

# Poverty in Canada: Unidimensional and Multidimensional Measures

*Lori J. Curtis*  
*University of Waterloo, Canada*

## **Paper Abstract:**

This study uses Statistics Canada's survey data to investigate whether multiple measures of wellbeing provide similar patterns over time and across populations. Health, demographic, employment, income and housing measures from the Canadian Community Health Survey and Survey of Household spending are used to estimate multidimensional poverty measures. The multidimensional measures are compared to more traditional measures of income and consumption (expenditure) poverty and GDP/capita between 2003 and 2012, the only period data are similar enough to compare. Subgroup analyses are performed by province, household type, and immigrant status. The study indicates that different measures do not provide similar policy implications. In particular, growth in GDP/capita and multidimensional poverty indicators move in the same direction even though they are meant to measure opposing experiences. When GDP/capita (economic well-being) increases, so do multidimensional poverty head counts (poverty worsens), when GDP/capita growth is negative (economy slowing), multidimensional poverty rates fall. Provinces rank differently depending on the well-being/poverty measure used. Family type and immigrant status rankings do not change depending on measure; perhaps due to the extreme within group differences in poverty rates.