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Bloomberg ® Consumer Comfort Index™ Weekly Analysis

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The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index extended a modest late-spring rebound this week, advancing to a six-and-a-half-year high among women while reaching its best overall since the first week of May.

While this week's gain isn't statistically significant, the index has advanced by 2.2 points from its level two weeks ago, a nearly six-month low. It's now 35.5 on its scale of 0 to 100, still off its peak for the year to date, 37.9 in late April.

The index has improved particularly among women, up 5.5 points in four weeks to 36.5, its best in this group since mid-December 2007. In contrast, the CCI is 34.4 among men, down 9.0 points since late April, which marked its high back to early 2008.

It's the second week straight the index has been numerically higher among women than men, only the 18th time this has occurred in more than 1,250 continuous weeks of available data. The current gap, 2.1 points, is the second-largest in that 24-year period by which the CCI among women has exceeded its level among men. The largest, in June 2008, was 3.7 points.

The CCI's gain last week anticipated the May jobs report, showing continued employment growth, but at a still-slow pace. Similarly, the Fed's Beige Book last week indicated modest to moderate growth across all regions of the country.

Like the economy, the CCI has far to go. While much better than it's been in the depths of the downturn, it remains a substantial 6.2 points from its long term-average, 41.7, in weekly polling since late 1985.

Notably in terms of the gender trends in consumer sentiment, an April report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that women's employment had recovered fully from the long downturn by late 2013 (not accounting for population growth), but men's employment – while recovering – lagged its pre-2008 levels. Underscoring that conclusion, the CCI is now 10.6 points below its long-term average among men, vs. a mere 0.9 points from its average among women.

The CCI, produced by Langer Research Associates, is based on an ongoing national survey measuring Americans' ratings of the national economy, their personal finances and the buying climate.

Among them, the personal finances subindex, at 50.5, is above the 50.0 midpoint for the second week in a row (and the 26th week out of the last 29), while the buying climate subindex, at 31.9, held essentially steady after its largest increase in more than a year last week. These two gauges are 4.8 and 3.8 points off their long-term averages, respectively. The persistently more-troubled national economy subindex, at 24.1, is 10.0 points below its average, albeit up 3.5 points in three weeks to a high since late April.

The index is above its midpoint among the top two income groups – those with household incomes of \$75,000 to \$100,000 (50.9) and those earning more (57.3), likely reflecting the impact of stock market gains. The CCI falls to 39.0 in the \$50,000 to \$75,000 bracket, and drops sharply, to 24.9, among those with incomes less than \$50,000.

Regionally, the index is its lowest since early April among Midwesterners, 32.2, while its highest in three months in the West, 38.2. (It's 33.0 and 37.0 in the Northeast and South, respectively.) And at 42.7, the index is its best since early August among adults younger than 35.

As of May 1, the index was rescaled to 0-100 for ease of interpretation. See details [here](#).

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