

This bulletin is a quick inventory of recent social research information. Its purpose is to promptly disseminate the most current external and internal research relevant to social policy.

Global MetroMonitor Volatility, Growth, and Recovery: Volatility, Growth, and Recovery by Emilia Istrate, Alan Berube, and Carey Anne Nadeau, the Brookings Institution, January 2012.

An analysis of per capita GDP (income) and employment changes in the 2010 to 2011 period for 200 of the world's largest metropolitan economies, which account for nearly one-half (48 percent) of global output but contain only 14 percent of world population and employment reveals that:

- Ninety (90) percent of the fastest-growing metropolitan economies among the 200 largest worldwide were located outside North America and Western Europe
- In nearly every global region, metro areas generated disproportionate shares of national increases in output and employment
- Employment growth accelerated in about three-fourths of metro areas from the 2009 to 2010 period, but income growth slowed in two-thirds, particularly in the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions
- Less than one-half of the 200 metro areas surpassed their pre-recession levels of employment and/or income by 2011
- Metro areas specializing in commodities and business and financial services within their countries exhibited the strongest performance.

For link to the report:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2012/0118_global_metro_monitor/0118_global_metro_monitor.pdf

Canadian Trends in Cancer Prevalence, by Larry F. Ellison and Kathryn Wilkins, Statistics Canada, January 18, 2012.

This study presents the first Canadian cancer prevalence trend estimates to be reported. Trends in prevalence for an extensive list of cancers by time since diagnosis, sex and age group signal changes in the extent of disease in the Canadian population. Rising cancer prevalence proportions are due to increases in incidence, which partly result from the aging of the population, and to improvements in survival.

- For all cancers combined, the five-year prevalence rate at the beginning of 2008 was 1,490 cases for every 100,000 people
- One reason for the higher prevalence rates is the greying of Canada's population: many cancers tend to develop as people reach older age
- Study found the increases in prevalence were most pronounced for liver and thyroid cancers, while the rates declined for cancers of the larynx and cervix

- The rate for prostate cancer, the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada, rose 3 per cent a year over the 11-year study period
- Colorectal cancer's average increase in prevalence was 2.3 per cent per year between 1997 and 2008

For link to the study:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2012001/article/11616-eng.pdf>

Quality of Personal Networks: Does Living Alone Make a Difference? By Mireille Vézina, Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada, November 2011.

Family, friends and acquaintances play a fundamental role in our lives. Research has shown that social relationships or “social capital” are beneficial, and that having good networks of close friends and relatives is associated with better physical and mental health. Some studies have even suggested that long-term mortality may be reduced.

- Networks of acquaintances can play a vital role in finding a job or moving off social assistance and in increasing employment earnings
- Personal networks can reduce poverty or social exclusion, increase neighbourhood safety, provide care and assistance to sick relatives, boost participation in the labour market, and foster the social integration of immigrants
- Personal networks can be especially important to people who live alone, since they often have to bear the cost of life's uncertainties on their own
- Since people living alone are much more likely to have lower incomes than those living in a couple, support from their personal networks is often critical.

For link to the article:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2011002/article/11591-eng.pdf>

Personal Networks and the Economic Adjustment of Immigrants by Derrick Thomas, Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada, November 2011.

For two decades, Canada has maintained comparatively high levels of immigration and almost one in four adults in this country is now foreign-born. Labour market needs are a key consideration in determining how many immigrants are admitted to Canada each year. More immigrants are now selected for their training and job skills and they come from a wider variety of source countries than in the past.

- Despite being more highly educated recent immigrants are having more difficulty adjusting to the Canadian economy than did their predecessors
- It is taking newcomers longer to achieve employment and income levels similar to those of the Canadian-born

- Researchers have looked at aspects of human capital such as language ability, literacy, education and work experience, but these factors do not fully account for the fact that many recent immigrants do not earn incomes commensurate with those of other Canadians
- Other problem is with the recognition of foreign credentials, intangible characteristics like individual drive and ambition, and institutional or sectoral change in the Canadian economy.

For link to the article:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2011002/article/11592-eng.pdf>

Recent Evolution of Immigrant-Language Transmission in Canada by René Houle, Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada, December 2011.

Immigrant-language transmission is one element of the settlement process for immigrant communities in Canada. Like religion, language of origin can be a marker of ethnicity, and can provide socioeconomic advantages like access to certain goods and services offered by or for the immigrant community. Immigrant children’s academic success is associated with maintaining one’s language of origin and ethnic loyalties.

- Immigrant groups of European origin have had more difficulty preserving their language over time
- Recent immigrant groups, such as those who speak Spanish, Chinese or Punjabi, are generally more likely to maintain theirs
- The most important factor is the extent to which children are exposed to those languages within the family
- In the
- 2006 Census immigrant languages were passed on to 55% of Canadian born children in this age group—an increase of 14 percentage points from 1981.

For link to the article:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/11-008-x2011002-eng.pdf>

The Eight Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: Ratings for Metropolitan Markets by Robert Brueggemann, Performance Urban Planning, 2012.

This survey covers 325 metropolitan markets around the world that include Australia, Canada, China (Hong Kong), Ireland, United Kingdom and the United States. It measures the markets using something called the “median multiple,” which is the median house price divided by gross annual median household income. Vancouver is the world’s second-least affordable major city to buy a house, according to the survey.

- Canadian banks worry about the state of the market and economists suggest prices could drop by as much as 10 per cent in cities such as Vancouver and Toronto
- Canada was the third most affordable market, behind the United States and Ireland

- Toronto sits in 18th place (\$406,400/\$73,600), sandwiched between Boston and Los Angeles with a rating of 5.5
- All of the 128 affordable markets (having a Median Multiple of 3.0 or below) were in Ireland, Canada and the United States
- There were no affordable markets in Australia, New Zealand or the United Kingdom.

For link to the report:

<http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>

Housing Subsidies and Homelessness: A Simple Idea: By Brendan O’Flaherty, Department of Economics, Columbia University, The School of Public Policy, January 2012.

This report offers a straightforward method for fighting homelessness that contrasts many current programs already in place to deal with this important social issue. Reducing homelessness is an indisputable social good, and housing subsidies offer one way to do so. However, subsidies come in many different varieties and are intricately bound up with economic and social policies.

- Homelessness can be reduced only if people who would otherwise be homeless somehow find or maintain a conventional place to live
- Housing subsidies are one way that housing can be made cheaper for some people who might otherwise be homeless
- Many interventions have tried to raise the resources that homeless people have by improving their psychiatric functioning, increasing their work skills or qualifying them for government benefits
- Other strategies for making housing cheaper operate by changing how housing markets operate, or increase resources by changing how labour markets operate.

For link to the paper:

<http://www.policyschool.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/research/oflaherty-housing-subsidy.pdf>

Quantity and Quality of Jobs Falling in Tandem: By Benjamin Tal, Canadian Employment Quality Index, CIBC, January 25, 2012.

Canada's job market is in bad shape and may be the worst it has been in decades, except for the periods when the economy was in recession. Not only has jobs growth stalled over the past half year — and declined in real terms over the past three months — but the quality of new jobs is generally poor.

- The Canadian economy created more jobs last year, but the quality of those jobs deteriorated as lower-paying jobs and self-employment grew faster than higher-paying jobs
- Lower-paying full-time jobs grew by 1.6 per cent last year, particularly in hotel, foodservice and personal care
- Self-employment, which generally pays 10 to 15 per cent less than regular jobs, rose 2 per cent
- Meanwhile, high-paying full-time jobs grew just 0.4 per cent, with notable softness in public administration, manufacturing, mining and the computer industry

- By province, employment quality in Ontario declined the most, while Alberta made the greatest gains.

For link to the report:

http://research.cibcwm.com/economic_public/download/eqi-cda-20120125.pdf

Emerging Stronger: Transformative Agenda for Ontario, by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto, January 26, 2012.

The global economic downturn has accelerated the need to identify a new economic path for the 21st century. Many Ontarians are concerned about the future of their businesses, families, and livelihoods. Canada and Ontario have weathered the recent economic downturn better than most, and as a result stand on more solid ground than many of the competitors.

Some of the priorities identified:

- Fostering a culture of innovation and smart risk-taking in order to become a productivity leader
- Building a 21st century workforce through workplace training, utilizing newcomers' skills, and apprenticeship reform
- Restoring fiscal balance by improving the way government works
- Taking advantage of new opportunities in the global economy by enhancing linkages with the US, leveraging newcomers' networks, and trading more with the BIC and other emerging economies
- Identifying, championing, and strategically investing in our competitive advantages in the global economy.

For link to the report:

<http://occ.on.ca/assets/Emerging-Stronger.pdf>

Focus Canada 2011 - Highlights Report on Crime and Justice: by Environics, January 26, 2012.

New poll results show the public is abandoning a stubborn belief that crime is on the rise, bringing public opinion into alignment with a 20-year trend of declining crime rates. The long-standing disconnect between public fears and reality has confounded criminologists and fuelled federal get-tough policies. The results shed important light on a raging debate over Ottawa's get-tough-on-crime policies, which include the use of mandatory minimum prison sentences and a massive prison expansion program.

Some of the findings:

- The Focus Canada poll shows the highest ever national public opinion that crime is declining (46% agree) since Environics first started asking about perceptions of crime. It should be remembered that 46% of poll respondents also believed that crime is not decreasing, which is significantly down from previous poll responses
- The Focus Canada poll found the highest ever national public opinion (63%) supporting investment in crime prevention vs law enforcement

- Despite these responses, the Focus Canada poll also found approximately 60% support for the federal government's law enforcement/mandatory sentencing/increased incarceration-focused legislation, Bill C-10, currently being considered by the Canadian legislature.

For link to the poll:

<http://www.environics.ca/uploads/File/Environics-Institute-Focus-Canada-2011---Hiighlights-Report-on-Crime-and-Justice---Jan-26-2012.pdf>

Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care: Better patient care through better value from our health care dollars by Ontario government's new action plan, January 30, 2012.

Ontario is launching an Action Plan to transform the health care system and deal with the demographic challenges as well as the province's deficit. The Action Plan for Health Care in Ontario will ensure families get the best health care where and when they need it, while ensuring all Ontarians get better value for their health dollars.

The Plan will:

- Make the necessary and responsible decisions regarding funding priorities and ensure funding is shifted to where we get the best value
- Provide new measures to prevent illness in the first place and to help Ontarians stay healthy
- Give Ontarians better access to family doctors and nurse practitioners - through after hours care and same-day and next-day appointments - that will save Ontarians time, keep them healthier, and help them avoid trips to hospital
- Support Ontario's seniors who want to live independently at home, in their communities, by providing more home care supports.

For link to the Plan:

http://www.ocsa.on.ca/userfiles/file/MOH_ActionPlan_BOOKLET_ENG_FINAL_PGS_5.pdf

Social Policy, Analysis and Research Information Resources:

Wellbeing Toronto: www.toronto.ca/wellbeing

Neighbourhood Profiles: <http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/neighbourhoods.htm>