

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.

Toronto Social Capital Study 2018 by Toronto Foundation, Environics Institute, and Toronto's Vital Signs, 2018.

This report presents the results of a major research study about social capital in the city of Toronto. Social capital is the term used to describe the vibrancy of social networks and the extent to which there is trust and reciprocity within a community and among individuals. It is the essential “lubricant” that makes it possible for societies to function, and for people to get along peacefully even when they have little in common.

- Overall, social trust in Toronto is by no means universal, but is reasonably strong and in most respects has held steady over time
- Significant proportions of Torontonians report at least half of their recent friend contacts are with those who are different from them
- Across generations, residents aged 65 and older have the strongest levels of social capital.
- The city's Chinese community as a whole exhibits lower levels of social capital on many dimensions

For link to this report:

<https://torontofoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TF-SocialCapitalStudy-Final-Clean-min.pdf>

Comparing Government and Private Sector Compensation in Ontario, 2018 by Milagros Palacios, David Jacques, Charles Lammam, and Steve Lafleur, Fraser Institute, 2018.

Using data on individual workers from January to December 2017, this report estimates the wage differential between the government and private sectors in Ontario. It finds that public-sector employees in Ontario—including municipal, provincial and federal government workers—received 10.6 per cent higher wages on average than comparable workers in the private sector last year, and also enjoyed more generous pensions, earlier retirement, more personal leave and greater job security.

- 81.9% of government workers in Ontario are covered by a registered pension plan, compared to 25% of private-sector workers
- Of those covered by a registered pension plan, 94.7% of government workers enjoyed a defined benefit pension compared to 41.5% of private sector workers
- Government workers retire earlier than their private-sector counterparts— about 1.8 years on average—and are much less likely to lose their jobs (2.5% in the private sector compared to 0.5% in the public sector)

- Full-time workers in the government sector lost more work time in 2017 for personal reasons (12.4 days on average) than their private-sector counterparts (7.6 days)

For link to the report:

<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/comparing-government-private-sector-ON-2018.pdf>

Canadian Identity 2013 by Maire Sinha, Statistics Canada, October 2015.

This report provided an overview of the collective Canadian identity, looking at three components of identity: national symbols, shared values and pride. The results reflect the diversity of Canada, with differences in perceptions across socio-demographic and economic characteristics. Immigrants were more likely to have strong beliefs in the importance of national symbols, such as the Charter, national anthem and flag. They were also more likely to believe that Canadians share a common set of beliefs, and to report a greater feeling of pride in being Canadian and in Canadian achievements.

- In 2013, Canadians were most likely to believe the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (93%) and the national flag (91%) were important to the national identity
- Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador were among the most likely to feel that national symbols were very important to the Canadian identity, while Quebecers were the least likely
- For every national symbol, immigrants were more likely than non-immigrants to believe that they were very important to the national identity

For link to the report:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015005-eng.pdf?st=VyhJvOeA>

Born to Win: Wealth Concentration in Canada since 1999 by David Macdonald, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, July 2018.

There has been plenty of concern in Canada and around the world about income inequality, in particular the growing gap between the incomes of society's highest-paid 10% or 1% and those of the bottom 90% of income earners. This report compares the net worth of Canada's 87 wealthiest resident families as compiled by Canadian Business magazine to the wealth of average families based on Statistics Canada's Survey of Financial Security over the past 17 years.

- While the average net worth of Canada's wealthiest families rose by 37% between 2012 and 2016 — from \$2.2 billion to \$3.0 billion, the net worth of middle class families increased by 16%, or \$41,000, over the same period (from \$264,000 to \$305,000)
- Canada's wealthiest 87 families now have 4,448 times more wealth than the average Canadian family, and they collectively own the same amount as the lowest-earning 12 million Canadians
- In 1999, just under half of Canada's wealthiest (45%) had passed their wealth down to at least one generation. In 2016, this number was 53%

For link to the report:

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/07/Born%20to%20Win.pdf>

Neighbourhood Financial Health Index: Cross Canada Check-up by Canadian Council on Social Development and Prosper Canada, 2018.

This report examines the financial health and vulnerability of Canadian households in different provinces and territories using a new composite index of household financial health. When it comes to looking at the financial health of Canadian households, however, we are often forced to rely on incomplete measures, like income alone, or aggregate national statistics that tell us little about the distribution of financial health and vulnerability in our neighbourhoods, communities or provinces/territories.

- The household financial vulnerability is on the rise in Canada with the net worth of Canadians overall has increased, driven by rising housing prices in key markets and investment wealth
- Many Canadians are also finding it hard to save adequately, leaving them ill-prepared to weather short-term emergencies or to secure their retirement
- While there are significant disparities in income across Canada, there are much greater disparities in wealth, highlighting the need to pay attention to all of the factors that contribute to financial health, not just income alone

For link to the report:

<http://prospercanada.org/getattachment/9429d0d4-dadd-4332-ad59-38e298b07420/Cross-Canada-check-up-Provincial-territorial-findi.aspx>

Previous issues of the SPAR Monitor can be viewed online at: <http://bit.ly/2iltgRQ>

Social Policy, Analysis and Research Information Resources:

Wellbeing Toronto: www.toronto.ca/wellbeing

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