

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.

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**Measuring Outcomes in Practice: Fostering an Enabling Environment for Measurement in Canada** by Lisa Lalande and Joanne Cave, Mowat Research, October 2017.

There is growing recognition that the social and economic challenges affecting individuals and communities are highly interconnected. This report argues that to address the root causes of these challenges in a systematic way, the charitable sector must shift from measuring outputs to measuring outcomes. Measuring to outcomes supports this shift by changing the frame: focusing on how a program or service contributes to a better quality of life for Canadians, rather than what the program or service delivers.

- Outcomes measurement is an important tool in a broader shift towards evidence-based policymaking
- Building evidence, especially on programs tackling complex social issues, takes time, energy and commitment from both governments and charitable and non-profit organizations
- Governments and funders have an essential role to play in building an enabling environment for measurement that includes selecting outcomes carefully for outcomes-based funding arrangements

For link to the report:

[https://mowatcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/publications/157\\_EE\\_measuring\\_outcomes\\_in\\_practice.pdf](https://mowatcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/publications/157_EE_measuring_outcomes_in_practice.pdf)

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**Does Canadian Federalism Amplify Policy Disagreements? Values, Regions and Policy Preferences** by Éric Montpetit, Erick Lachapelle and Simon Kiss, Institute of Research on Public Policy, September 2017.

Federations have to strike a delicate balance between unity and regional diversity. In the Canadian case, the highly decentralized nature of the federal system enables the provinces and regions to exercise considerable autonomy. In this context, policy disagreements have often been interpreted through the prism of regionalism. Some observers of Canadian politics have expressed concerns that this amplifies disagreement and could undermine the legitimacy of national policies and institutions.

- Canadians are first and foremost divided over values, not regions. Disagreements on policy issues exist because of Canadians' differing values, not because of territorial fracture lines
- Individuals who share the same values, regardless of where they live, have similar policy preferences
- To be successful, policy should be designed, framed and promoted to appeal primarily to values, not regions

For link to the paper: <http://irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/study-no65.pdf>

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**Missing Family Dynamics:** Canadian Discussions about Family Fracturing, Poverty, and Inequality by Mark Milke, Cardus, September 2017.

The debate over income inequality and poverty in Canada is a hot topic that has long had the attention of leaders at the highest levels. Even so, the inequality debate in Canada among politicians, policy analysts, the academic community, and the media has largely ignored the role of a monumental social change over the last four decades: increased family fracturing.

Some of the recommendations:

- Recognize that family fracturing is itself a cause of poverty and can affect inequality statistics
- the family form with the highest income level (two parents with children) diminished from 71.6 percent of families in 1976 to just 49.8 percent of families in 2014
- Encourage individuals, religious institutions, non-profits, and other non-government institutions to support families and help those who struggle with poverty or inequality because of family fracturing

For link to the report:

<https://www.cardus.ca/research/family/publications/5137/missing-family-dynamics/>

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**Benefits and Best Practices of Safe City Innovation** by Darrell M. West and Dan Bernstein, The Brookings Institution, October 2017.

According to UNICEF, 70 percent of people around the world will live in cities by the year 2050. This trend toward urbanization will necessitate new operating models and pose challenges in terms of how to protect residents. Public safety, of course, is an important aspect of contemporary urban life. In a world that is chaotic, dangerous, and volatile, it is hard for there to be economic prosperity and social cohesion without some degree of safety.

- Cities face a variety of implementation challenges, such as poor funding, infrastructure difficulties, public resistance, a lack of technical expertise, and privacy and security concerns
- Technology innovation in the public sector includes the level of financial investment, crime rates, safety considerations, openness to technology solutions, and the strength of the digital infrastructure in particular countries
- Government policy is especially important because officials make investments that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector operations

For link to the paper:

[https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/safe-city-innovation\\_final.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/safe-city-innovation_final.pdf)

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**Immigration and Ethno-Cultural Diversity: Key results from the 2016 Census**, Statistics Canada, October 2017.

The share of immigrants in Canada has reached its highest level in almost a century, according to 2016 census figures released by Statistics Canada. The census figures show 21.9 per cent of Canadians report being or having been an immigrant or permanent resident, nearly matching the high of 22.3 per cent in 1921 and up from 19.8 per cent in 2006.

- In 2016, Canada had 1,212,075 new immigrants who had permanently settled in Canada from 2011 to 2016 which represented 3.5% of Canada's total population in 2016
- The majority (60.3%) of these new immigrants were admitted under the economic category, 26.8% were admitted under the family class to join family already in the country, and 11.6% were admitted to Canada as refugees
- For the first time, Africa ranks second, ahead of Europe, as a source continent of recent immigrants to Canada, with a share of 13.4% in 2016
- Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal are still the place of residence of over half of all immigrants and recent immigrants to Canada

For link to the results:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.pdf>

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**What does an Actual Housing Allowance Look Like?** Manitoba's Rent Assist Program by Josh Brandon, Jesse Hajer and Michael Mendelson, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, October 2017.

In 2015, Manitoba pioneered a brand-new type of housing program in Canada, called 'Rent Assist.' Rent Assist is unique in making housing affordable for almost every resident of the province – not, as in all other provinces and territories, only for a limited number of renters in subsidized units, nor, as in several other provinces, paying a few extra dollars to offset a small portion of their rent. Manitoba's Rent Assist housing allowance is designed so that renters in the private market pay no more than 28 percent of their income on housing, if they are renting a modestly-priced apartment.

- Rent Assist is set as a percentage of the current median market rent, so the amount a recipient gets depends solely on income, family size and residence in eligible rental accommodation
- Rent Assist rates are set in legislation and increase automatically with median market rent, so if rents go up benefits increase, preventing benefits from being eroded by inflation
- Rent Assist is available to everyone whether on or off social assistance; whether a family with children or an unattached individual; and without restrictions based on disability, age or employability

For link to the report:

[http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1117ENG.pdf?utm\\_source=Announcement&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Announcement1355](http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1117ENG.pdf?utm_source=Announcement&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Announcement1355)

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Social Policy, Analysis and Research Information Resources:

Wellbeing Toronto: [www.toronto.ca/wellbeing](http://www.toronto.ca/wellbeing)

Demographics & other resources: [www.toronto.ca/demographics](http://www.toronto.ca/demographics)