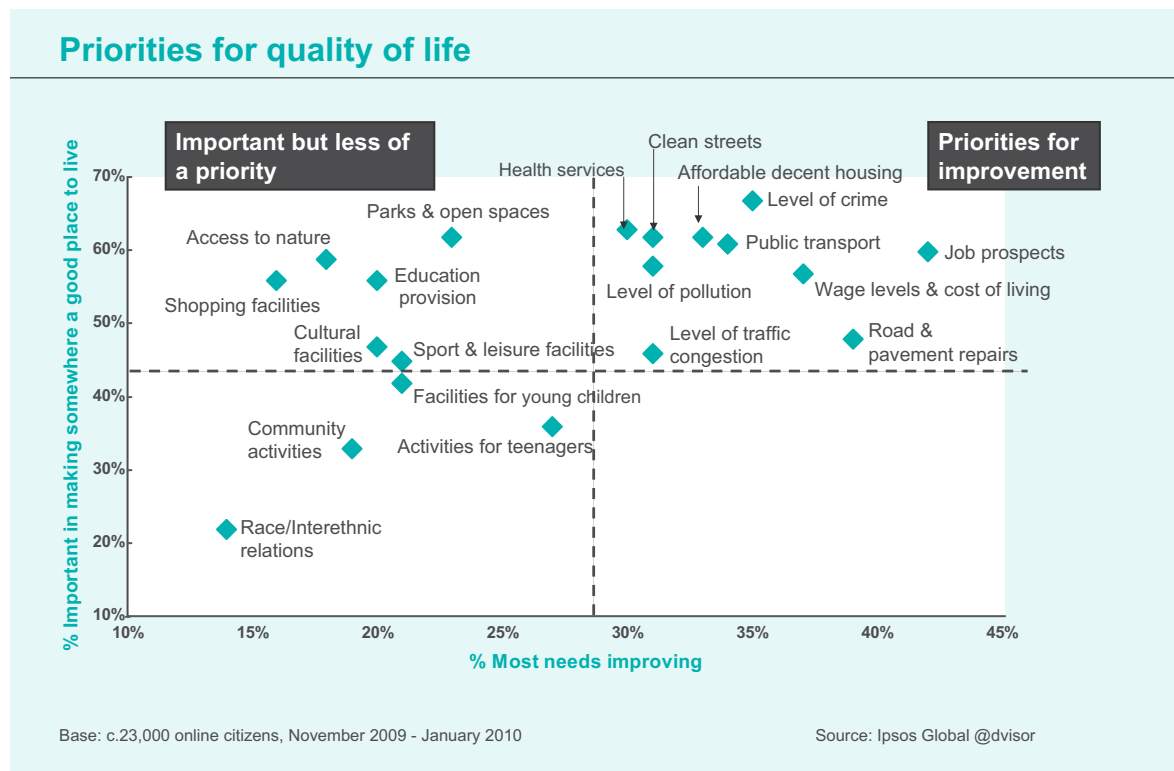
So it seems that demography, development factors, empowerment and community cohesion may all impact on ratings of quality of life to some degree, but none of them explain the whole story. There remains a lot that local and municipal government, together with public services, can do. This is all made clear when we simply ask people about their priorities for the local area.

Core aspects of public services such as crime reduction, affordable housing, health care, clean streets and public transport are all very important in making somewhere a good place to live, and should provide a clear agenda for any municipal authority looking to improve quality of life.

However, it is also useful to look at these priorities compared with what people would most like to see improved, as seen in the next chart. The top right quadrant shows issues that are very important and most need improving – i.e. the most immediate priorities. Job prospects are the top issue for improving globally, with wage levels and cost of living next. This is not surprising, given the current economic crisis.

On more local issues, as we often find, the level of crime is both very important to quality of life and generally seen as needing improvement. This again may be expected – but the chart shows that some more apparently mundane or minor issues like road and pavement repair and clean streets also need to be taken seriously.

The top left quadrant, meanwhile, shows those issues that people think are important determinants of quality of life, but are less of a priority to improve. These include environmental factors such as parks and open spaces and access to nature, and forms of entertainment such as sport and leisure, shopping and cultural facilities.



However, priorities do differ from place to place, and this is where more targeted research (either nationally or, ideally, at the local level) can make a real difference to our understanding of citizens' needs.

The table overleaf looks at the top priorities by country. While there is a lot of commonality in the main issues, there are also some regional and national differences. For example, as well as being the top issue globally, job prospects also tend to be the top issue in Europe and North America. In Latin America the level of crime is the most pressing issue, while in the Asia-Pacific region it is the level of pollution that citizens are most concerned about.

Top priorities for improving locally			
Country	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
All	Job prospects (42%)	Road and pavement repairs (39%)	Wage levels and cost of living (37%)
Europe			
Belgium	Road and pavement repairs (44%)	Public transport (36%)	Job prospects (34%)
The Czech Republic	Job prospects (48%)	Road and pavement repairs (42%)	Wage levels and cost of living (41%)
France	Job prospects (55%)	Wage levels and cost of living (43%)	Public transport (37%)
Germany	Job prospects (28%)	Activities for teenagers (27%)	Road and pavement repairs (24%)
Great Britain	Activities for teenagers (39%)	Road and pavement repairs (37%)	Job prospects (37%)
Hungary	Job prospects (73%)	Wage levels and cost of living (67%)	Road and pavement repairs (66%)
Italy	Public transport (50%)	Job prospects (49%)	Road and pavement repairs (44%)
The Netherlands	Level of crime (25%)	Affordable housing (23%)	Road and pavement repairs (20%)
Poland	Road and pavement repairs (59%)	Wage levels and cost of living (54%)	Job prospects (53%)
Russia	Road and pavement repairs (76%)	Affordable housing (69%)	Wage levels and cost of living (68%)
Spain	Affordable housing (51%)	Job prospects (50%)	Wage levels and cost of living (42%)
Sweden	Job prospects (49%)	Level of crime (39%)	Affordable housing (38%)
Turkey	Level of crime (41%)	Level of pollution (41%)	Traffic congestion (41%)
North America			
Canada	Road and pavement repairs (42%)	Job prospects (38%)	Affordable housing (32%)
The United States	Job prospects (49%)	Wage levels and cost of living (42%)	Road and pavement repairs (36%)
Latin America			
Argentina	Level of crime (68%)	Road and pavement repairs (65%)	Clean streets (62%)
Brazil	Health services (62%)	Job prospects (56%)	Level of crime (56%)
Mexico	Level of crime (60%)	Road and pavement repairs (55%)	Clean streets (55%)
Asia-Pacific			
Australia	Level of crime (36%)	Road and pavement repairs (35%)	Job prospects (33%)
China	Level of pollution (58%)	Traffic congestion (48%)	Wage levels and cost of living (40%)
India	Road and pavement repairs (54%)	Level of pollution (52%)	Clean streets (52%)
Japan	Level of crime (21%)	Public transport (17%)	Job prospects (17%)
South Korea	Public transport (33%)	Affordable housing (33%)	Level of pollution (32%)
Base: c.23,000 online citizens, November 2009 - January 2010 Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor			

We also find that some issues are specific to certain countries. In Great Britain the issue of most concern to residents is activities for teenagers – and Britain is the only country to have this issue as its number one concern (the only other country where it appears in the top three is Germany). In some senses, this finding illustrates the benefits of making these broader international comparisons: we find that calls for more activities for teenagers are common to so many of our local surveys for individual cities and municipal areas in Britain that it seems “normal” – but in fact these comparisons suggest that it is a peculiarly British issue.

While the level of crime is, on average, the most important issue in the Latin American countries covered by Global @dvisor, in Brazil citizens are most concerned by health services – something that is not in the top three for either Argentina or Mexico.

As mentioned earlier, despite their high level of development, a low proportion of residents in Japan and South Korea say they are satisfied with their local area or their local authority, with high numbers remaining neutral. This reluctance to express a strong opinion extends to suggesting areas for improvement. On none of the major priorities for quality of life globally do more than one in five Japanese residents or one in three South Korean residents say they need improving - and on each measure the proportion citing it as needing improving is lower than the global average.

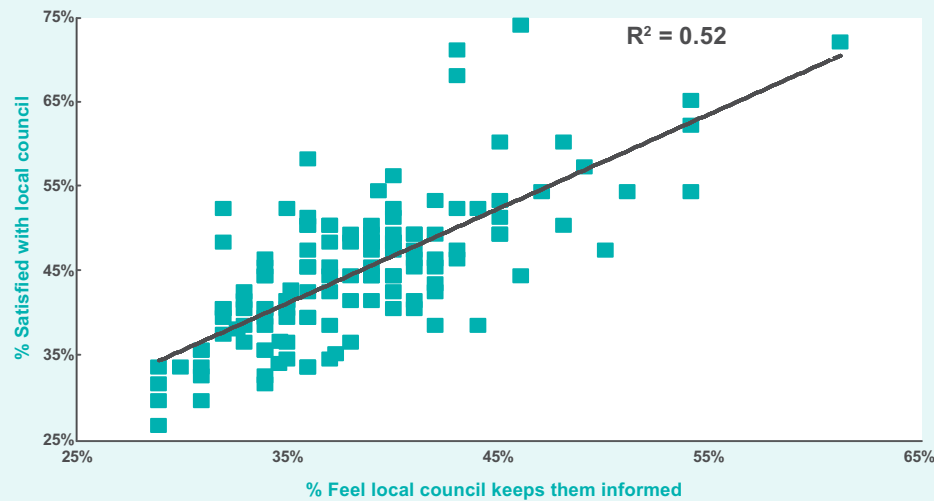
However, residents in Japan and South Korea still have their priorities for improving their quality of life. In Japan it is the level of crime that residents are most concerned about, while in South Korea it is public transport, affordable housing and the level of pollution that people most want to be improved.

The importance of communications

Residents' perceptions of their municipal government will also be affected by aspects of its image beyond the direct provision of services and dealing with local issues. In dozens of studies across the world our research points to the central importance of communications in determining how people rate central and local government. This includes both what the government and public services say themselves in direct communications with citizens and service users, and what the media says about them.

The impact of good (and bad) communications can be seen in many different public services. The example overleaf is taken from Britain, and demonstrates the link between information provision and satisfaction with municipal government (where each point is an individual municipal authority). Public services that are better at keeping people informed are better rated by local citizens.

A strong link between information provision and satisfaction with local council in Britain



Base: All valid responses, 131 local authorities, Place Survey 2008 (England)

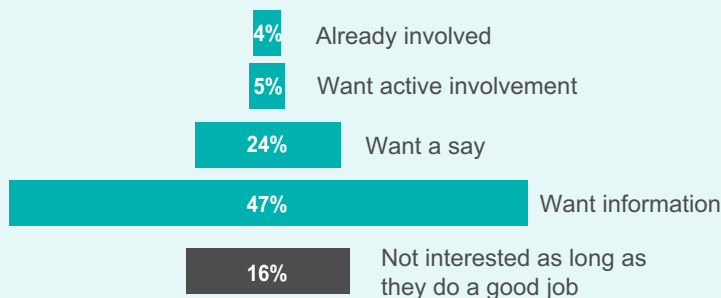
Source: Ipsos MORI

The fact that communications seem to be more related to satisfaction with local government than feelings of influence should not be that surprising, when we consider citizens' priorities. From a number of studies we have conducted, it is clear that many residents do not actually want to get very involved in taking local decisions, and even where active engagement is very well developed (such as in some Latin American cities), it only reaches a minority of the population.

On the other hand, good communications can have an impact on much larger numbers of people. To illustrate this, we have developed a "Christmas Tree" model, shown below using British data. Significant minorities do want to be more actively engaged, but most people would prefer to just receive information about what services are doing. This does not imply that concentrating on capacity building and encouraging involvement among those who want to be engaged will be a waste of time – just that improving communications for the wider majority should also be a priority.

The majority just want information, but a minority will get more involved

Whether people want to be informed about/involved in local services



Base: 1,009 adults in Great Britain, 18+. August 2009

Source: Ipsos MORI

Towards a model of municipal government reputation

So what have we discovered? That while most people are broadly happy with their local area, municipal authorities do not necessarily get the credit. That improving communications should be a first step towards addressing this, even before encouraging greater involvement and engagement. That feelings of community cohesion do seem to be closely linked to people's quality of life, especially in the developed world. That overall perceptions of service quality and performance can make a difference as well as direct experience of services. And, that all of this has to be interpreted with an understanding of the most important national (and local) background factors.

But what does this mean for local and municipal governments attempting to improve local citizens' quality of life and perceptions of their own performance? We believe that while some factors influencing people's perceptions cannot be controlled by municipal authorities, there remains much they can do, and a vital first step is to understand exactly what does make a difference.

One way to do this is to construct a model that outlines exactly which factors are most important in affecting perceptions, and then to understand which of these municipal government and local public services have some control over. This will help policy makers understand not only where they should concentrate their work to have most impact, but also where their efforts will be wasted.

For example, in Britain we have built up a model of the factors driving local government reputation, based on hundreds of surveys and qualitative studies. This draws together both drivers that service leaders can control – for example, the perceived quality of services and value for money that a local authority offers are the two greatest drivers of overall satisfaction – and those which they can't, such as the deprivation or diversity of the area they serve.



Of course, the key message from our local work is that each area is different, and we therefore need to tailor our focus to local circumstances and government roles. For example, other non-service factors that might colour residents' perceptions of their municipal government could include people's political views. Are authorities led by the party they support or not? And in cities or regions that have a powerful mayor, what impact does the mayor's image have on attitudes towards the civic authority? The model above does however provide a useful framework that we can adapt to these different circumstances.

But overall the message from our research is simple – that local and municipal authorities need to ask citizens what they want, and then tell them what they are doing to achieve it. This research shows that some priorities are common across the world – job prospects, street maintenance, the level of crime, the cost of living, public transport and core public services such as health really do matter. However, national level differences – for example, the concern about activities for teenagers in Britain, health services in Brazil and pollution in China – show how priorities differ between countries. But it is also clear that there will be even more variation in emphasis at the local and city level. Our work in the Ipsos Social Research Institute brings together an appreciation of these overarching patterns with a direct understanding of the specific local context.

For more information on the issues raised in this report or the Ipsos Social Research Institute's municipal research, please get in touch with the authors of this report, or any of the contacts listed below.

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