

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.

Assessing Active Labour-Market Programs: How Effective Is Ontario Works? By Jason Adams, Ken Chow, and David Rosé, C.D. Howe Institute, October 2018.

The Ontario Works social assistance program assigns beneficiaries to employment assistance activities intended to prepare them for finding and maintaining employment. Ontario Works provides income support to a substantial swath of the population: approximately 449,000 beneficiaries (over 3.3 percent of the population) received some form of assistance from Ontario Works in 2016.

Some of the key findings:

- The average recipient is better off being assigned only to a training program rather than also being assigned to a structured job search
- A combination of workshops and training with a structured job search actually increases the length of time on benefits by 4.6 months
- When used on their own, direct job placements add 16.6 months to the time spent on social assistance but reduce the rate at which people return to social assistance

For link to the report:

https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/e-brief_285_web_0.pdf

Homicide in Canada, 2017 by Sara Beattie, Jean-Denis David and Joel Roy, Statistics Canada, November 2018.

Homicide in Canada hit its highest rate in almost a decade in 2017. Much of the increase was the result of more firearm-related and gang-related incidents. The firearm-related homicide rate increased 18% from 2016 to 0.72 per 100,000 population—the highest rate since 1992. While homicide continues to be a relatively rare occurrence in Canada, representing less than 0.2% of all police-reported violent Criminal Code offences in 2017, homicide rates are considered benchmarks for levels of violent activity both in Canada and internationally.

- Police reported 660 homicide victims in Canada in 2017, 48 more than in 2016
- The homicide rate rose 7% in 2017 to 1.80 victims per 100,000 population—the highest level since 2009
- Serious violent offences, including attempted murder (+4%), sexual assault (+13%), robbery (+2%) and aggravated assault (+1%), were up in 2017
- Firearm offences and the presence of firearms in violent crimes have also increased in recent years

For link to the report:

https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/181121/dq181121a-eng.pdf?st=jm7cz_4s

Faith in the Public Square? A Comprehensive Study of the Segments of Canadian Society by Angus Reid Institute, November 2018.

The appropriateness of faith in the public square is often a source of debate in Canada. A new study from the Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with Cardus, finds that when it comes to this debate, the Canadians taking each side may not be those that one may expect. One may assume this group is more likely to be made up of older and more Conservative voting Canadians, this study finds Proponents more likely to be younger, more highly educated, and largely Liberal-supporting.

Key findings:

- Three-quarters of Public Faith Proponents (73%) say that the contributions of faith-based communities to Canada are more good than bad, or good outright, while just six per cent of Public Faith Opponents hold this opinion
- Half of Public Faith Proponents (50%) strongly agree that having a religious or faith-focused upbringing helps shape good citizenship characteristics. The Uncertain are more likely to moderately agree (53%) while two-thirds of Opponents (68%) disagree with this idea
- Canadians are deeply divided about the relevance of faith communities in addressing social issues
- Seven-in-ten (68%) Canadians say that the basics of world religions should be taught in public high schools, and that government leaders should be knowledgeable about the tenets of major religions (70%)

For link to the study:

http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018.11.23_Cardus.pdf

A Work and Opportunity Agenda for Canada by Brian Lee Crowley and Sean Speer, Macdonald-Laurier Institute Publication, September 2018.

Concerns about economic dislocation, working-class anxieties, and “the future of work” have led to a renewed political focus on income redistribution and new forms of welfarism including the guaranteed annual income. The working assumption for many politicians and commentators is that present-day political populism is merely an expression of income disparities and economic insecurities, and that higher tax rates for high-income earners and larger cash transfers for everyone else will solve the problem and restore political tranquility.

- Forty percent of Canadians are concerned about losing their jobs to automation and other technological innovation
- More than one-third think they are doing worse compared to those 25 years ago and nearly 60 percent expect their circumstances will only worsen

- Policy-makers have misinterpreted economic anxieties and financial insecurities as demands for more redistribution

For link to the paper:

http://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/MLI_GAI_Labour_FinalWeb.pdf

The impact of undergraduate Degrees on Early-Career Earnings by Chris Belfield, Jack Britton, Franz Buscha, Lorraine Dearden, Matt Dickson, Laura van der Erve, Luke Sibieta, Anna Vignoles, Ian Walker and Yu Zhu, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Department for Education, UK, November 2018.

This report uses the new Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) administrative dataset to provide the latest estimates of the impact of Higher Education (HE) on individuals' early-career earnings after accounting for individuals' pre-university characteristics. This will provide vital evidence for prospective students choosing whether, where and what to study at university.

Key findings:

- At age 29 the average man who attended HE earns around 25% more than the average man (with five A*-C GCSEs) who did not. For women the gap is more than 50%
- A typical HE student has higher prior attainment and is more likely to have come from a richer family than someone who does not attend. They would therefore be expected to earn more, even had they not gone to university
- The average impact of attending HE on earnings at age 29 to be 26% for women and 6% for men. If we focus on the impact of graduating, these returns rise to 28% and 8% respectively
- 67% of men and 99% of women (and hence 85% of students) attended universities that have significantly positive returns on average by age 29

For link to the report:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759278/The_impact_of_undergraduate_degrees_on_early-career_earnings.pdf

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City of Toronto Data, Research & Maps: <https://web.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/>