



Policy Research  
Initiative

Projet de recherche  
sur les politiques

# PRI Update Autumn 2004

[www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca)





The PRI projects worked in high gear throughout this past summer. We started off in June with a widely distributed issue of *Horizons* (volume 7, number 1) dedicated to North American economic integration. June also saw two important policy research roundtables: an expert workshop on measuring social capital and a workshop on the emergence of cross-border economic regions. The Sustainable Development team produced two publications on freshwater issues, Poverty and Exclusion released a discussion paper on financial capability and poverty and, in August, at the annual Queen's University International Institute for Social Policy, we presented a draft discussion paper on a life-course approach to social policy analysis.

The autumn and early winter of 2004 will be an important season for the PRI, as we approach the conclusion of a number of core projects, culminating in December with a milestone conference on the lessons learned from recent social policy research. We are also beginning a new series of PRI-SSHRC policy research roundtables, as well as producing a range of publication products, including *Horizons*, volume 7, number 2, dedicated to new approaches to poverty and exclusion.

This PRI Update outlines the status of the PRI's research activities and, specifically, plans for the upcoming autumn and early winter. Information is posted on our web site <[www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca)> as it becomes available. For general enquiries, contact us by e-mail at [questions@policyresearch.gc.ca](mailto:questions@policyresearch.gc.ca) or by telephone at 613.947.7761. For specific project contacts, see the textbox at the end of this Update.

## Core Research Projects

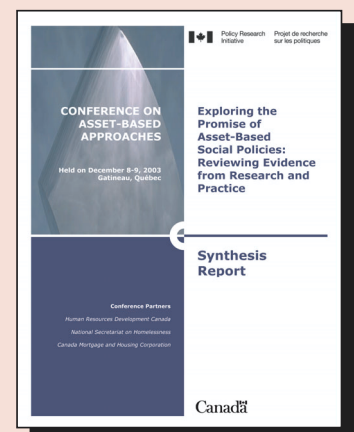
### New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion

Nationally and internationally, there is growing recognition that poverty is more than income deprivation. It is widely accepted that the most critical outcome of living in poverty is experiencing social exclusion. In conjunction with this change in perspective, there is acknowledgment that the current social realities of Canada significantly differ from the time when most of the current social policies were set in place. The goal of this PRI project is to explore likely future directions in policies addressed to poverty and exclusion in light of these changes. In particular, we are assessing the role of new policy approaches emerging worldwide, with an emphasis on their possible medium-term implications for Canadian federal policies.

#### To Date

A project diagnostic and analytic framework was presented at the August 2003 Queen's University International Institute for Social Policy. These items were further discussed at a PRI-SSHRC roundtable of senior policy officials and experts in November 2003.

In December 2003, participants at the PRI's conference on asset-based policies assessed the appropriateness and applicability





of an asset-based approach to social policy in Canada. A synthesis report from the conference is available on the PRI web site. In July 2004, the project released a discussion paper prepared by Social Enterprise

Development Innovations (SEDI) on developing financial literacy as a complementary strategy to asset building.

## Next Steps

The project is examining exclusion, from a life-course perspective, with a focus on three issues: the role of the social economy in bringing excluded individuals to the mainstream, factors associated with precarious work and the working poor, as well as housing affordability and homelessness. We have a variety of events planned for the autumn and early winter of 2004 to present findings from this work.

- PRI-SSHRC Roundtable: Policy Research Needed to Support the Social Economy (September 28, 2004)

This roundtable will explore how policy research will contribute to the efforts required to deliver and follow up on the Government's recent pronouncements endorsing the social economy as a promising means to meet policy objectives regarding the social and economic participation of Canadians.

- PRI-SSHRC Roundtable: Housing and Homeless Issues (October 20, 2004)

This workshop will explore the role of housing, both as a dimension and a determinant of exclusion, and will focus

research attention on clarifying the public role in terms of ensuring access to adequate and affordable housing and, by extension, to a quality living environment.

- PRI-SSHRC Roundtable: Working Poor and Precarious Work (November 8, 2004)  
This roundtable will assess our understanding of the working poor in relation to precarious employment, and identify current and emerging approaches for addressing working poor and precarious work issues that have been used in Canada and elsewhere.
- Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy (December 13-15, 2004)

A number of plenary sessions and workshops at the PRI social policy conference will centre on poverty and exclusion, including a diagnostic of low-income dynamics, the multiple dimensions of exclusion, and emerging and underutilized tools for reducing poverty and exclusion.

The project also has a number of publications planned for release in the autumn and early winter of 2004.

- *Horizons*, volume 7, number 2 (due out in mid-November, 2004) will be devoted to new approaches to poverty and exclusion.
- A report will provide a diagnosis of challenges and opportunities in the medium term, and identify groups most at risk of persistent poverty.
- A discussion paper will focus on the rationale for asset-based social policies and the strength and limitations of such policies.
- Normative approaches to poverty and exclusion will be examined with a focus on legal policy perspectives as drivers of policy rather than policy outcomes.

- An overview will look at the main issues and notable findings regarding the importance of neighbourhood effects in Canada.

### Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool

Social capital is essentially about the ways in which one's social relationships provide access to needed information, resources and supports. The PRI project on social capital is designed to explore the potential role and contribution of social capital for public policy. The first phase of the project focused on developing an operational definition and conceptual framework for the analysis and measurement of social capital. The second phase explores key policy and program areas where the application of social capital may play an important role.

#### To Date

March 2004 saw the publication of the synthesis report from the November 2003 PRI-OECD



conference, The Opportunity and Challenge of Diversity: A Role for Social Capital?

A June 2004 PRI-SSHRC roundtable examined different empirical strategies and measurement tools used in social capital

research. Emphasis was placed on the measurability of the resources produced by social networks as core constituent elements of social capital. The workshop drew on the knowledge of Canadian researchers, as well as on measurement specialists from abroad, to identify essential elements for analyzing social capital for purposes of developing and assessing government programs and policies.

#### Next Steps

The PRI is working with several federal departments to produce a series of thematic policy studies to document and illustrate existing research and particularly promising practices that can provide concrete examples of how a social capital perspective may be usefully applied in certain specific policy areas.

Thematic policy studies underway include poverty reduction, community development, youth civic engagement, community crime prevention, healthy aging, the settlement of new immigrants to Canada, the socio-economic outcomes of Aboriginal youth and building community capacity in First Nations communities (the case of Aboriginal community policing).

A number of events and publications are planned for the autumn and early winter of 2004.

- Synthesis report from the June Measurement Workshop (September 2004)
- Meeting of researchers and departmental partners to discuss the interim findings/conclusions of the thematic policy studies (November 2004)
- PRI conference, Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy (December 13-15, 2004)  
The results from thematic policy studies and lessons learned on the implications of social capital for different areas of public policy will be showcased.
- Toolkit for Measuring Social Capital (paper, December 2004)
- Thematic Policy Study Publication and Synthesis Report (January 2005)  
This document will be a compilation of different thematic policy studies exploring the relevance and application of social capital in specific policy and program areas. It will

also include a synthesis report from the PRI with the conclusions and recommendations from the social capital project.

## Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility

The project's objectives are twofold: assess the likely economic, fiscal, labour market, and social impacts associated with population aging; and evaluate the potential economic and social gains associated with more flexibility of choice regarding how time is allocated between work, family responsibilities, and learning throughout life. The first phase was devoted to the development of modelling capacity. In the second phase, we are analyzing various scenarios of working longer compared to alternative allocations of time over life.

### To Date

A January 2004 PRI-SSHRC roundtable explored the potential consequences of life-course based policies in the Canadian context, looking in particular at social and economic consequences of aging and how they relate to the new life-course approaches now playing a large part throughout the OECD world.

The Population Aging and Life-Course Flexibility discussion paper, subtitled *The Pivotal Role of Increased Choice in the Retirement*



*Decision*, presents the key research questions guiding the PRI's inter-departmental project on this subject. The paper reports on the evidence obtained so far, and outlines where more

work is necessary. In July 2004, the PRI published the results of a focus group exercise, managed by EKOS, on the views of Canadians on life-course flexibility. In August, at the annual Queen's University International Institute for Social Policy, the PRI presented a draft discussion paper on a life-course approach to social policy analysis.

### Next Steps

The project will produce a series of papers for presentation at the PRI's December conference, Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy. The papers will include an impact analysis of population aging and life-course scenarios on the economy, labour market, federal fiscal position, and distributional implications, and will detail the following elements:

- Assess various proposals intended to increase the overall work effort, such as increasing immigration, increasing women's participation in the labour market, reducing unemployment and underemployment, and working later in life by three years.
- Assess the impact of the various barriers that prevent more flexibility of choice.
- Examine policy options that would allow for greater flexibility of choice in life-course decisions as a general response to the challenges associated with population aging.
- Consider recent policy experiences in OECD countries and Canada.
- Summarize the project's main insights to date and look at the general directions for policies that flow from various analyses.

## Sustainable Development

The PRI's Sustainable Development project uses freshwater as a vehicle to explore a variety of sustainable development issues. The issues surrounding freshwater reflect the issues

surrounding SD in general, as exemplified by the internationally adopted paradigm of integrated water resource management (IWRM), which promotes the simultaneous optimization of economic, social, and environmental goals in watershed management.

Freshwater is an abundant resource in Canada, yet is in increasingly short supply in some regions of the country. At the same time, water quality is of more concern, not only for human consumption, but also for agriculture and various industrial uses. Meeting the challenge of sustainable water use requires effective co-operative efforts among all levels of government in a context of fragmented responsibilities.

Accordingly, the PRI freshwater exercise has two major focuses: economic instruments for freshwater management and the federal role in freshwater management.

### To Date

In June 2004, under the economic instruments focus, the SD project hosted a successful experts' symposium on economic instruments

for water demand management. This symposium featured a number of domestic and international experts,

and attracted decision makers and analysts from seven federal departments, provincial and municipal governments, and leading academics. Symposium partners included Agriculture

Canada, Environment Canada, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, and the Canadian Water Network.

Under the federal role focus, the SD Project inaugurated a new outreach tool with the publication of the first SD Briefing Note, "Integrated Water Resources Management."

### Next Steps

For optimal dissemination, results from the Symposium on Economic Instruments for Water Demand Management will be published in three stages:

- a synthesis report will communicate the main conclusions reached at the Symposium to the analyst community;
- a series of SD Briefing Notes will provide these conclusions in an accessible format for senior decision makers; and
- the full text of papers presented will be made available to the academic and government research communities in a special issue of the *Canadian Water Resources Journal*.

Over the next several months, we will complete and publish (as SD Briefing Notes) research under way on the federal role in freshwater management as seen in:

- the sustainable development strategies;
- existing federal legislation; and
- the potential use of integrated landscape management models in land-use planning and environmental impact assessment.

A review of federal water policies, in the autumn and early winter of 2004 will identify policies that may require revisions as a result of climate change impacts on freshwater resources.

### North American Linkages

In March 2003, the PRI proposed a number of research initiatives to address central policy issues in Canada-United States relations. The





The objective of the **Emergence of Cross-Border Regions** project is to substantiate the existence, scope, and nature of Canada-US cross-border regions, and to examine policy implications of these regions for the Government of Canada. The research has been articulated around three axes to provide a disaggregated perspective of North American integration: economic, socio-cultural, and institutional.

### To Date

Several roundtable discussions have been held with experts from participating departments and universities, in particular on the border effect and province–state trade flows. Work has been completed, with input from Industry Canada, International Trade and Statistic Canada, refining methodologies to assess the extent of regional cross-border integration, and examining the characteristics of several large data banks covering Canadian and US regions.

A two-day PRI-SSHRC roundtable was held in late June 2004 to review research results to date and to nurture discussions among academics and senior officials on the three dimensions of cross-border regions. The report from this roundtable is available on the PRI web site.

An important component of this research project is the analysis of trade and industry clusters, both as regards their ongoing economic integration (domestic and cross-border) and the role of clusters in explaining the economic performance of regions.

### Next Steps

- Regional Roundtables

The PRI is planning a survey of private and public regional actors, and will hold a series of regional roundtables over the autumn and winter of 2004 to bring together representatives of regional institutions and organizations. The objective is to collect

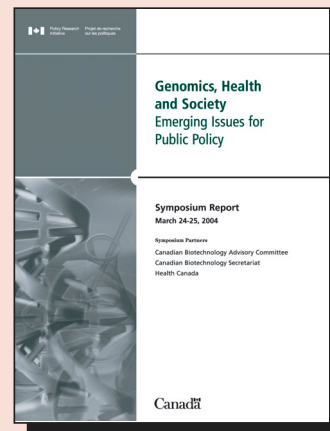
more local information on the emergence of cross-border regions, and on the roles and expectations of regional agents in the conduct of Canada-US relations.

## Other Research Activities

### Genomics

Genomics, the study of human genes and how they function, has huge implications for improving health care and individual well-being. At the same time, it raises questions about the privacy of health information, the potential for discrimination, and the potential for economic growth.

Although genomics is not one of the PRI's core research projects, we believe it is important to keep current on the subject and to share knowledge with the policy community. In January 2004, the PRI released the book *Genomics Health and Society: Emerging Issues for Public Policy*. The publication features presentations made at a June 2002 PRI symposium, as well as other recent research.



The PRI organized a second symposium in March 2004, in partnership with the Canadian Biotechnology Secretariat, Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee, and Health Canada. The symposium brought together national and international experts and the federal policy community to delve deeper into issues raised in June 2002 and to share current knowledge. A report summarizing the discussions was published in August 2004.

## PRI-SSHRC Roundtable Series

The PRI-SSHRC policy research roundtables are a joint effort by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council and the PRI.



The objective is to improve the quality of knowledge transfer between experts from academia and those responsible for the design and development of federal policies and programs.

The roundtables provide a unique venue for informed discussions on key emerging policy

priorities and policy research issues. In addition, they contribute to the development and maintenance of networks between key policy researchers and senior government policy officials. The autumn 2004 portion of the series will feature roundtables on the social economy, housing, regulatory co-operation with the United States, the working poor, and policy applications of social capital.

## Policy Research Conference: Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy

On December 13-15, 2004 the PRI will present a milestone conference on new approaches to social policy. Building on interdepartmental research from three PRI social policy projects, the conference objectives are twofold: to describe, based on research results, the social, economic, and demographic challenges and opportunities most likely to affect social policy in the medium term; and to assess new and underutilized approaches for addressing such challenges and for capitalizing on opportunities.

The second objective will dominate the agenda, with many sessions exploring different approaches to social policy issues. The format and general substance of the conference were discussed at an interdepartmental meeting at the beginning of September 2004. Detailed conference information will be posted on the PRI web site as it becomes available.

For program information, contact Jean Kunz by e-mail at [j.kunz@prs-srp.gc.ca](mailto:j.kunz@prs-srp.gc.ca) or by telephone at 613.992.5193.

## Policy Research Data Group/Data Gaps Initiative

In March 2004, Treasury Board ministers approved funding for the Policy Research Development Program (PRDG) of \$20 million per year for 2004-05 and 2005-06. Since nearly all these funds will be needed to continue projects approved in 1998, there is little flexibility to accommodate emerging data development needs.

Treasury Board ministers have asked that the PRI (as chair of the PRDG) and Statistics Canada deliver a plan by the end of October 2004 on how to address this issue. An assistant deputy minister advisory group will be called in late September to review the report that will be submitted to the Treasury Board Secretariat.

A PRDG workshop is planned for September 20, 2004 to discuss analysis of data from the recent General Social Survey on Social Engagement.

## Policy Research Development Program

The PRDP has provided a recruitment and development opportunity for highly skilled post-graduates of diverse disciplinary backgrounds to become policy researchers within the Public

Service. The PRDP exposes recruits to different policy research projects that cut across departmental boundaries, and provides them with various learning opportunities.

The program is managed by the PRI. It is now winding down, and will be concluded by the autumn or early winter of 2005.

## ■ Project Contacts

### Poverty and Exclusion

Jeff Frank	j.frank@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.947.3905
Jean Kunz	j.kunz@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.992.5193

### Aging and Life-Course

Terrance Hunsley	t.hunsley@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.947.3892
Alain Denhez	a.denhez@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.943.5860

### Social Capital

Catherine Demers	c.demers@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.943.1997
------------------	------------------------	--------------

### Sustainable Development

Ian Campbell	i.campbell@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.992.3704
--------------	--------------------------	--------------

### North American Linkages

André Downs	a.downs@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.995.3655
-------------	-----------------------	--------------

## ■ Other PRI Contacts

### Executive Director

Jean-Pierre Voyer	jp.voyer@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.992.8059
-------------------	------------------------	--------------

### Publications

Richard Tate	r.tate@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.947.7761
--------------	----------------------	--------------

### Policy Research Data Group

Ian Campbell	i.campbell@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.992.3704
Sushma Barewal	s.barewal@prs-srp.gc.ca	613.943.2400

