MONITOR
Progressive news, views and ideas

Back to business

Can the climate emergency melt the bonds between government and big oil?

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STUART TREW

A how-to guide for social transformation

WHEN THE CCPA was founded 40 years ago, it was in direct opposition to a handful of right-wing, "free market" policy groups who, despite being on the political scene for only a few years, had become influential in the halls of government and the news media. From their earliest days, these think-tanks aimed to weaken public faith in government's ability to do good in people's lives.

Rather than try to balance priorities like full employment, regional development and environmental protection, they proclaimed, government's preoccupation should be the "free" exchange of commodities (goods or services) by whatever company (Canadian or otherwise) can do it most efficiently (i.e., cheapest). State agencies should integrate business input and methods at every step of the decision-making process. Corporate income taxes must come down. Public services should be turned over to the private sector.

This ideological project called neoliberalism got a boost when Margaret Thatcher declared "there is no alternative" to the market economy. On this continent, the Jimmy Carter administration started the U.S. on the deregulatory path; Ronald Reagan pressed the accelerator pedal. Brian Mulroney would toe the neoliberal line in Canada, privatizing state enterprises, deregulating telcos, air transport and other sectors, and abandoning regional development to multinational demands for continental integration in the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement and later NAFTA.

Jumping into this fray, the CCPA set out to prove there *were* alternatives to this anti-government, anti-worker and antisocial agenda. We strongly criticized federal and provincial deregulation and pandering to the corporate sector, and allied ourselves with labour unions, students, Indigenous groups, the environmental movement and others to push a more human version of economics. In the process, as William K. Carroll and David Huxtable wrote in 2012, the centre "helped form…a social democratic community of practice, committed to reforming and possibly transforming Canada into a more just, ecologically sustainable society."

Today, on the threshold of climatic breakdown and with inequality at historic levels in much of the world, the moral bankruptcy of the neoliberal project is all too apparent. There is no market-based way out of this mess. Randomly put your finger on a world map while blindfolded and you have a 50/50 chance of touching a country embroiled in mass unrest related to neoliberal austerity, absentee government and the failure of political parties to think outside the "free market" box.

Yet in Canada there are now 20 times the number of think-tanks on the scene as when the CCPA was founded in 1980 and virtually all of them work within the narrow confines of economic orthodoxy. They are still influential with civil servants and political parties and are quoted regularly in the news. Nationally and internationally Canada endorses progressive sounding variations on the neoliberal theme: environmental policy, housing and other infrastructure initiatives, and even foreign aid are fine and good as long as someone in the private sector realizes a return on their investment.

It seems to me the CCPA is even more essential today than it was 40 years ago. But how and in what ways? I asked a few colleagues to help me answer that question.

CCPA research "provides a focal point for progressives—academic, labour and civil society—so that we may develop thoughtful, reflective positions and policy that allow us to redraw the limits of what's possible," said Erika Shaker, interim director of the CCPA national office. We show "how different political choices would reduce inequality and produce more equitable and sustainable societies."

David Macdonald, a senior economist in our national office, highlighted the "hardcore quantitative analysis" we do to understand key domestic issues. "Numbers and economics are often used to obfuscate the operation of power," he said. The CCPA, on the other hand, wields numbers to strengthen the case for social justice–based reforms to policy, law and government practices.

Simon Enoch, director of the CCPA-Saskatchewan, likened our work to "a how-to-guide" for the Canadian left. "Want to de-commodify essential aspects of our lives? Here's what we could do," he said. "Want to ensure an energy transition that leaves nobody behind? This is what we could do."

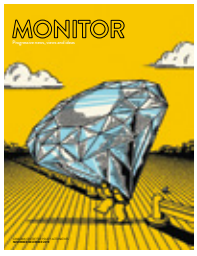
I like this idea a lot. For one thing, the CCPA's work across Canada backs it up again and again (see pages 14–15 for some highlights from 2019). But more importantly, I think Simon's point gets to the heart of what the CCPA offers in this time of political uncertainty and transition.

With the right priorities and effective policies, government *can* be a force for good in people's lives. Neoliberalism's light is fading, but there are no guarantees it won't be replaced with something much worse. As long as the CCPA is here, and with your support, we promise to be an unmovable voice for social, economic and environmental justice—for today and the next 40 years.

The *Monitor* goes back to school

Finally, I'm very excited to draw your attention to the entirely unique magazine wedged into the middle of this one. From now on, twice a year, the *Monitor* will include a full issue of *Our Schools/Our Selves* (OS/OS), the voice of progressive education in Canada, which the CCPA has been publishing since 2000 under the editorship of Erika Shaker. Let us know how you like it!

Letters



We do social procurement, too

I'm a little surprised Declan Ingham didn't use slightly more local examples in his fine article about social procurement ("How procurement can spur economic development," September/October 2019). I believe the original concept arose in 2010 at the Olympics in Vancouver, thanks to Sandra Hamilton. How it spread from that beginning is a great story.

AnchorTO, founded and backed by the Atkinson Foundation, is an example of the anchor institution principle in action in Toronto. Out here on the West Coast, there's the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI), which was developed by local government leaders over the past three years. Lots of good news happening right here.

Rob Southcott,
Powell River, BC

BDS's questionable values

I am an Israeli-Canadian citizen. Born prior to the inception of the state of Israel and having lived there most of my life, I am quite familiar with Israeli politics and policies and, sadly, could likely add to Dorothy Field's list of grievances ("BDS is about our values," November/December 2019, Letters). Nevertheless, I hold Israel to higher, not lower, moral standards than any other country. In fact, voicing my non-conformist views would make more than a few Israelis label me too as a "self-hating Jew."

However, moral values, such as truth and justice, are no values at all when used selectively as a political tool against a particular entity but not applied to others. Regrettably, even well-intentioned Jews of unquestionable integrity, such as Ms. Field, have fallen prey to the wolf in sheep's skin that is the BDS behind its value-laced mask.

Had universal moral values guided BDS's subscribers then they would have directed their attention and actions not only at Israel, but also toward Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Syria, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Myanmar and China, to name just a few countries. Consider the discrimination and exploitation suffered by Palestinians at the hands of their Saudi and Qatari "brethren." Contemplate the sad state of women and human rights, in general, in most of the Gulf's regressive, Dark Age autocratic and often murderous regimes, and one must wonder why no BDS actions have ever been exercised against them.

Why has there been no BDS movement against China following its illegal subjugation of Tibet, the Tiananmen Square massacre, or the persecution of its Uyghur Muslims? Why has there been no BDS action against Russia after its unlawful annexation of Crimea, the downing of the MH17 flight in Ukraine, or its unwavering support of the murderous Assad regime in Syria? What about Myanmar and its Rohingya genocide?

Obviously, anti-Semites are more likely than others to criticize Israel, but criticism is not necessarily anti-Semitic. Being Jews, it would be ludicrous to label Ms. Field and me as anti-Semites. However, when criticism and boycotting schemes selectively target Israel, and find "sounding box" support in otherwise liberal and progressive organizations such as the NDP and the Green parties here in Canada, there is no escaping the conclusion that anti-Semitism, deliberate or subconscious, is a major factor underlying BDS.

Raffy Dotan,
St. Catharines, Ontario

Splitting the difference

David Macdonald recommends abolishing pension income-splitting ("Close these tax loopholes now," November/December 2019). While I have no objection to excluding high earners from the scheme, it would clearly be inequitable to abolish it completely without replacing it with a mechanism that had the same effect.

Let's compare couples reliant on pension income alone, but with the same total income. If pension splitting were abolished, such a couple with equal pensions would then pay less total income tax than one with significantly different pensions, which is surely unfair. For low and middle earners, income tax should be based on the joint income of the couple, for in the normal case this is shared equally between the partners.

John Black, Professor Emeritus, Vancouver Island University, BC

Send all letters, feedback, praise and criticism to monitor@policyalternatives.ca. We will contact you if we plan on running your letter in a future issue.

New from the CCPA

How to build affordable housing

New housing investments from the B.C. and federal governments are a sign of revived interest in public non-market housing. But as explained in a new report from CCPA-BC, ***Planning for a Build-Out of Affordable Rental Housing in Metro Vancouver***, 10,000 new units of non-market rental housing must be built each year to meet the city's need. And these units must include public housing and co-ops that are truly affordable for ordinary households.

The greatest need is for rental housing stock for low- to moderate-incomes, writes author **Marc Lee**, a senior economist with CCPA-BC. This is precisely the kind of housing that is unprofitable for private sector developers who would rather build luxury units for sale to the highest bidders worldwide. Building 10,000 truly affordable units a year would cost about $2.5 billion, or less than one penny per dollar of provincial income (GDP), notes Lee. This upfront capital cost would be recouped through rental income over the lifespan of the buildings and revenues from property tax reforms.

Colour-coded Canadian workforce

Despite its increasingly diverse population, Canada is making little progress on reducing racism in labour market outcomes, according to a new CCPA report, ***Canada's Colour Coded Income Inequality***, by CCPA-Ontario economist **Sheila Block**, Ryerson University professor **Grace-Edward Galabuzi** and CCPA-Ontario researcher **Ricardo Tranjan**.

Using 2016 census data to compare work and income trends among racialized and non-racialized Canadians, the report finds significant entrenched barriers along racial and gender lines, with little change between 2006 and 2016. Racialized women earned just $0.59 for every dollar non-racialized men earned in 2016, while racialized men earned $0.78 compared to non-racialized workers.

"In the absence of bold new policies to combat systemic racism and to advance equity in employment, these trends show no signs of improving," says Galabuzi.

Oil together now!

Recent comments by Alberta Education Minister Adriana LaGrange and former Wildrose Party leader Danielle Smith have painted public school curricula as biased and even outright hostile to the oil and gas industry. Right-wing provocateur Ezra Levant has gone so far as to label public school teachers the country's "most powerful anti-oil lobbyists."

In reality, "oil industry–sponsored programming, materials and perspectives are readily available and promulgated in Saskatchewan schools," says CCPA-Saskatchewan Director **Simon Enoch**, the co-author, with **Emily Eaton**, of a new Corporate Mapping Project report titled ***Crude Lessons: Fossil Fuel Industry Influence on Environmental Education in Saskatchewan***. Through interviews with teachers, educational employees, administrators, and representatives from oil industry–sponsored third-party educational organizations, Enoch and Eaton conclude that conservative fears of bias are entirely without merit.

"We found the industry exerts a tremendous social power over the classroom, where teachers are often reticent to raise environmental issues for fear of backlash from parents and the community," says Enoch. "Rather than environmental instruction that radicalizes students against the oil industry, we found it to be profoundly conservative, solely fixated on individual lifestyle choices that mirror the types of market-based environmentalism that has long been promoted by the oil industry."

Pensioners for the planet

The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) manages one of the country's largest pools of investment capital worth more than $400 billion. A new Corporate Mapping Project report by **James Rowe**, **Steph Glanzmann**, **Jessica Dempsey** and **Zoë Yunker**, titled ***Fossil Futures***, asks if the CPPIB is investing our money with the 1.5-degree Celsius limit on global average temperature rise in mind. The answer is no.

"Within its public equities portfolio, the CPPIB has over $4 billion invested in the top 200 publicly traded fossil fuel reserve holders (oil, gas and coal)," says Rowe, associate professor at the University of Victoria and a co-investigator with the Corporate Mapping Project. "To stay within 1.5 degrees, these companies can extract only 71 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. Yet the companies the CPPIB is invested in have 281 billion tonnes in reserve, meaning they have almost four times the carbon reserves that can be sold and ultimately burned to stay within 1.5 degrees."

Fossil Futures makes a number of recommendations, including that the CPPIB should carry out a portfolio-wide risk analysis in the context of the climate emergency and disclose all findings to pension members. It also recommends fossil fuel divestment while reinvesting capital into renewable energy sources, and it calls on the federal government to require all public pension funds to fully disclose their climate risk—including all fossil fuel holdings—as California recently did.

For more reports, commentary, blogs, infographics, video, audio and podcasts from the CCPA's national and provincial offices, visit www.policyalternatives.ca.

Up Front

DAVID CLIMENHAGA | ALBERTA

Hey Canada, get off our lawn! And would you mow it, please?

Watch out, Rest of Canada!

Jason Kenney, our leader here in Alberta, has mastered the art of sucking and blowing at the same time!

You're in for it now!

This is the New Alberta, and you're going to need to get the hell out of our way! *We'll* be taking over our share of the Canada Pension Plan, and we'll be investing it in fossil fuel infrastructure or whatever we like, thank you very much!

And *you'll* be reforming Confederation to get rid of that annoying equalization plan so we can keep all our money, or we'll be having a national unity crisis, *have you got that?*

And don't blame Mr. Kenney. He's Canada's biggest patriot, a really huge patriot, very patriotic. But those darned Wexiters will be up to something if Mr. Kenney doesn't get his way. *So get cracking!*

Plus, we'll be firing the RCMP and having the Royal Alberta Mounted Police (RAMP) take over for them, so the Mounties might as well drop their investigation into fraud and vote buying in the United Conservative Party's leadership campaign. Because the minute we're an independent republic we'll be taking that stuff right out of the Criminal Code anyway, just like we're doing right now with the charges under the old Alberta election financing laws.

And by the way, if we do charge anyone, you won't be hearing about it either, because it's none of your darned business.

Plus you're going to need to fork over the dough to us to clean up all those dirty abandoned oil wells plus all the ones that haven't been abandoned yet but will be soon because we don't try very hard to make the companies that drill them clean up their messes like they do in North Dakota.

Anyway, like our finance minister Travis Toews just told your finance minister Bill Morneau, we need the money to create all the jobs that went missing when oil prices took a dive, plus the ones we're getting rid of in the civil service, schools and hospitals. Also, we want federal tax breaks for oil companies, because we're plumb out of tax breaks we can give them and ours aren't working.

Just like Gary Mar—who should've been premier instead of Alison Redford and is now the CEO of the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, which is almost as good if you ask us—keeps saying over and over, all of Canada benefitted from the money those oil companies made, so now all of Canada is going to have to pay to clean up their messes!

Oh, and while you're figuring out how to pay for the cleanup, our favourite economist Jack Mintz says you're going to have to cut your taxes. So start thinking about that, too!

In other words, *we're not just going to build a firewall*, we're going to build *two* firewalls, with lots of pipelines running through them, *and you're going to pay for them!**

And that's just *today's* demands. We've got a whole Fair Deal Panel, with Preston Manning on it and everything, looking into things you're going to have to do to fix our economy. So brace yourselves, Justin Trudeau and Chrystia Freeland, because we're going to have more as soon as we're back from dodging those furious teachers on our Christmas break!

And if you don't like it, you shouldn't have gone and won that election last month that our guy Andy Scheer was supposed to win. If you hadn't messed up like that, Mr. Kenney would be running Canada now from Calgary just like he was supposed to be.

*Now get the hell off our lawn, Ottawa! And please cut our grass!***

Seriously, people, you couldn't *make* this stuff up!

* Thanks to @RealDonaldTrump for this line.

** Thanks to @TomPark1n for this one.

DAVID J. CLIMENHAGA IS AN AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST, AUTHOR, POST-SECONDARY TEACHER, POET AND TRADE UNION COMMUNICATOR.
THIS ARTICLE IS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM DAVID'S ALBERTA POLITICS BLOG (WWW.ALTERTAPOLITICS.CA).

JEAN TEILLET | **NATIONAL**

Louis Riel was the original voice of Western alienation

Western alienation is a belief that Eastern Canada takes too much out of the West. That it plunders Western wealth and gives nothing back. That it acts in its own best interests and rarely acts to protect, promote or invest in the West. This sense of injustice may be at a rolling boil right now, but it isn't new.

Alienation began when the West joined Canada in 1870, when Great Britain transferred Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory to Canada. It was the largest peaceful land transfer in the world and included what would later become the Prairie provinces. The Canada First movement started it. The movement was initiated by a group of men in Ontario who firmly believed that immigration should be limited to the British, with their superior Anglo-Saxon Protestant values and institutions. When some of their leaders moved from Ontario to Red River in the late 1860s, they formed the Canadian Party. Both the movement and the party were anti-French, anti-Catholic and dismissive of Indigenous peoples. The goal of these men was to ensure that their race and religion would control and profit from the lands and resources in what would soon become Western Canada. The Métis called them Iii Canadas (the Canadas)—and it wasn't a compliment.

It is in this context that Louis Riel arose as the leading voice of those who rejected this supremacist vision and land grab. In July 1869, the Métis set up patrols, forcibly ejecting men who were staking claims on Métis lands—men Canada had sent as road workers. Events began to move quickly after Riel and the Métis stood on the surveyors' chain on October 11, 1869.

Then-prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald's proposed lieutenant-governor, a prominent member of the Canada First movement, arrived in the West with a shipment of one hundred Spencer

carbines and 250 Peabody rifles all equipped with bayonets and accompanied by 8,000 to 10,000 rounds of ammunition. It was in response to this display of force that the Métis took up arms to defend their lands and their rights.

Riel gathered together the leading men of Red River, including Ojibwa Chief Prince, the Métis, the Catholics and Protestants, the French and the English, into the Red River Resistance. His articulation of the complaint was simple. The people living in the land Canada sought to annex wanted a say in their lives. They wanted to protect their languages, religions and cultures. They objected to joining Canada if that meant losing control over their lands and resources. They did not want to become a colony of a colony. It was the first articulation of what we now call Western alienation.

Riel insisted on the right to negotiate the terms on which the West would enter Confederation. He wanted the West to enter as a province, not a territory, because he appreciated the crucial distinction between the two: a territory had no control over its land and resources, and a province did.

Riel succeeded in forcing Macdonald to negotiate, but the goal of local control was undermined when Macdonald made Manitoba a province in name only. He kept control of the lands and resources and established an inequality that lasted until 1930. According to the newspaper *The New Nation*, Macdonald kept control so that he had a "field in which to feed and fatten Canadian Government pets and robbers." In 1874, Macdonald established colonization companies. The idea was that the companies would purchase land on the Prairies from the government and resell it at a profit. The idea failed at that time, but in 1882, when 10 million acres were given freely to these companies, men fought to take part in a land speculator's dream. The boards of directors of these companies provide insight into what was going on. They usually included one or more sitting Conservative members of Parliament, their sons and in-laws. Most were Easterners. It was, at least in part, in response to the land grabs by these colonization companies that Riel's North-West Resistance began in Saskatchewan in 1885. The Canadian Party had simply shifted its focus further west.

For daring to resist Canada with arms, Riel was targeted by the Canadian Party and the Grand Orange Lodge, which demanded his head. They wanted the Métis exterminated and driven out of the country. On November 16, 1885, Macdonald gladly obliged. He hanged Riel—and with that one brutal act suppressed the opposition to Eastern Canada's efforts to control its Western colony.

So it is not without irony that the Métis observe the latest rendition of Western alienation. Today's version is largely the cry of the descendants of the very men who came from Eastern Canada to make their fortunes by scooping the lands and resources of the West from Indigenous peoples. For decades, their schemes of land speculation and resource extraction paid them huge dividends, and all of Canada's legal resources supported this appropriation. The treaty and scrip systems were designed to give the force of law to efforts to move the land out of the hands of Indigenous

Today's version is largely the cry of the descendants of the very men who came from Eastern Canada to make their fortunes by scooping the lands and resources of the West from Indigenous peoples.

Monitored

A DIG INTO THE *MONITOR* ARCHIVES
JAN/FEB 2000

On the front page, Bob Hackett and Richard Gruneau discussed the findings of their survey of journalists on the external pressures on news content. Nearly 52% of survey participants cited "direct pressure by owners as a factor that 'often' or 'occasionally' has the effect of 'filtering' the news," they wrote. "This was followed by a 43% rating for direct pressure by advertisers, and a 42% rating for interest group pressures."

The *Monitor* quoted the Canadian Association of Food Banks, whose 1999 Hunger Count recorded that nearly 800,000 people relied on a food bank in 1998 for at least part of every month. For comparison, the 2019 Hunger Count released last February reported that 1.1 million people used a food bank in March 2018.

Former *Monitor* editor Ed Finn warned readers not to panic about Y2K, the so-called Millennium Bug. "Most authorities are confident that no major interruption of vital services will occur," he wrote. "[W]e can only hope that whatever happens will cause just minor and temporary inconvenience, and that the heating and lighting in the CCPA offices will be no more impaired by the Y2K bug than our computers."

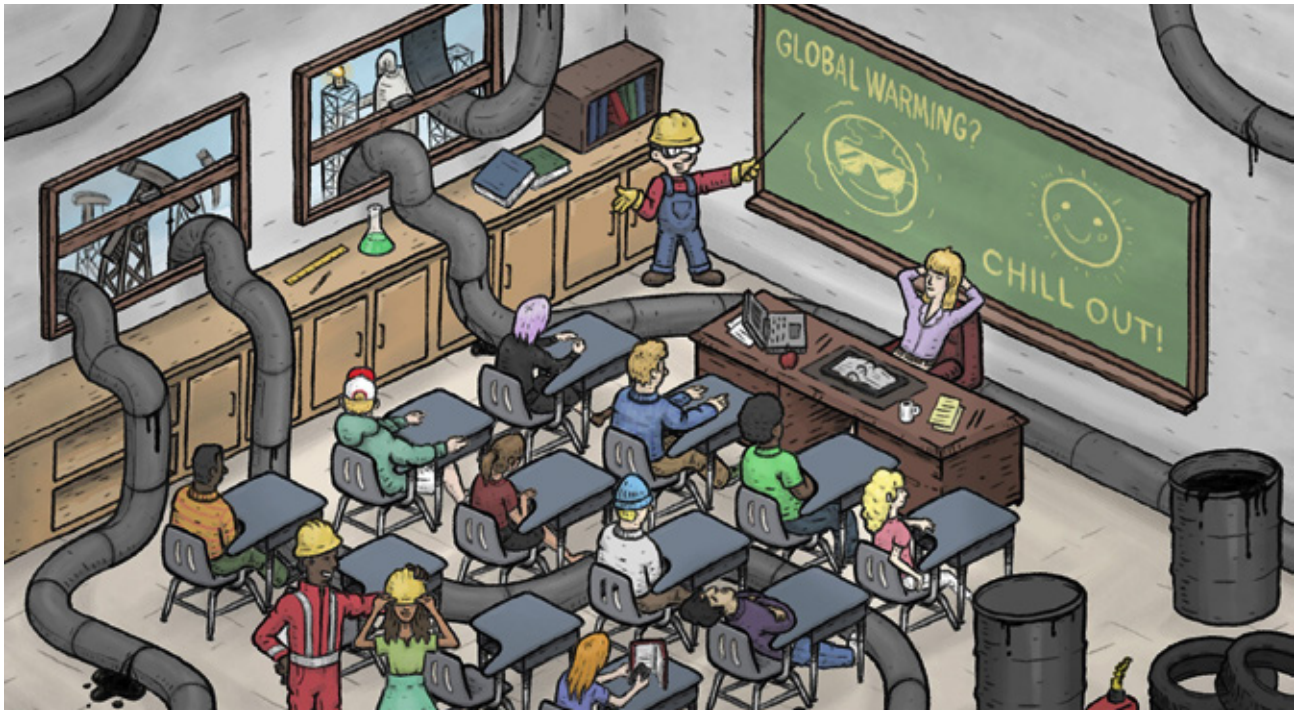
Walden Bello described the contributing factors to and effects of the Asian "miracle" and crisis caused by international capital flows into and out of the region in the 1990s. Deforestation and pollution of land, air and water will be the "enduring legacy of the 'miracle' that has now vanished," he wrote. (Since 2002, an average of 500,000 hectares of Indonesia's forest has been lost per year, equivalent to more than one soccer field each minute—a result of unchecked agricultural development and the country's export dependence on extractives.)

The February 2000 issue of the Monitor excerpted from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency memo showing chemicals maker Monsanto had "lied to U.S. authorities about dioxin production, and deliberately falsified data to prevent compensation claims or the tightening of U.S. regulation." The Monsanto studies in question provided "a key basis for denying compensation to Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange and their children suffering birth defects from such parental exposures." The company was also accused of covering up the neurological damage and other health problems experience by workers in Monsanto plants.

peoples and into the market, which enabled the new Westerners to benefit. And benefit they did: for 150 years, they have taken the riches of the land.

Western alienation has never been far from the surface in Canada. It boils up from time to time as successive generations of Westerners object when they think Eastern Canada is interfering with their resources. But we should remember that the original voice of Western alienation was Louis Riel. We should also remember that Canada hanged him for being that voice.

JEAN TEILLET IS THE GREAT GRANDNIECE OF LOUIS RIEL AND AN INDIGENOUS RIGHTS LAWYER. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF *MÉTIS LAW IN CANADA* AND *THE NORTH-WEST IS OUR MOTHER: THE STORY OF LOUIS RIEL'S PEOPLE, THE MÉTIS NATION*. THIS COLUMN ORIGINALLY RAN IN THE *GLOBE AND MAIL* AND IS REPRINTED HERE WITH THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION.



EBEN MCCUE FOR THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

ERIKA SHAKER AND SIMON ENOCH | **SASKATCHEWAN**

Who's really playing politics in the classroom?

Alberta Education Minister Adriana LaGrange is very concerned that teachers in classrooms across the province are turning students into anti-oil zealots. Her evidence? Two multiple-choice questions from a Grade 10 social studies test, reportedly sent by a parent, that appear to cast aspersions on oilsands development. She helpfully highlighted the offending options in a tweet at the end of November.

In the first, students were asked to identify the most valid criticism of oilsands development; in the second, to read a quote and then select one of four possible responses best describing the author's main point. No further context was provided in the tweet, but the minister certainly seemed perturbed about how two multiple-choice questions requiring students to diagnose a particular perspective was evidence of "politics in the classroom." Ironically, as some on Twitter pointed out, this type of question is entirely in line with the 2005 curriculum, which was developed under the previous Conservative government.

The minister's indignation was amplified by ex-politician and political commentator Danielle Smith who claimed that, even as a child, she knew social studies teachers were Marxists, and that to save money we should be "getting rid of [teachers] who are administering tests like this."

Multiple-choice tests are one method of teaching about topics—even controversial ones—without ever suggesting there is a right or a wrong answer. The focus is on identifying what's behind the perspectives of the people who hold these opinions. The concept behind this method is frequently referred to as "bias balance," where the philosophy of the "free marketplace of ideas" is integrated into the classroom setting. There is no right or wrong—just different perspectives, all equally valid, which the educator helps students identify and navigate but never pass judgement on.

But are anti-oil materials actually flooding our classrooms, presumably with the intention of transforming a

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Vaping

Compiled by
Elfreda Tetteh

2003

Year that Chinese pharmacist Hon Lik figured out you could use a piezoelectric ultrasound element to vaporize a nicotine solution within a device resembling a cigarette.

2007

Year "vaping" products, namely e-cigarettes, were first introduced to North America.

2,291

Number of vaping related illnesses recorded in the United States to December 10, 2019; there had been 48 recorded vaping related deaths to that point. Symptoms in all cases include breathing difficulty, shortness of breath, and/or chest pain before hospitalization. Mild to moderate gastrointestinal illness including vomiting and diarrhea were reported in some cases, along with other symptoms such as fevers or fatigue.

4.6 million

Estimated number of Canadians aged 15 or older who have tried an e-cigarette, according to a 2017 University of Waterloo survey. That's 15.4% of the population; 2.9% of people (863,000) in the same survey admitted to using an e-cigarette in the past 30 days.

55 million

Estimated number of adults who will vape (global) by 2020 if current trends continue.

Vitamin E acetate

Named a chemical of concern after the U.S. Centres for Disease Control (CDC) found it in the lungs of everyone hospitalized for vaping related illness. Vitamin E acetate is used in food production but also as a thickening agent in THC-containing vaping products.

13

Number of vaping (e-cigarette) related illnesses recorded in Canada as of December 3. Ten of these people required admission to hospital and are now recovering at home. Seven of the 13 people are women and four are over the age of 50.

15,500

Estimated number of e-cigarette flavours, or "juices," as of January 2018. Examples of vaping fluid flavours you can buy in Canada include "Rocket Man," which tastes like the vintage Rockets candy, "Key Lime Pie" and "Earl Grey."

74%

Increase in vaping among Canadian youth between 2017 and 2018, according to another University of Waterloo study. Regular cigarette smoking went up by 45% among youth (from 10.7% to 15.5%) during the same timeframe, suggesting a link between flavoured e-cigarette use and regular tobacco use among young people.

US$12.8 billion

Amount Altria paid for a 35% ownership stake in JUUL last year. Altria are the makers of Marlboro cigarettes. When they bought the e-cig company in September, Altria executive K.C. Crosswaithe was put in charge. Many tobacco companies own stakes in vaping companies or have created their own vaping products. British American Tobacco sells Vype; Reynolds owns the Vuse brand of vapes; and Imperial Tobacco purchased Hon Lik's e-cigarette patent for US$75 million in 2013.

April 1, 2020

Starting date of a Nova Scotia ban on all flavoured vape products including flavoured cannabis. It is the first ban of its kind in Canada. Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Quebec have announced they will take similar action. The B.C. government says it will limit vape sales to specialty shops and prohibit the sale of e-cigarette flavours that could appeal to youth.

Sources Guardian U.K., "Hon Lik invented the e-cigarette to quit smoking—but now he's a dual user"; Government of Canada, "Vaping-associated lung illnesses"; Centers for Disease Control, "Outbreak of Lung Injury Associated with the Use of E-Cigarette, or Vaping, Products"; DentalCare.Com (a Crest website); Uwaterloo.ca, "E-cigarette use in Canada"; CBC News, "How vaping is undermining Canada's battle against cigarettes"; Truth Initiative, "How much nicotine is in JUUL" and "Action Needed: E-Cigarettes"; CNBC, "Juul CEO Kevin Burns to step down, replaced by former Altria exec K.C. Crosthwaite"; CBC News, "Province extends flavoured vape ban to cannabis products."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

generation of students into Greta Thunberg wannabes? A new report co-produced by the CCPA indicates that's highly unlikely.

The Corporate Mapping Project (CMP) conducted research into climate-based lessons and teaching aids currently available in classrooms across Saskatchewan. We interviewed educators, educational employees, administrators and representatives from oil industry–sponsored third-party educational organizations.

We found that industry-sponsored education materials, programming and perspectives about the environment are readily available and widely promoted in Saskatchewan schools. In fact, the majority of third-party environment-focused classroom materials are sponsored by the oil industry and promote a decidedly pro-industry perspective on the environment, climate change—along with steps that should and should not be taken to address it—and the role and responsibility of industry. While our research focused on Saskatchewan classrooms, because all the industry-sponsored educational organizations we identify operate primarily in Alberta, their influence in that province would be even more pronounced.

Insufficient public funding has created a situation where schools are more susceptible to and even dependent on corporate funding, which has further reinforced the significant influence and social power wielded by the industry over schools. In fact, as the CMP research uncovers, educators often self-censor when it comes to discussing the environment or climate-based concerns of oil development because of fears over backlash—fears which, as the minister's tweet indicates, are not unfounded.

ERIKA SHAKER IS NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE CCPA. SIMON ENOCH IS DIRECTOR OF CCPA-SASKATCHEWAN AND THE CO-AUTHOR, WITH EMILY EATON, OF *CRUDE LESSONS: FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY INFLUENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION*. THIS RESEARCH IS PART OF THE CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT (CMP), A RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE INVESTIGATING THE POWER OF THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY. THE CMP IS JOINTLY LED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES AND THE PARKLAND INSTITUTE. THIS RESEARCH WAS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC).

DAVID MACDONALD | NATIONAL

Canada's CEOs are failing upward

Every year for the past 13, the CCPA has combed through the filings of the 250 publicly traded companies on the S&P/TSX Composite Index to determine the average compensation of the top 100 highest-paid CEOs. We then compare their pay to the average working income in Canada. The gap between top CEO incomes and the average Canadian income is a pretty good indicator of overall income inequality—and that gap has been growing since we started doing this research.

In 2018, the last year for which we have data, Canada's average top-100 chief executive made a record $11.8 million, or 227 times the annual average individual income in Canada. The previous record was set in 2016, when the average CEO income hit $10.4 million.

Put another way, by 10:09 a.m. on January 2, the average highest-paid CEO in Canada will have taken home the average worker's whole salary for the year (based on 2018 incomes). That's half an hour earlier than the previous (2016) record time of 10:57 a.m. In 2011 or 2012, it would have taken the average CEO until after lunch (about 1 p.m.) on the first working day of the year to earn a full year's average individual income. Now they've done it by the time many people are pouring their second cup of coffee.

The pay gap is a result of top CEO incomes rising faster than average incomes across Canada. The average compensation of the richest CEOs was $1.8 million higher in 2018 than in 2017—an 18% jump. The average worker, on the other hand, saw their pay go up by $1,302 in 2018—from $50,744 to $52,061—representing a 2.6% pay hike. Subtract inflation of 2.3% that year, and the real average income increased by a paltry $150.

Since 2008, more or less in line with inflation, average worker pay has risen 24% while top-100 CEO pay has grown more by 61%. Canada's relatively low unemployment rate of 5.9% does not appear to be putting any upward pressure on average incomes. Economic growth over this period, however, has padded corporate profits, with some of the spoils paying for rising executive salaries.

The significant increases in executive compensation recorded in our annual reports are not just due to a few highflying CEOs skewing the average income at the top end. In fact, our research has uncovered regular increases in the "minimum wage" CEOs need to make to get on the top-100 list to begin with. In 2008 and 2009, a CEO would have had to make just over $3 million to be included in this report. This year, that amount is double: the minimum top-100 CEO income is now over $6 million.

If we subtract out base salary, pension and other compensation, an average of 79% of CEO pay comes from bonuses that are almost always tied to the company's stock price. As stocks rise, the value of all these bonuses goes up. When the stock price falls, so does the CEO's income, but not by much. Complicated formulas virtually guarantee that CEOs get almost all their variable pay irrespective of their company's stock performance. These and other factors make stock-based compensation difficult to rationalize.

Excessive corporate pay isn't limited to the CEO chair but extends through other top positions at major companies. For the first time this year, our CEO pay report collected compensation data for so-called named executive officers—Chief Financial Officers, Chief Operations Officers, etc.—and compared it to company performance and income taxes paid. The results were enlightening.

We found that in some cases, executive (C-suite) payrolls have become so large that they are a major factor in company losses. Among profitable companies, C-suite compensation can exceed the value of a company's income tax payments.

Shopify, for example, pays its executives an eyewatering $36 million a year, yet its average loss over the past five years was $46 million. Blackberry's C-suite is among the most expensive on the TSX/S&P Composite Index, even while its average losses over the past five years amount to $352 million a year. We make no judgment as to why these and the other firms are not profitable, but the numbers do significantly undercut the idea that C-suite compensation is based on performance.

The vast gap between excessive CEO compensation and average incomes in Canada is growing larger and more difficult to rationalize with each passing year. Canadian companies are earning money and seeing profits, even in this period of relatively slow growth, but that money is not reaching workers.

The government could address excessive executive compensation through tax reform. On top of ending preferential taxation of stock options, the federal government should:

• Eliminate the dividend gross-up and tax credit, which credits shareholders (including company CEOs) on their personal tax return for taxes paid on company profits;

• Eliminate the partial inclusion of capital gains, which taxes profits from the sale of stock or property at 50% the normal income tax rate; and

• Significantly increase income taxes on extremely high salaries.

The longer-term solution to extreme CEO compensation will lie in a more thorough reform of the tax system that doesn't just target single items like tax loopholes, but which updates the entire system with the intention of fighting inequality.

DAVID MACDONALD IS SENIOR ECONOMIST AT THE CCPA AND THE AUTHOR OF THE NEW REPORT *FAIL SAFE: CEO COMPENSATION IN CANADA.*

WORTH REPEATING

Canadian farmers have tripled nitrogen fertilizer use since 1980. They have doubled or tripled pesticide use since 1990. Farmers have been pushed to adopt a maximum-output, maximum-input production approach. The result, however, is that over the past generation input suppliers have captured 95 cents out of every dollar farmers received from the markets. Fertilizer, chemical, fuel, machinery companies and banks have installed themselves as the primary beneficiaries of Canadian agricultural wealth creation. This unrelenting and aggressive wealth extraction threatens to drain and collapse the family farm sector by mid-century....

Here is a provocative idea: farming does not produce greenhouse gas emissions; agricultural inputs produce greenhouse gas emissions. The emissions coming out of our farm and food systems are simply the downstream outputs of the petro-industrial inputs we push in. Push in millions of gallons of fossil fuels and they will come out as millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide. Push in megatonnes of fertilizers and they will come out as megatonnes of nitrous oxide. As we have doubled and redoubled input use, we have doubled and redoubled the GHG emissions from agriculture.

The seemingly inescapable conclusion is this: any low-emission food-production system will be a low-input food production system. And as we change policies and approaches to reduce and optimize input use, farm incomes can rise. The solution to the farm crisis and the solution to the climate crisis are, to a large degree, the same: a decreased dependence on high-emission petro-industrial farm inputs and an increasing reliance on ecological cycles, biology, energy from the sun, and the knowledge, wisdom, and judgment of farm families on the land.

Excerpted from the report, *Tackling the Farm Crisis and the Climate Crisis: A Transformative Strategy for Canadian Farms and Food Systems*, released by the National Farmers Union at the end of 2019. More info: www.nfu.ca.

How the "New NAFTA" will affect Canadians

After months of talks, House Democrats and the Trump administration agreed in early December on revisions to the Canada–U.S.–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) that cleared the House of Representatives in a vote on December 19. Although Canada was sidelined in these discussions, the Democrats won some significant improvements to the "New NAFTA" that will benefit Canadians.

The biggest change is the removal of proposed longer data protection periods for biologic medicines, such as treatments for Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis. Data protection periods refer to the time competitors are denied access to the clinical trials data used to secure regulatory approval for a drug. Generic drug firms need this information to produce cheaper versions, known as biosimilars.

Currently, data protection periods for biologics are set at 12 years in the United States. Congressional Democrats, hoping to roll back that long period of monopoly protection for brand-name biologics makers, had no interest in locking in minimum 10-year terms, as CUSMA would have done.

Under the original agreement, Canada had to increase its data protection term for biologics from eight to 10 years—at an estimated cost of at least $169 million per year, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. That change was dropped from the agreement, and Canadians will now avoid these projected cost increases.

One of the biggest sticking points in closing a deal was stricter enforcement of labour standards, with Mexico as the principal target. Democrats initially pushed for independent inspection of workplaces suspected of violating labour standards and the ability to withdraw preferential treatment of shipments from those factories under CUSMA if violations were found. Mexican employer groups vehemently objected while Mexican President Manuel Lopez Obrador rebuffed the demand as an infringement on Mexican sovereignty.

In practice, such inspections are a regular feature of international trade. Canadian and U.S. regulators, for example, routinely inspect foreign food facilities to ensure they comply with food safety standards. If they don't pass muster, exports from those facilities can be suspended. In the end, a compromise was reached with Mexico where complaints about workplaces can be heard by panels of independent labour experts and confirmed violations can lead to penalties.

In another positive change to the CUSMA labour chapter, the three countries agreed to loosen the condition that labour abuses be "sustained or recurring" to trigger sanctions, a significant hurdle that has allowed single violations of labour rights, however atrocious, to go unpunished.

These changes and tougher rules protecting Mexican workers' rights to bargain collectively are an improvement over previous free trade agreements.

We should take no solace in the fact politicians have invested so much energy in salvaging a discredited trade model as they dither and delay on the climate emergency.

But they won't soon close the large manufacturing wage gap with Mexico or halt outsourcing. Indeed, just as a draft version of CUSMA was signed a year ago, General Motors announced plans to shutter five plants in the U.S. and Canada.

In the important auto sector, the U.S. pushed for tougher rules of origin if manufacturers are to qualify for tariff-free treatment under the agreement. Any steel used in auto manufacturing must be "melted and poured" within the NAFTA trade zone. This could be a boon to U.S. and Canadian steel producers. It is also possible some auto companies who use offshore steel will simply choose to pay the already low 2.5% tariff to export to the U.S. Nonetheless, Mexico objected, and the steel rules will now be phased in over seven years.

Democrats achieved scant progress on environmental protection. On a positive note, certain multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, will prevail in the event of any inconsistency with CUSMA's rules. However, the Paris climate agreement, which Trump confirmed the U.S. would be leaving on November 4 this year, is not among them.

The Democrats have likely improved CUSMA for workers and consumers in all three countries. That doesn't mean it's the right deal. Like the original NAFTA, this new agreement privileges multinational capital and increased trade flows above all else. It weakens environmental policy by insisting it not interfere with trade or impose higher regulatory costs on business. It will sustain the accumulation of wealth in fewer and fewer hands.

Canadians can be thankful the new CUSMA will not result in higher prescription drug costs. We can feel relief that Mexican workers get a chance to form authentic trade unions and to fight to improve their wages and working conditions. But we should take no solace in the fact politicians and governments have invested so much time and energy in salvaging a discredited trade model as they dither and delay on the climate emergency.

SCOTT SINCLAIR IS SENIOR TRADE RESEARCHER AT THE CCPA. A VERSION OF THIS COLUMN ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN *THE TYEE* ON DECEMBER 10.

Colour-coded Justice

ANTHONY N. MORGAN

What will we do with this decade?

"PAPA, YOU HAD a whole decade and this is all you did with it?"

Reflecting on the start of the second decade of this millennium, I shudder with heart-sinking shame at the thought of my daughter asking me such a question in January 2030.

She will be a few weeks shy of 12, and no doubt familiar with the looping social and broadcast media retrospectives on the moments that shaped the 2020s. But both she and I will know exactly what decade she's talking about. It won't be the one just gone by, but the decade starting in 2015 that, despite her young age, we'll both feel more connected to.

On January 30, 2018, flanked by federal ministers, members of Parliament, and a small crowd of Black Canadians from across the country, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stood in the foyer of the House of Commons to announce that Canada would officially recognized the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024). Neither my daughter nor I will ever forget this day. It's the day she was born.

Ten years from now, while many are reflecting on the highlights of the 2020s, I wonder if my daughter's questions about the UN decade will sting. Will Canada's Black communities have effectively seized or squandered the once-in-a-lifetime opportunities this moment availed to significantly reshape Canada's racial justice record?

Already in January 2020, more of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent is behind us than is yet to come. Canada's official recognition has had little to no substantial impact on the general material realities of Black people in Canada.

This is important to point out because the UN adopted the decade in large part to spur global action to improve the well-being and outcomes of Black communities in the areas of justice, education, employment, health and housing. This is explicitly and thoroughly outlined in the UN's official program of activities, which lists dozens of concrete measures under the theme of "Recognition, Justice and Development."

Five years into the decade, Canada has done moderately well with the recognition part. Justice and development, however, remain all too elusive for the country's Black communities.

In Toronto, former police chief Julian Fantino was given a platform in the *Sun* newspaper to call for the return of carding, arbitrary ID checks that always predominantly target Black individuals. Fantino and the *Sun* thought the column was a good idea even after Montreal police were pressured to put a moratorium on the ineffective, rights-violating practice and Halifax issued an official apology to African Nova Scotians for engaging in this form of policing.

With respect to the UN decade's call for development, Black Canadians continue to chronically experience some of the highest rates of socioeconomic exclusion. In Toronto, recent reports out of the University of Toronto, nonprofit FoodShare and the Metcalf Foundation have revealed that Black communities face the highest rates of segregation, food insecurity and of being among the working poor.

As I write this, Ontario media is talking about the case of Canadian rapper John River, whose months-long misdiagnosed leakage of spinal fluid strongly suggests systemic anti-Black racism in Canadian health care. River was presumed to be a drug dealer and possible drug abuser, he says, and thereby treated like he was embellishing his painful symptoms to get access to narcotics.

Canadian education systems are also coming under public scrutiny for systemic anti-Black racism going into 2020.

In November, the Ontario government announced a formal review of widespread anti-Black racism at the Peel District School Board, with the results set to be released in February. In Edmonton, the Catholic school board has come under fire for accusing an 11-year-old Black student of being in a gang because he wore a durag to school. The Vancouver School Board is facing a human rights complaint because of its handling of an incident wherein a white student was filmed going on a hatefully racist rant targeting Black students.

It's not that Canada is doing nothing for the UN Decade for People of African Descent. The federal government has committed $25 million toward the objectives of the decade, to be distributed by a Canadian Institute for People of African Descent. The Nova Scotia government also released a plan to support provincial action on Black recognition, justice and development, as I noted in my last column.

Though these are important steps, with more than half of the decade now behind us, Canada should have more to show for its official recognition. My hope is that in the years to come, we will improve the pace of change for Black Canadians.

In 2030, I want to be able to point to Black Canadian institutions, structures and policies as legacy-building outcomes of the UN decade. I want to be able to one day hear my daughter say, "Papa, you had just one decade, and look at all you did with it."

To which I will proudly respond, "Happy Birthday, bunny." M

ANTHONY N. MORGAN IS A TORONTO-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER, POLICY CONSULTANT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATOR. HIS COLUMN, COLOUR-CODED JUSTICE, APPEARS REGULARLY IN THE *MONITOR*

THE CCPA IN ACTION IN 2019

THIS SUMMARY DOESN'T COVER HALF OF WHAT THE CCPA ACHIEVED IN 2019—ALL OF IT THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT. VISIT **WWW.POLICYALTERNATIVES.CA** TO SEE MORE OF THE WORK WE ARE DOING, AND CONTINUE TO DO, TO TRANSFORM CANADA FOR THE BETTER IN 2020.

ABOVE THE FOLD AND BEYOND

CCPA expertise is always in high demand, but our media presence grew again in 2019. By the end of November, CCPA experts and their research had been mentioned in more than 10,000 media stories across the country—a 30% bump from last year. During the federal election alone, the CCPA's policy analysis and fact-checking of party platforms featured in 761 news stories from BBC World Service, the *National Post*, The Canadian Press, the *Toronto Star*, CBC Radio, *Chatelaine*, *Maclean's* and many others.

We had massive success with Senior Economist David Macdonald's report on the rental housing crisis, Unacomodating, which calculated the average wage you would have to earn in 795 Canadian neighbourhoods to comfortably afford to pay the rent. The report, and David's analysis of the rental housing crisis, featured in 1,500 news stories and was part of making the cost of living a key issue during the federal election.

At the end of 2019, the CCPA launched a campaign (see image from the CCPA's Instagram account) targeted at the federal government, asking MPs to reject another "middle class" tax cut that primarily benefits higher income earners, and to use the estimated $6 billion it will cost to fund other priorities: a national action plan to combat violence against women, accessible child care, affordable housing, climate infrastructure, student loan debt, etc.

EXPOSING GAS PRICE GOUGING

Are B.C.'s gas prices higher than anywhere else in Canada because of the carbon tax (as right-wingers claim) or the province's opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline (as Jason Kenney would have it)? CCPA-BC Senior Economist Marc Lee did some research and found out the culprit is in fact price gouging by Big Oil. We used Marc's research to call on the BC Utilities Commission to investigate and for the provincial government to regulate prices—as all maritime provinces do. The government subsequently mandated the commission to conduct an inquiry, which confirmed the CCPA's findings, and brought forward legislation requiring much greater transparency on how gas prices are set.

LIVING WAGE DROPS ACROSS B.C.

The living wage dropped significantly in British Columbia in 2019—the first time this has happened since we started measuring. While housing and others costs of living are going up, provincial child care investments are saving families thousands of dollars a year. In Metro Vancouver the "model" living-wage family (two parents working full time and two young children) saves more than $8,000 a year, showing the power of good public policy to make lives better.

BIG OIL'S NETWORK OF INFLUENCE

The Corporate Mapping Project (CMP) database of who's who in the oil and gas industry was launched in 2019, along with the Fossil-Power Top 50 listing, which profiles the most influential corporate players (see page 21 for a CMP article on oil and gas lobbying). This publicly available resource is there for anyone who wants to understand and monitor corporate power and uncover the links between powerful corporations, think-tanks, lobby groups and more. The CCPA gives special thanks to Bill Carroll, professor of sociology at the University of Victoria, for co-directing the initiative with CCPA-BC Director Shannon Daub.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE JUST TRANSITION

The CCPA continues to be at the forefront of the conversation on a just transition as a fundamental part of Canada's response to the climate emergency. Our 2019 research found that government climate plans to date may be sidelining women, immigrants and racialized workers, who must be able to benefit equally from the sustainable economy of the future. That's why this year, the CCPA will be exploring new policies for promoting greater diversity in the green workforce while continuing to pressure governments to move faster and more aggressively to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.

A WIN AGAINST PRIVATIZATION IN NOVA SCOTIA

This November, CCPA–Nova Scotia celebrated the provincial government's announcement it will no longer seek a private-public partnership (P3) to build new health centres in Cape Breton but will continue the project using a traditional government-managed build. This is exactly what the CCPA promoted in a recent report on P3 hospitals, Shrouded in Secrecy, which also recommends halting the P3 redevelopment of the Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) hospital. Our work on P3s has made it difficult for governments to defend this model of funding pubic infrastructure.

MAKING WOMEN COUNT

The CCPA's annual Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada report puts pressure on municipalities to close their gender gaps. It also highlights the work that community organizations across the country are doing to help address inequality. Many organizations across Canada cite Best and Worst as a critical resource in their struggles to legislate equality and inclusion initiatives locally.

Senior Researcher Katherine Scott added a new dimension to the CCPA's gender justice work in 2019 by co-ordinating the release of Unfinished Business, a comprehensive assessment of Canada's implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Katherine collaborated with a network of more than 50 women's rights and equality-seeking organizations, trade unions and independent experts to assess Canada's progress over the last 25 years in areas ranging from reproductive health to women's economic standing and the situation of women in prisons.

THE FIGHT FOR FAIR TRADE

In 2019, the CCPA was a key player in the launch of an international project for challenging the retrograde, corporate vision of globalization driving deals like CETA (with the EU), CUSMA (or "New NAFTA") and the TPP (with Asia-Pacific countries). Working closely with CCPA's allies in the U.S., Mexico and elsewhere, we co-published Beyond NAFTA 2.0, a major report critiquing the pre-amended (in December) CUSMA while offering a forward-looking blueprint for a "Trade Agenda for People and Planet."

The CCPA was also enlisted this year by Germany's Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung think-tank to produce a report on the early impacts of CETA on the Canadian economy, small business, workers and public procurement. Earlier in 2019, the CCPA published comprehensive reports on how "regulatory co-operation" in trade deals can undermine public protections, and how Canadian firms are using investment treaties to attack public interest and environmental protection laws in developing countries.

A PEOPLE'S BUDGET IN WINNIPEG

Winnipeg recently introduced a new consultation process for the 2020 municipal budget. In-depth, department-by-department spending plans released to the public revealed alarming cuts to recreation, community programming and urban forest maintenance. Meanwhile, the city is proposing an inadequate 2.33% property tax increase after a years-long freeze that compromised Winnipeg's ability to meet community needs. Activists, academics and union leaders, including the CCPA-Manitoba, met to discuss the implications of the proposed municipal cuts and turned to the 2018 Alternative Municipal Budget report, Imagine a Winnipeg, to organize our response. The result was a unified and widely reported call for the mayor and council to consider a 7.33% property tax increase, and for that money to be spent improving local services and lives. It was a clear case of movement-based research in action—one of our specialties at the CCPA.

IMPROVING EI, UNCOVERING RACISM

The Ontario office of the CCPA launched two major reports on national issues in 2019. The first, *Towards an Inclusive Economy*, was a deep dive into Canada's employment insurance system by political economist and Senior Researcher Ricardo Tranjan. Hundreds of thousands of low-income workers pay into EI but can never collect benefits because they work too few hours or quit unsuitable jobs. Tranjan's paper proposed a universal 420-hour standard for EI eligibility among other reforms to make EI work for more workers.

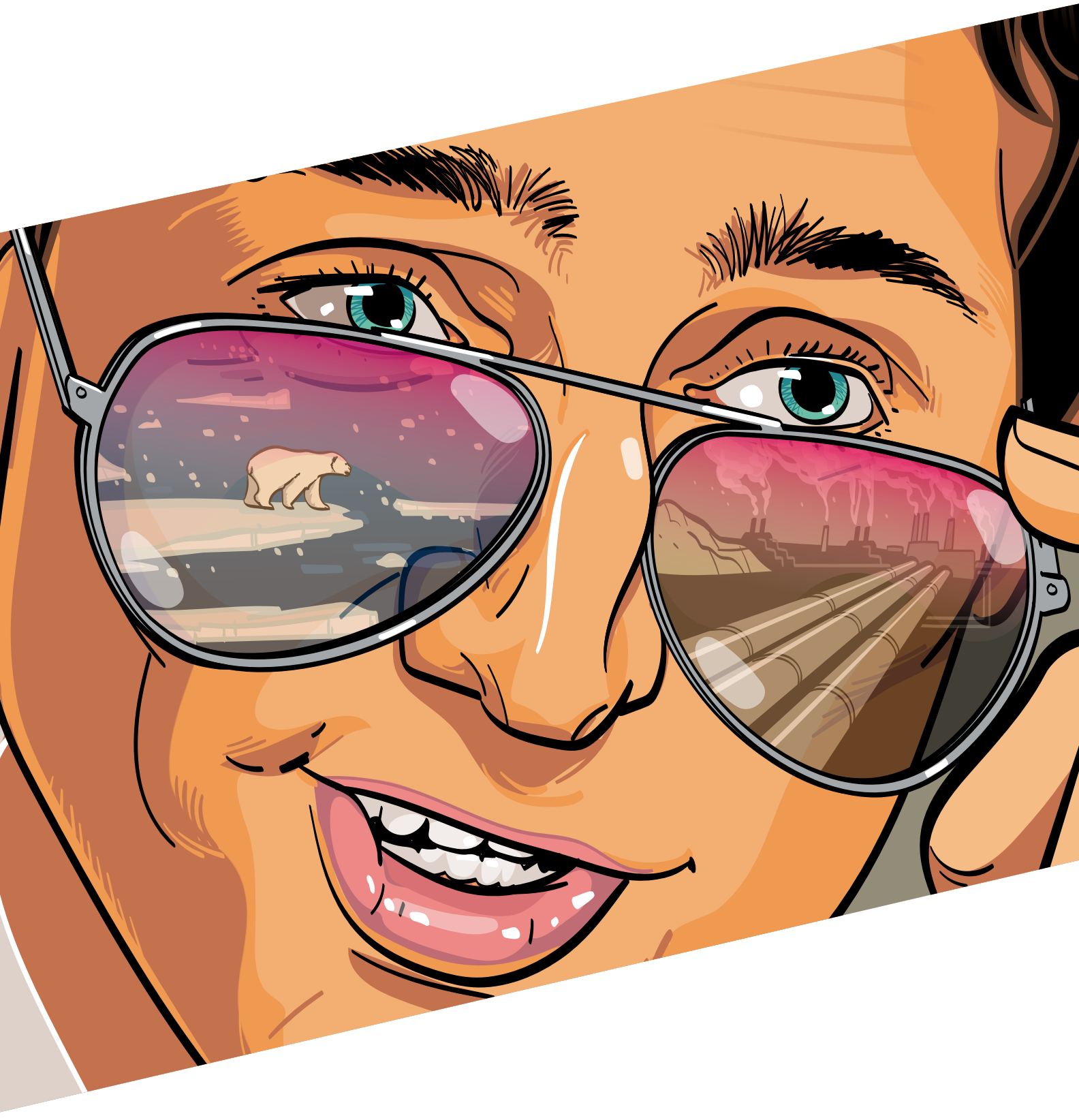
Another CCPA-Ontario report, *Canada's Colour Coded Income Inequality*, looked at census data from 2006 and 2016 to gauge whether racialized workers found significantly better jobs and/or higher earnings with the passage of time. They didn't. The report, by CCPA Senior Economist Sheila Block, Ryerson University's Grace-Edward Galabuzi and Ricardo Tranjan, showed a desperate need in this country for strong public policies to tear down the barriers to economic equality.

CHALLENGING BUDGET SPIN IN ONTARIO

In April, the CCPA-Ontario worked hard to untangle the spin around Premier Doug Ford's first provincial budget. Our analysis revealed the stark numbers behind the words: the province was bringing in huge and punitive cuts to program spending. Within three months, public resistance to the cuts had unseated the finance minister and triggered a massive cabinet shuffle as the Ford government scrambled to pull out of its political nosedive. As 2019 ended, CCPA-Ontario launched *Richer Than Ever*, a five-minute video designed to kickstart a provincewide conversation about the 2020 budget.

ONGOING ANALYSIS OF ONTARIO SCHOOL FUNDING

Funding cuts to Ontario schools have met stiff opposition from parents and educators alike. While the Ford government portrays its plans to cut staffing, increase class sizes and bring in mandatory online learning as improvements, the CCPA's Ricardo Tranjan has been setting the record straight since the school year began in September. Tranjan's ongoing analysis of the cuts, their board-by-board impacts and the government's strategy has been a rich resource to all those who value quality public education.



Is it still *business as usual?*

The "Trudeau Formula" has legitimized status-quo policies behind a mask of progressivism. Growing public resentment for politics-as-usual, and a new minority government setting may complicate that plan.

STORY BY MARTIN LUKACS / ILLUSTRATION BY REMIE GEOFFROI

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, hundreds of Liberal Party members descended on Mont-Tremblant to enjoy the latest instalment of the annual Banff Forum. In Parliament the party might have been knocked down to minority government status just a few weeks before, but the mood at Quebec's favourite ski resort was cheerful and confident.

After all, Liberal MPs in the strongholds of Ontario and Quebec had almost universally retained their seats, many with increased vote margins. And Conservative leaders across the country, after huffing and puffing for a few weeks, were already in retreat from their principal election battleground of the carbon tax. Even Jason Kenney's United Conservative government in Alberta had quietly brought in a tax on industrial polluters and other premiers were adopting a more conciliatory tone. For many people at the summit, the situation looked positive.

Though the Liberal contingent is usually high at the Banff Forum, most of the attendees in Mont-Tremblant were not formal representatives of the party. Known as "Banffers," they were, however, drawn from its main demographic base: lawyers, heads of non-governmental organizations, venture capitalists, bankers, policy and public relations types, tech entrepreneurs, and cultural industry executives. "Old enough to have something substantive to contribute," the forum's website enthused about the participants, "yet young enough to be open to new people and new ideas."

The three-day confab is officially billed as a public policy forum, but it's not exactly that. It is by invitation only. Conversations take place under strict confidentiality rules. And alongside the obligatory panels and fireside chats there are the equally important organized hikes in the woods, soaks in hot outdoor pools, and late night parties—clubby opportunities to forge social cohesion. "Dazzling amount of good ideas circulating here at Mont-Tremblant," read a tweet from Jesse McCormick, until recently the director of policy and Indigenous relations for former environment minister Catherine McKenna. "A-Type personalities abound!"

The entry fee clocked in around $1,500, or slightly less if you were under the age of 40. The rest of the cost of organizing the forum was picked up by corporate sponsors, including some of the country's heftiest corporations: Suncor, Telus, CN Rail, TD Bank, Coca Cola, Enbridge, Bell, Power Corporation of Canada, etc. This year, organizers said they made a concerted effort to recruit more political variety, which meant in practice many more Conservatives and a handful of New Democrats.

An all-female panel of former provincial premiers—Kathleen Wynne, Kathy Dunderdale and Rachel Notley—was well received by the audience. But so was another panel on Quebec's Bill 21 that lacked even a single critic of the legislation, which prohibits teachers, police officers and other public servants from wearing religious symbols at work. An event on

the future of Canadian energy, featuring three proponents of the Trans Mountain pipeline, ended on a buoyant note and slideshow photograph of shovels breaking ground, heralding the completion of that tar sands expansion project.

All in all, the Banff Forum offered a glimpse of liberal strategy today. The picture we get is one of class solidarity between the rich and professionals, for whom politics is a glamorous and privileged festival of ideas, accentuated by credentials and elite diversity. This kind of politics is naturally more comfortable tilting right than left and can evince only shallow concern with the profound environmental, racial and economic crises bedevilling the age. As a ruling strategy it proved remarkably successful for the first Trudeau government. Whether the prime minister can pull it off in a minority situation is another question.

The days and months after the last election were shakier for Justin Trudeau than for others in his party. In the wake of media coverage of his repeated blackface episodes, international news outlets no longer run columns about Canada's "lurch to the left," as the *Atlantic* put it in a 2015 article. They are no longer describing his thematic socks as a long-sought-after ingredient to world peace. And interest has finally faded in what seemed, from the coverage at least, like a new national pastime—sightings in nature of a shirtless Trudeau.

In fact, in the month after the election, Prime Minister Trudeau wasn't seen out much at all. At the swearing-in ceremony in 2015, he and his cabinet had bounded up the pathway to Rideau Hall together. This time, Trudeau slipped in quietly through a side entrance. And whereas the Liberals spent the first few months after their election in 2015 basking in and playing up Trudeau's new status as a global progressive icon, this fall they have been clearer where their real priorities lie.

In public announcements and mandate letters issued since October, the government has committed to building the Trans Mountain pipeline; moving ahead with tax cuts that will primarily benefit higher-income families; issuing a memo whitewashing Canadian complicity in the Saudi war on Yemen; and endorsing a right-wing military coup in Bolivia. The shift from campaigning on the left to governing on the right was fast enough to give any good faith observer whiplash.

Yet what I've named the "Trudeau Formula" has powerful durability and is still very much in play. This formula—in many ways a Liberal Party heritage but one that Trudeau is especially good at practising—revolves around making a close study of the values and aspirations of the country's progressive majority and co-opting its protests, language and demands. Selective concessions to the left may follow. But the progressive aspirations behind these policies are frequently hollowed out as part of a quiet compact with the corporate elite, whose policy priorities are channelled, repackaged and advertised as a captivating option. Demobilizing and integrating progressive challenges in this way, the government manufactures consent for the prevailing social order and captures the voting blocs necessary to win or remain in office.

The clearest expression of this formula was articulated by Trudeau himself, in a speech to the ritzy Canadian Club of Toronto in May 2015. It was not long after the Liberals had announced their marquee policy of a new tax on the top one per cent, to which his audience that day universally belonged. The establishment media had howled about Trudeau's "redistributionist dogma." But Trudeau's team had a savvier message for the country's financial barons.

The status quo was not sustainable, said Trudeau in his speech, which ran through statistics many leftists would be comfortable citing: growing inequality, stagnating wages, soaring personal and family debt, and an increasingly insecure social safety net. A "sense of fairness" had evaporated in Canadian society, said Trudeau. If a government could not put forward an agenda "aimed squarely at restoring that sense of fairness," he warned, "Canadians will eventually entertain more radical options."

It was a polite way of saying: it's me or the pitchforks. If Bay Street could lend support to a mild tax hike, Trudeau promised, he could harness the rhetoric of the Occupy movement and stifle any backlash against the elite, restoring confidence to the economic system. (Indeed, the wealth of the top one per cent would grow, rather than diminish, over the next four years of his government.) In short, Trudeau's pitch was that only he would be able to save neoliberalism from growing calls to replace it.

To be fair, the Canadian Club would have heard this message before and known they could count on its power. The legacy of governments going back decades is not as a force for social progress and economic justice, but as a potent obstacle to the radical change that so many are hungry for, and which a livable climate now literally depends on. I would argue that everything Canadians have seen from the Trudeau government so far has amounted to a politics of changeless change—a spectacle of splashy announcements and bold initiatives that appear to disrupt business-as-usual, but in fact mostly shore up prevailing disparities of wealth and power.

We have witnessed the public drama of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples while the policies of land and resource dispossession from prior governments continue apace. The Liberal government has enthused about its

I would argue that everything Canadians have seen from the Trudeau government so far has amounted to a politics of changeless change.

infrastructure agenda, but in secret it studied the privatization of $200 billion worth of public assets including airports, highways, water systems and the postal service, while perpetuating the stealth privatization of transit projects through public-private partnerships. The Trudeau government has postured Canada as a human rights champion abroad while increasing military spending by 70% over 10 years and continuing to ship military vehicles and weapons to the Saudi dictatorship fighting a war in Yemen.

Not just in Canada, but around the world we have seen the emergence of an airbrushed, focus-grouped avatar liberalism—"yuppie simulacrum of populist breakthrough," in Perry Anderson's words—to face the challenge from a democratic-socialist left and an ugly resurgent right. This model of politics was ground-tested by the Obama administration and is today exemplified in the "extreme centrism" of Trudeau, French President Emanuel Macron, and U.S. Democratic politicians like Pete Buttegieg and Beto O'Rourke. What these men all share in common is an effort to forge a new consensus that can salvage the failed yet still pervasive neoliberal governing logic that counts extreme inequality and climate breakdown as its most obvious consequences.

Alongside a continued support for privatization, deregulation, corporate tax cuts, and a slow withdrawal of the welfare state, these political figures have tinkered around the edges to give their conservative economic policies a patina of emancipatory progressivism. Trudeau offered reforms, like a means-tested Canada Child Benefit, more representation of women and racialized people in cabinet and the civil service, and incremental measures on climate change. But none of Trudeau's actions have so far threatened the authority of corporate interests to set the political agenda.

In rare moments, Trudeau has been candid about his role as a diligent manager of the status quo. Describing his government's early achievements in a late-2016 interview with the *Guardian* (U.K.), the prime minister said: "We're actually able to approve pipelines at a time when everyone wants protection of the environment. We're being able to show that we get people's fears and there are constructive ways of allaying them—and not just ways to lash out and give a big kick to the system."

Canada is second only to the United States in its planned growth of the oil and gas industry—counteracting any reduction gains... and making it impossible to meet Canada's climate commitments.

While the brand of the *messenger* of this formula has evidently been damaged since then, the formula itself lives on.

When the prime minister participated in the giant climate strike march in Montreal last September, the satirical news outlet *The Beaverton* pointedly observed, "Trudeau comes to Montreal climate strike to protest self." The truth of this mock headline wasn't lost on the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who reportedly told Trudeau in a private in-person meeting that afternoon that he wasn't doing enough to combat the climate crisis. No doubt to the relief of the Liberal strategist Gerald Butts, whose idea it was to participate in the climate march, Thunberg would later generalize her point in remarks to the media, saying *no* politician was doing enough anywhere.

Still, according to formula, the potential backlash was worth the opportunity to burnish the government's environmental bona fides. More importantly, it was very much in keeping with a broader strategy the minority Liberal government can be expected to continue to deploy on environmental and energy policy.

Days after the election, Finance Minister Bill Morneau tested out a new line to justify the government's purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline for $4.5 billion dollars. "We purchased it for a reason," he said. "We now see how it can help us accelerate our clean energy transition by putting any revenues that we get from it into a transition to clean energy." Morneau promised profits of up to $500 million a year would be spent on cleaner energy sources and technologies to pull carbon out of the atmosphere. This vaguely progressive sounding policy is in fact the logic of an addict, akin to suggesting the need to chain-smoke several packs of cigarettes to build up the courage to break a nicotine habit.

Canadians came to expect such mystification from former environment minister Catherine McKenna, whose office was lobbied almost as much as the natural resources department in the government's first three years. During the 2019 election campaign, McKenna introduced the promise to get to net-zero emissions by 2050, but told the media there was no plan yet for how to do it. Just trust us, she said, and we'll figure it out when we're back in office.

That task has now fallen to new Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, a former cleantech executive who has indicated that the government will invest far more significantly in technological silver bullets like hydrogen energy. When referring to oil and gas developments, he has emphasized not overall emissions but reducing emissions per barrel. "We have a significant resource," he told the *Toronto Star*. "The issue isn't the resource, the issue is the pollution, and our focus is on reducing pollution." Yet across the industry there has yet been no decrease in emissions per barrel, as they shift to even more high-intensity-emitting in-situ tar sands projects.

Even the government's new pledge to reach Canada's 2030 targets and get to net-zero emissions by 2050 sounds like having your cake and eating it too. "Net zero" is a shifty concept long

pushed by the global fossil fuel industry to allow them to keep extracting, with the dim hope of technologies emerging to suck carbon out of the atmosphere (or to spray the stratosphere with potentially very dangerous solar reflecting chemicals). The throne speech in early December offered an airy and vaguely progressive message that "Canada's children and grandchildren will judge this generation [by its action on] the defining challenge of the time." But it also indicated that the government would "work just as hard to get Canadian resources to new markets."

Little of this approach has deviated from the pitch that Trudeau made to oil executives, before becoming prime minister, in a speech to the Calgary Petroleum Club in 2013. Trudeau made it clear then that there was little separating him from Stephen Harper when it came to support for the massive expansion of the tar sands. Where they differed was on tactics, with Trudeau pledging to be a deft diplomat for their interests, building alliances where Harper had burnt them, co-opting his opposition instead of demonizing it. Taking the direction of the powerful Business Council of Canada, Trudeau would brandish technological solutions and the carbon tax—universally supported by the leading corporative executives of all the high-emitting industries as early as 2008, but stymied politically by Harper—and use them as a green fig leaf for a business-as-usual agenda.

Meanwhile, the tar sands are now Canada's fastest-growing source of emissions, on track to eat up more than half of Canada's carbon emissions budget within the next decade. In the latest UN report, Canada was one of 14 G20 countries that are on pace to miss their emissions reduction targets for 2030. In February, Environment Minister Wilkinson will decide whether to give final approval to Teck Resources' Frontier Mine, which, at twice the size of Vancouver, would be the biggest tar sands mining project to date. With such projects on the table, Canada is second only to the United States in the planned growth of the oil and gas industry—counteracting any reduction gains from the Liberal government's half-measures and making it impossible to meet Canada's climate commitments.

The closeness of the Liberal government to Big Oil has actually been mapped. A new report by William Carrol, Nicolas Graham and David Chen of the Corporate Mapping Project (see their article in this issue) found that the level of contacts between fossil fuel companies and the current government matched those of the previous Conservative government. Over the first three years of the Trudeau government (to 2018), oil lobbyists had a staggering 3,791 contacts with officials. Yet somehow the *Globe and Mail* still thought it was appropriate, in 2019, to describe the Harper government, and not this one, as being "in cahoots with Big Oil."

Thankfully, the Indigenous and youth-led resistance to pipelines will likely hamper the Trudeau government's plans for tar sands expansion (see the article in this issue by Hannah Muhajarine and Molly McCracken). But if no party makes a convincing case for a prosperous transition off oil, it may yet be the right-wing that harnesses the growing resentment, insecurity and anger in Canada for its own political advantage.

Entering the new decade, the appetite has not abated among Canadians for the "radical options" Trudeau warned Bay Street financiers about in his 2015 presentation. Some 67% of us, according to a poll in September, believe that the "economy is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful." Decades of slow, grinding cuts to the social safety net and the public sphere has left a dignified existence—decent wages, affordable housing, accessible education, etc.—out of reach for growing numbers of people.

Spending by the Liberal government has lifted a few hundred thousand people out of absolute poverty while child care credits have lowered cost of living for many people. But cost and quality of life dominated the last election as major public concerns. In mid-December, Statistics Canada reported, alarmingly, that more than 10% of all workers in Toronto and Vancouver are working in the temporary "gig" economy. Home ownership—a sought-after retirement strategy under our hollowed-out welfare state—is now an impossible dream for many people.

If "radical centrism" of the kind offered by Trudeau is not helping this situation, the question is whether it will be the right-wing who seizes on popular insecurity and directs it toward scapegoats, or whether a resurgent left can channel it in a movement against vested interests.

There are some hopeful signs. Class politics have made a return to western countries, however haltingly in Canada. Polls show enormous popularity for wealth taxation and programs like a Green New Deal. While the NDP under Jagmeet Singh has stopped its slow slide to the centre, its ability to advocate in opposition for the vastly ambitious policies that Canadians are evidently hungry for has yet to be seen.

The moral clarity and passion shown by a new crop of young left-wing parliamentarians suggests one way forward. But ultimately what we need is a voice for a radically different vision for the country—a vision rooted in redistribution, solidarity, and equality. Nothing less will test the Liberal government's continued success in capturing voters by saying progressive things they may not ever mean. M

Decades of slow, grinding cuts to the social safety net and the public sphere has left a dignified existence out of reach for growing numbers of people.

FOSSIL FUEL LOBBY INFLUENCE RUNS DEEP

Bill Carroll, Nicolas Graham and David Chen

There's no doubt that climate change and fossil fuel extraction determined how significant sections of the population voted in the federal election. These issues dominated the federal leaders' debates, and since September we've seen hundreds of thousands of people join countrywide student-led climate strikes demanding more robust action. Such demands are likely to grow as the effects of climate change become more severe and the window closes to avoid catastrophic climate-related impacts.

While the Justin Trudeau-led Liberals again campaigned on a promise to more aggressively fight climate change, the question of why Canada has been so politically paralyzed in pursuing decisive climate action, and how to overcome this paralysis, is urgent. It's a problem of central concern to us at the Corporate Mapping Project, a research initiative investigating the power and influence of the fossil fuel industry.

We published a study in November that examines federal lobbying by oil, gas and coal companies and their industry associations across a seven-year period from 2011 to 2018. The period allows for a comparison of lobbying under the Stephen Harper Conservatives and the Trudeau Liberals. The findings are troubling, but they do help explain the close coupling of federal policy to the needs of the fossil fuel industry.

Examining records at the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, we found that the fossil fuel industry recorded 11,452 lobbying contacts with government officials over this period—significantly more than other sectors and amounting to just over six contacts per working day. Presumably due to having far greater resources, the sector lobbied the federal government at rates five times higher than environmental non-governmental organizations.

This is important because lobbying is intended to influence policy. For this sector specifically, policy decisions over the studied period related to major environmental assessment acts, national energy strategy, pipelines, and consultation processes with First Nations. The intensity of lobbying increased when salient policy issues—like the Environmental Assessment Act—arose or when the stakes were high for industry, such as major pipeline decisions and approvals.

We found that lobbying is highly concentrated among large fossil fuel firms and key industry associations (which control much of this economic sector) and is targeted at a few key offices and individuals within government. There is intense interaction among relatively few lobbyists and key designated public officeholders, who are in regular contact with each other.

In comparing lobbying across the Harper and Trudeau governments, we found a pattern of continuity in change. Under Trudeau, the bulk of lobbying has been carried out by the same large firms as under Harper, but lobbying has focused on fewer government agencies, particularly Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada. Under Trudeau, senior government bureaucrats rather than members of parliament were the focal targets of lobbying. Key decision-makers that remained after the 2015 change of government were targeted, which is concerning as it indicates that elite policy networks outlast election cycles and potentially the stated platforms of elected officials.

It is important to bring lobbying more fully into public view in order to limit the undue influence of private interests over public policy. However, reforms are needed that go beyond increased transparency to equalize opportunities for political influence between industry and civil society groups. Democratizing measures can challenge and limit corporate power, which is critical to achieving sustained and robust climate action.

LOBBYING CONTACTS OF THE FOSSIL FUEL CORPORATIONS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

January 4, 2011 to January 30, 2018

Mining Association of Canada	**1,596**
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers	**1,268**
Suncor Energy	**881**
TransCanada Corporation	**751**
Canadian Gas Association	**641**
Enbridge Inc.	**558**
Canadian Energy Pipeline Association	**478**
Teck Resources Ltd.	**466**
Kinder Morgan Canada Ltd.	**396**
Encana Corporation	**394**
Imperial Oil	**385**
Petroleum Services Association of Canada	**359**
Westcoast Energy Inc.	**353**
Shell Canada Ltd.	**345**
Canadian Fuels Association	**343**

NICOLAS GRAHAM IS A POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCHER WITH THE CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT AND SESSIONAL SOCIOLOGY INSTRUCTOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA. WILLIAM K. CARROLL, A SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, CO-DIRECTS THE CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT. DAVID CHEN IS A CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT STUDENT RESEARCHER AND UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA MASTER'S STUDENT. THEIR CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT RESEARCH IS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC).

HANNAH MUHAJARINE AND MOLLY MCCRACKEN

The future is in our hands — not theirs

The youth-led climate movement is intent on passing Green New Deal legislation this year despite organizing and political challenges.

HOPE FOR ACTION on climate is in the hands of mass movements. Through the student climate strikes (Climate Strike Canada) and Our Time (for a Green New Deal), young climate activists are mobilizing people of all ages and pushing governments to legislate the large-scale response needed to get to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

A minority Liberal government creates potential for bolder climate action with support from the NDP and Greens, while conservative-led provinces are bound to push back no matter what the federal government proposes. It's incumbent on us, in this political moment, to reject half-measures and push for the most expansive and inclusive just transition possible.

It's time for us to get behind what people around the world are calling a Green New Deal.

As a framework for climate legislation, the Green New Deal arose in response to the environmental wreckage and growing inequality that are a direct product of fossil-fuelled capitalism. The only way to meet our climate obligations is to transform our economy — not just away from fossil fuels, but also to be more equitable and inclusive.

The GND therefore combines financial help for transitioning energy workers with secure universal pensions for all, good quality housing, high-wage job creation, expanded public services (health care, child care, elder care and transit), restored public and natural spaces, and a new internationalism based on solidarity and true development. Absolutely central to the *Canadian* Green New Deal movement is decolonization and Indigenous rights.

"We will not achieve climate justice without Indigenous human rights. UNDRIP and the right to free and informed prior consent are central to our struggle," says Leah Gazan, newly elected NDP MP for Winnipeg Centre, and one of Our Time's Green New Deal champions.

The social policy piece of the GND is crucial for two reasons. First, making a job guarantee and expansion of public services part of our demands is how we build support for the mass movement we need to make this happen. Second, an economy centered on care work, along with sustainable food production, housing, and transportation, is what a low-carbon economy looks like.

The challenge will be convincing enough Canadians that dismantling fossil fuel capitalism is in the interests of all. Those whose futures are being stolen by inaction understand this clearly, which explains why they are leading the way toward a Green New Deal.

Diversity of tactics

The national youth-led movement Our Time emerged out of 350.org's 2019 conference, *Powershift: Young and Rising*, and the Winnipeg Hub began organizing around a Green New Deal last spring. If the focus was on national politics and the election, it's because only the federal government has the heft to bring in the sweeping measures — sometimes compared to an all-out war mobilization — needed to respond meaningfully to the climate emergency.

Many young people were and still are hesitant to engage in electoral organizing due to an erosion of faith in our democratic processes. Some have overcome this to do lobbying work with Our Time, while others choose to focus on education and community capacity-building, and planning local "Fridays for the Future" climate strikes. But as one activist explained, "we need everyone doing everything all the time." With its diversity of tactics, the climate movement is attracting hundreds of people new to organizing or new to the climate action movement.

"There is tremendous potential here," says David Camfield, professor of sociology and labour studies at the University of Manitoba and activist member of Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition (MEJC), a supporter of the Manitoba Youth for Climate Action's September 27 Global Climate Strike in Winnipeg. "The climate strike drew in tonnes of people. Some have organizing skills and others are new to social movements. The challenge is to leaders to facilitate everyone finding a role to play."

As reported recently in the *Monitor* (September/October 2019), Our Time held town halls last spring with the Pact for a Green New Deal and hosted the Leap tour in June. Organizers collected almost 50,000 signatures asking CBC to host a fall election leaders' debate on the climate crisis and held over 30 rallies outside CBC headquarters in Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Yellowknife and other communities. CBC rejected the idea, saying the climate would be covered in the general all-candidates debate. On October 10, during the final debate of the election, the greatest emergency of our time got 21 minutes.

As the election drew nearer, Our Time hubs started meeting with candidates face to face to determine whether we could count on them to support a Green New Deal if elected. In Winnipeg, Our Time approached and then chose to endorse Leah Gazan, a fierce Indigenous rights advocate

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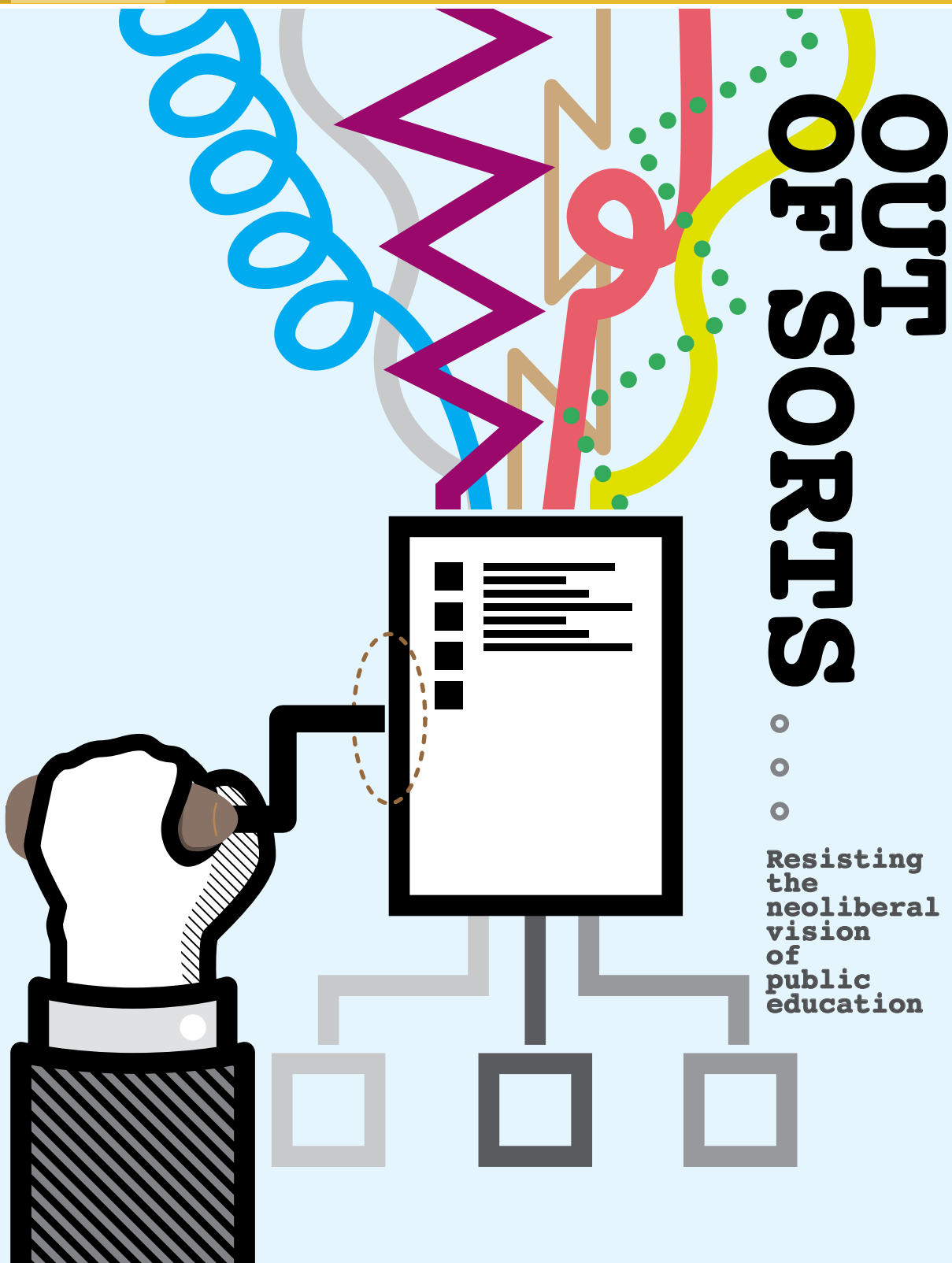
Our Schools/Our Selves

The Voice Of Progressive Education In Canada

Canadian Centre For Policy Alternatives

Winter/Spring 2020



OUT OF SORTS . . .

Resisting the neoliberal vision of public education

Winter/Spring 2020

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Editorial

Seizing the momentum

Erika Shaker

I am so pleased to reintroduce to longtime readers, and introduce to new ones, our popular education magazine *Our Schools / Our Selves*, which began in 1988 and which the CCPA has been publishing since 2000.

Given the growing prominence of education, both as a target of neoliberal governments and as sites of resistance for those working for systemic progressive change, we felt it made sense to move *OS/OS* from a standalone publication to one that would be regularly combined with the *CCPA Monitor*. I want to express my deep appreciation to Stuart Trew for his enthusiasm and support in this new collaboration.

In addition to the opportunity to address and reach more readers who may not have had read this popular education journal, I appreciate the symbolism; for many people, education is their way into discussions of globalization, privatization, justice and equity—so many of the topics explored in the *Monitor* and in CCPA's other publications.

Given the way in which education is under attack, in so many jurisdictions and on so many fronts, we need to be working together, and not at cross purposes. This can be challenging given that, when it comes to education, there are so many voices, so many needs—particularly as entrenched inequality disproportionately impacts our most vulnerable—and one size truly cannot fit all.

But, and I think this is important, those voices and that diversity are also a tremendous source of strength….provided we are listening to and learning from each other, and that we recognize a rejection of the current neoliberal direction does not mean an endorsement of the status quo. Too many people have been poorly served by the present system to pretend that this is the high water mark of what we are capable of and what our children deserve. We must strive to do better, with and for all of us.

At its heart, education is about the future, and about each other—two very powerful goals around which to rally, engage with each other, and truly make the kind of progress that leaves no one behind.

And not in a high stakes, standardized test kind of way.

This issue of *Our Schools / Our Selves* focuses on the ways in which the neoliberal education agenda and austerity governments are reshaping education across the country, and the impact of these changes on kids—particularly the most vulnerable—and communities. It discusses the seductive nature of the consumer-based, "choice" narrative that is often reinforced with public money to further a privatized agenda. But it also illustrates the passion with which the public will defend its schools and support their educators and education workers. This is on display in Ontario (at the time of writing) with the current state of labour negotiations between the education unions and the provincial government intent on imposing policies including larger class sizes and reduced course selections, mandatory e-learning, and board funding cuts in either per-pupil funding or total operating funding (or both).

The central feature in this issue is a provincial and territorial scan of standardized testing policies in K-12 education compiled by Dylan Kelly. It provides a snapshot of how pervasive

standardized assessment has become across the country, along with how it is being justified and the concerns that have been and continue to be raised about its impact and pedagogical efficacy. Going forward, we will continue to produce similar snapshots, painting a more comprehensive picture of education policies and practices across the country, and how they intersect with neoliberal reforms.

Chuka Ejeckam asks if it's really the responsibility of public education to mitigate and even reverse the effects of growing inequality, precarity, automation, and corporate power. Similarly, Alec Stratford examines the impact of sufficient and comprehensive anti-child poverty policy measures in Canada and Nova Scotia, and how it is placing additional stress on an already under-resourced education system (underscoring the irony of education being "the great equalizer"). Jim Silver and Kate Sjoberg look at the impact of complex, multi-faceted poverty—with additional forms of oppression—on students' educational outcomes at three schools in a Winnipeg suburb, and the way in which the board has been working with the surrounding community to try and strengthen networks of support inside and outside the schools.

Public money can be used to reinforce educational inequalities, or "educational segregation" as it's sometimes called in Quebec. Public funding of private schools exists in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and (to a limited extent) in Nova Scotia. Stéphane Vigneault provides a history of how public subsidies of private education began and evolved in Quebec, how public schools responded by implementing their own pseudo-private specialized public schools, and the implications of both for socioeconomic inequality in the province. It's an analysis that public education advocates in other provinces—especially Alberta, which also heavily subsidizes private education in the province—should pay close attention to.

Alberta education is also experiencing legislated changes similar to what is being witnessed (and opposed) in Ontario—the difference being that province's position, further along the neoliberal spectrum. In addition to significant cuts, and an end to subsidies implemented by the previous government—which have been met by vocal protests as illustrated by the powerful words of Barbara Silva from Support our Students Alberta—Alberta's minister of education has recently accused the province's educators of teaching pro-environment, anti-oil industry propaganda to students. Simon Enoch and Emily Eaton address this, in the Saskatchewan context, in their article about "bias balance" and ways in which climate change is, or isn't, being addressed in their province's classrooms.

The post-secondary sector is not immune from neoliberalism's pressures and prescribed restructuring. Claire Polster offers seven strategies for academics to help push back against the corporatization of their institutions, rebuilding solidarity and helping to create healthier campuses and workplaces that reject the often demeaning and demoralizing effects of an internalized corporate mindset.

Public education is a target of neoliberalism and the governments that enact its policies because of the investment it requires, the role it plays in shaping and reinforcing current and future priorities, and the opportunities it provides for civic resistance to regressive ideologies. Which is why, in spite of the intensity of the cuts intended to undermine the public system, disproportionately damaging the most vulnerable; in spite of the rhetoric designed to divide—students from teachers, the public from the schools they care so deeply about, educators and education workers from their elected union leadership—I am optimistic.

Parents, students, and workers as I discuss in "Familiarity Breeds Resistance" are coming together to fight for their schools. Young people are leading province-wide rallies in defense of relevant, inclusive curriculum and a sustainable future. Smaller classes. More course selections. Safe and inclusive schools. More one-on-one time with educators and education workers. These are what parents want to see for their kids.

Rather than dividing us, debates about the kind of schools we want to see for our kids, the supports required to support them inside and outside classrooms, and what it takes to get them, can be instrumental in bringing people together. But it requires us to listen, and to learn from each other and from the past. The attacks on public education are not new; they're part of a neoliberal continuum that's only as relentless as we allow.

I'm looking forward to continuing these conversations about the schools we want, the resources required to meet kids' needs, the communities we're building, the content being discussed and debated in classrooms across the country, and the educators and education workers whose job every day is literally about other peoples' children. And I'm looking forward to reconnecting with our supporters, across the country and internationally, who work every day for universal, high quality, equitable, accountable public education, from cradle to grave.

The bias of balance

What Canada's fossil fuel industry wants students to think about climate change

Emily Eaton and Simon Enoch

The past few years have witnessed a number of prestige media organizations offering a *mea culpa* of sorts for how they have reported on climate change in the past. Both the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and *The Guardian* have admitted that too often their blind pursuit of "balance" when covering global warming left readers believing the science of climate change was uncertain and up for debate, even as climate scientists moved towards overwhelming consensus on the reality of anthropogenic climate change. Despite this consensus—endorsed by the national academies of science of 17 countries as early as 2001—the news media regularly framed the science of climate change as a debate, "balancing" the consensus of the scientific community with statements from fringe climate deniers. In an internal memo to staff, the BBC admitted that it gets coverage of climate change "wrong too often" by seeking "false balance" in its coverage:

> To achieve impartiality, you do not need to include outright deniers of climate change in BBC coverage, in the same way you would not have someone denying that Manchester United won 2-0 last Saturday. The referee has spoken.

It is now well understood that this failure of "false balance" was not the news media's fault alone. In fact, it was a carefully cultivated public relations strategy by fossil fuel companies to exploit journalism's need for "balance" in order to confuse the public on the reality of global warming. Leaked internal documents demonstrate that the major oil companies—despite acknowledging the realities of climate change by their own sciene tists—developed a media strategy that sought to politicize climate science by promoting the views of climate deniers and accusing the news media of "bias" if their own hand-picked denialists were not included in coverage. Given the majority of the public rely on the news media for their knowledge of climate change issues, this strategy has done irreparable harm by sowing confusion and uncertainty over the most important issue of our time, delaying the urgent action required to prevent the more catastrophic impacts of climate change in the near future.

While these media outlets acknowledgement of "false balance" is welcome, if not severely overdue, our research demonstrates that the fossil fuel industry has been eager to strategically exploit "balance" in order to influence how climate change is thought about in another equally important public venue: Canada's classrooms.

The social sciences ought to also be teaching about climate change and considering the politics, economics and societal impacts and/or responses to climate change and climate change policies.

In the 1990s, Canada's fossil fuel industry began promoting what they called "bias-balanced" third-party environmental educational materials and professional development programs to teachers and students in the public-school system. The reach of these industry-sponsored third-party materials into Canada's classrooms is impressive. Inside Education, one of Canada's most prolific energy literacy education organizations—funded by the likes of British Petroleum, Cenovus Energy, Suncor and ConocoPhillips Canada—reports that in 2017, 24,736 students attended their programs, with 1,058 K-12 classrooms visited and 416 teachers enrolled in their professional development programs. Canada's other largest third-party environmental education provider, SEEDS (Society, Environment and Energy Development), which has been sponsored by Imperial Oil, Cenovus Energy and Chevron, boasts that its energy literacy series has reached over 1.5 million Canadian students, with programs in more than 8,000 Canadian elementary, middle, junior high, and senior high schools.

For the fossil fuel industry, the preference for third-party vehicles to influence environmental education in schools has been explicit since the outset. It was recognized early on that attempts by industry to directly produce and disseminate teaching materials would be met with suspicion. An advertising feature on behalf of SEEDS in 1989 points out this dilemma:

> The problem the energy industry in general has with going directly into education is that any material it produces is immediately suspect. It may, at worst, be branded propaganda. At best, teachers will look at it with suspicion as they wonder what the catch is. One solution is to fund someone else, someone recognized as a reliable authority in the field of education.

It was also recognized that clumsy attempts at blatant propaganda would not have the kind of staying power required to influence environmental education over the long haul. Speaking to *Oilweek* magazine in 1999, the president of SEEDS observed,

> We can't put propaganda into the school system. We might do it once, but not a second time. They [schools] are a place to get what we call bias-balanced information into their hands.

Third-party "bias-balanced" educational materials would be the solution to this dilemma, ensuring the environmental education curriculum took the industry's interests into account by framing any lesson plan that failed to include industry's perspective as "biased," while offering up "bias-balanced" materials that purport to give equal representation to industry, environmental, and educational interests in how they present environmental issues like climate change. Often this includes materials emphasizing the centrality of fossil fuels to modern life as well as the economic benefits of oil extraction. While this certainly sounds reasonable enough—who could be opposed to balance?—the consideration of industry "interests" when teaching established environmental science like climate change often serves to obfuscate that science. If there is a genuine debate within the environmental science community, that should certainly be emphasized in the classroom, but attempting to "balance" scientific arguments with the inclusion of industry arguments—or any other interest group—is to conflate political arguments with scientific ones. As science historian Naomi Oreskes emphasizes, "balance is a political concept, not a scientific one. It really has no place in science." Inserting industry perspectives into the teaching of climate science in our classrooms effectively transforms a scientific debate into a political one. It would be akin to having students consider the contribution of tobacco farming to GDP in a lesson on the health effects of smoking. This is not to claim that science education should not engage with the social and environmental worlds of which science is a part and in which scientific discourse attempts to intervene. Indeed, curricula across the country have explicitly moved towards the integration of science and technology with society and environmental education (or STSE). However, the integration of STSE should not prioritize the adoption of perspectives that speak from the narrow interests of one industry.

The social sciences ought to also be teaching about climate change and considering the politics, economics and societal impacts and/or responses to climate change and climate change policies. These are appropriate spaces to consider the kinds of interests involved both in obstructing and advocating for climate change action. Here industry perspectives could be included so long as their underlying motivations and consequences are also critically assessed. Instead the uncritical inclusion of industry perspectives without consideration of industry's underlying interests and its history in obstructing climate action through these third party programs and materials works to further disguise industry's agenda.

Yet these materials do not only serve to obfuscate climate science, our research demonstrates that these third-party provided materials also promote a very distinct form of "market-environmentalism" to students and teachers that

prioritizes market-based solutions and individual voluntary action over state-intervention and collective action as the best means to respond to climate change. Indeed, the third-party educational materials we reviewed focus entirely on individual student actions as the best means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—such as purchasing LED lightbulbs, low-flow shower heads or bicycles—with no discussion of industry responsibility for emissions or its documented culpability in delaying climate action. Similarly, when these materials do discuss political action, it is almost exclusively devoted to how best to enshrine these individual actions into law, such as encouraging carpooling, curbside recycling or municipal bans on idling cars. This pervasive focus on individual responsibility in these industry-sponsored materials confirms environmental writer Sami Grover's observation that contrary to popular belief, "fossil fuel companies are actually all too happy to talk about the environment. They just want to keep the conversation around individual responsibility, not systemic change or corporate culpability."

This is not to disparage such individual actions—they are laudable in their own right—but if students are encouraged to believe that these actions are the extent of what is necessary to effectively combat climate change, they will not only be sorely misinformed but sorely disappointed. With just 100 fossil fuel corporations responsible for more than 70 percent of GHG emissions since 1988, no climate change response worth its salt can fail to address the inordinate power of the fossil fuel industry. Due to decades of inaction, only state governments have the power to force the kinds of deep and rapid emission reductions on industry that will be required to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Moreover, only the state has the resources necessary to build the kind of sustainable energy and transportation infrastructure that allows us as individuals to make environmentally responsible choices. Ditching my personal automobile only becomes viable if there is a robust and effective system of public transportation for me to choose instead. But only mass collective action and popular pressure has the power to compel governments to act against what are often very powerful established interests. The fossil-fuel industry has long promoted this type of market-oriented environmentalism in lieu of state-led intervention and more stringent regulation that might negatively impact their bottom-line. Yet despite almost 30 years as the dominant mode of environmental regulation, market environmentalism has been an abject failure, with key environmental indicators in catastrophic decline over this period. As the realities of climate change and environmental degradation become more visible and alarming, today's students who will have to live with its impacts are becoming more and more motivated to "do something," as the global growth of student-led climate strikes attest. The market environmentalism promoted by organizations like SEEDS and Inside Education have attempted to channel this legitimate desire by youth to "do something" into relatively non-threatening and ultimately ineffective modes of voluntary environmental practice. Ultimately, these educational materials and programs do a disservice to students, as they evade the issue of corporate power altogether, while engendering a fantasy that small changes in personal consumption habits have the power to effectively address the planetary-scale threat of climate change. As renowned climate scientist Michael Mann argues, such lessons fail to "give our kids the tools to rise to the immense challenge they will face as the climate change generation."

This is not to disparage such individual actions but if students are encouraged to believe that these actions are the extent of what is necessary to effectively combat climate change, they will not only be sorely misinformed but sorely disappointed.

This article is based on research from a report by CCPA Saskatchewan: Crude Lessons: Fossil Fuel Industry Influence on Environmental Education in Saskatchewan *by Emily Eaton and Simon Enoch as part of the Corporate Mapping Project*

Emily Eaton is an associate professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Her work concerns the political economy of natural resource industries, just transition, and the political ecology of oil.

Simon Enoch is Director of the Saskatchewan Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. He holds a PhD in Communication & Culture from Ryerson University with research interests in corporate social responsibility and political ecology.

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A question of educational justice

Good afternoon.

My name is Barbara Silva and I am with Support Our Students Alberta, a public education advocacy organization! We are a citizen's action group committed to fighting for a universal, accessible and well funded public education system.

The other day, in an interview a journalist asked me if we are mad at this government—I'm here today to say that we are not mad.

We are furious.

We are furious on behalf of the child who wakes up sick every morning—worried about navigating a school where lack of support makes them feel unseen, and unheard.

We are enraged for parents who depend on transportation, hour long bus rides in lieu of costly before/after school care, whose costs have just doubled.

We are shocked that families are expected to fundraise for basic resources, like books, furniture, technology, playgrounds.

We are outraged that music teachers, phys ed teachers, art teachers, language teachers are now considered educational luxuries.

We are fuming, that part way through the school year, children who have built trusting relationships with their teachers will have those relationships broken in January due to cruel cuts.

We are furious that in the last four years, over one billion taxpayer dollars have left the public system to subsidize the private one, and that right now

the United Conservative Party is debating if that funding should actually increase.

This is now a question of educational justice.

So don't ask us to compromise.

Don't ask us to negotiate at the expense of Alberta's children.

We see the plan.

We know where this is taking public education.

We know this is about breaking the unions, weakening the public service and dividing communities.

We know that while the UCP debates a 100% voucher right now, we already have a 70% voucher system in Alberta.

We know they want you to focus on a teacher's two months off, instead of the 10 months of dedicated, committed work they put in year over year.

They think teaching is a vocation.

We know it is a calling.

They want you to see education as an individual commodity.

We know it is a common public good.

There are those who want to attack public education at every opportunity.

We will meet him there every time, to defend it.

We are here to say we are public education proud.

We are community builders, not breakers.

We support students.

We support teachers.

We support public education and we will not stand by and let it be sold to the highest bidder.

This is *the* moral issue of our generation—how we stand up for children's right to public education.

Today is just the beginning. Join us.

Choose public education.

This is based on a speech given by **Barbara Silva**, co-founder of SOS-AB, at the Rally for Public Education in Calgary on November 30, 2019. The video, along with closed captioning, is available at https://vimeo.com/376576481. For more information about Support Our Students (Alberta), please visit www.supportourstudents.ca/. (All photos courtesy of SOS-AB)

Justice obscured

The "great equalizer" argument isn't about education or equity

Chuka Ejeckam

The commonly-deployed adage that 'education is the great equalizer' is widely used in political discourse. It has become shorthand for the belief that access to educational resources, especially in the early childhood years, drastically improves individuals' life outcomes. Those who attend well-resourced schools in their early years—and, critically, have access to educational resources and experiences outside of their time at school—have a higher likelihood of graduating high school, attending post-secondary education, finding and maintaining employment in adulthood, and have higher average incomes. Political figures and pundits argue that to decrease inequity and inequality in socioeconomic outcomes and circumstances, access to education is essential.

In many ways, this is true. Children who have access to educational resources do typically go on to fare better in their lives than children who do not. However, citing education as 'the great equalizer' doesn't tell the whole story. In fact, this claim obfuscates some of the most important aspects of inequity, and the steps that must be taken to reduce and eliminate it.

First, by raising education as 'the great equalizer,' political figures and pundits effectively downplay society's broader obligation to proactively lessen inequalities—inequalities that are inevitably attached to historical and ongoing structures of dispossession, marginalization, and subjugation.

The 'great equalizer' claim ignores the fact that the groups in our society which experience the most inequitable lack of educational resources experience the most inequitable lack of *all* resources, public services, and support systems—Indigenous and First Nations students in Canada, for example, face an educational funding disparity of hundreds of millions of dollars. Such disparity makes completing high school and pursuing post-secondary education significantly more difficult for many young people. The claim also obscures the marginalization that certain groups experience *while in school.* Black students are disproportionately suspended and expelled from school, and are disproportionately likely to be pushed into applied-education streams, rather than academic streams which seek to prepare students for university.

Secondly, the 'great equalizer' claim arguably implicitly asserts that education should be pursued specifically for the purpose of improving one's economic circumstances. This reinforces the narrative that students should select educational programs most likely to secure high-income employment, ignoring entirely the self-actualizing benefits of pursuing education, and the innumerable benefits to society produced by practices other than the pursuit of wealth.

While the first aspect of the claim has largely deterrent policy implications—in that it could dissuade policymakers from pursuing measures which would lessen the surrounding inequalities that impact students' likelihood of completing high school and continuing on to post-secondary—the

second aspect of the claim can be actively enacted in troubling ways. This can be seen in the policy announced by the Conservative government in Ontario, which makes funding to educational institutions contingent, in part, upon indicators that include the job placement rate of their graduates. The full list of criteria that will be used to evaluate schools' performance has not been revealed, but the Training, Colleges, and Universities Minister has identified that graduation rate, graduate employment, graduate earnings, experiential learning, 'skills and competencies,' research funding and capacity, and community impact will be considered. The amount of funding directed in this manner to Ontario universities and colleges sits presently at 1.2 and 1.4 per cent, respectively, but will rise to 60 per cent by 2024. The government has also replaced free-tuition programs for low-income students with a mix of grants and loans, and has stated that funding will also be contingent on compliance with its new 'free speech' policy.

This decidedly employment-centric perspective of post-secondary education policies (which is certainly not limited to Ontario—Alberta's Blue Ribbon Panel also recommended perfore mance-based funding metrics) is often combined with the stated need to prepare graduates for the 'jobs of the future,' which implicates the trades as well. While the labour environment is certainly changing, this view effectively cedes control over that change to employers and corporations, rather than recognizing that workers and broader society can use collective power to make those changes serve everyone, not just those who seek only to profit from it.

The 'great equalizer' claim reinforces the bootstrap myth, placing the onus upon those on the lower rungs of social and economic ladders to raise themselves up, rather than arguing that we, as a society, must seek to reshape the structures which produce and entrench such grievous inequality.

What's more, a host of problems arise when considering metrics which incentivize colleges and universities to prioritize streams of education that are especially desirable to employers. In many ways, it functions as a means of using public institutions to bear the costs of training workers, to the benefit of private-sector employers. It also forces us to consider what sorts of research, experiential learning, skills and competencies, or community impacts will be considered valuable by a government that accused student unions of "crazy Marxist nonsense."

A number of socioeconomic forces that influence a student's likelihood of graduation, let alone their areas of interest, are replicated and reinforced by application of metrics that prioritize market-based forces and employer demands. In a worst-case scenario, colleges and universities might be hesitant to take on students who, as a result of their political or educational interests, or even as a result of their life situation (including caring for dependents or other significant obligations) could negatively impact the school's funding.

Further, this funding structure has implications for new and young professors, who—along with the insecurity they experience in their academic employment—will now have to contend with institutional funding being tied to the workplace- and economy-based expectations and demands placed on the students they have taught. A noted impact of employment precarity is heightened levels of stress and anxiety, which does immense harm to the person experiencing it, as well as increasing societal health care costs, and negatively impacting students.

There's no question that, in the long term, automation will have a significant impact on how we conceive of and perform work. In fact, this has already been leveraged by employers demanding that both work and education become less comprehensive, and more segmented into a series of isolated tasks.

This has already impacted the trades. In 2003, the BC Liberal government introduced a modularized trades training structure in British Columbia—a system which trained students and young workers in a more task-specific model, as opposed to providing a comprehensive education in the students' respective fields. For example, rather than offering a comprehensive program which would provide an individual with certification as a carpenter, the modularized training system offered a progressive set of learning modules which provided certification as a former, framer, and finishing carpenter, and so only cumulatively offered training in the full trade. The system also relied upon employers to identify skill requirements and develop training programs themselves, diminishing the education and training role of the labour movement (an additional benefit to employers).

The long-term effects included a decrease in completion of full-trade certifications, a stratification in the number of registrations across trade sectors, and an immediate increase in rates of workplace injury to a level four times that of tradespeople in Ontario. While injury rates in the trades are almost always higher than those of workers in university-related professions or office-based workers, the underlying point stands; the benefits of a comprehensive education are difficult to fully quantify, and the negative consequences of modularizing education at the behest of employers are difficult to fully predict. This is especially relevant in fields deemed least susceptible to automation—the fields of education

and care provision—where teaching and aiding 'the full person' exponentially increases the value and benefit of the service.

The education system alone cannot solve inequities and inequalities that are structurally embedded in our society. In implying otherwise, the 'great equalizer' claim reinforces the bootstrap myth, placing the onus upon those on the lower rungs of social and economic ladders to raise themselves up, rather than arguing that we, as a society, must seek to reshape the structures which produce and entrench such grievous inequality. These are structures which underpin and inform our politics to this day, and curtailing the harm they propagate through generations cannot be accomplished with a single policy or institution. The only 'great equalizer' available is a mass social movement seeking to reshape society in service of justice, rather than profiteers.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to pursue an education that teaches them about the world, about themselves, and helps them find their place in the stupefying and inscrutable cosmos of existence. Increasing access to education is certainly positive, and increasing funding to educational institutions to eliminate tuition fees and improve access to resources and opportunities during post-secondary education can reduce inequality. However, education should be considered an essential aspect of well-being and self-actualization, not merely—and certainly not primarily—a means to economic security.

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PHOTO SOURCE: SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS (ALBERTA)

Falling behind

Prioritizing care and well-being of children in Nova Scotia

Alec Stratford

In Nova Scotia, child protection social workers are going above and beyond their duties to try to hold a system together that has suffered from a lack of resources, the role of professional care in our society being undermined, and a focus on searching for "efficiencies" rather than best practices to foster human-centered connection.

The Nova Scotia government is determined to mark its success by the growth and expansion of the economy which theoretically will benefit all; however, this has resulted in political leaders dismissing any evidence demonstrating overall well-being continues to deteriorate.

Clearly, provincially and nationally the well-being of our children and youth is not being properly prioritized or adequately supported. For example;

- Child poverty remains stubbornly high and continues to rise. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia reported that child poverty increased from 18.1 per cent in 1989 to 21.5 percent in 2016.
- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death of Canadian children and youth, according to the Raising Canada report. Over the last 10 years, there was a 66 per cent increase in emergency department visits and a 55 per cent increase in hospitalizations of children and youth due to mental health concerns. In Nova Scotia alone, 806 children were hospitalized for mental health concerns in 2016.
- The child protection system disproportionately involves children, youth and families who are Indigenous, black, or visible minorities, as indicated in a 2018 report by the Canadian Association of Social Workers.
- UNICEF ranks the well-being of children in Canada at 25th out of 41 affluent nations. Canada is at the bottom of the rankings for challenges that may seem inconceivable—child health and safety, child poverty, hunger and abuse.

These realities have had a profound impact on the ability of teachers, social workers and other staff to support communities, and help improve the education, emotional and social well-being of children. Yet the Nova Scotia government continues to implement an organizational and management change strategy that will transform crucial services without increasing overall financial resources to schools', families and community services.

The promotion of austerity as the supposed "solution" to our supposedly "failing" public services has resulted in the erosion of the well-being of Nova Scotia's most vulnerable children. Children in institutional care often lack an attachment with a consistent caregiver, which has ramifications for physical development and language. This has major consequences: inadequate care and protection threaten children's well-being and stops them from developing and learning to their full potential. Inequities are further perpetuated when services required to provide meaningful care and protections are unavailable. Because many children who experience a lack of care or protection commonly come from already

marginalized groups, the stigma and discrimination they have experienced is further reinforced by an inadequate support system.

With the aim of transforming child protection services, the government implemented over 80 amendments to the Children and Family Services Act in 2016, broadened the definition of a child in need of protective services, included youth 16–19 years of age, and tightened court timelines. Social workers and community organizations reported their concerns with the legislative changes prior to implementation. Their concerns included increased caseloads, the readiness of staff and community organizations to implement the changes and the ability of families to make necessary changes given the tightened court timelines. Most importantly concerns were raised that the goal of the amendments would not be met if the Nova Scotia government failed to increase community supports such as housing, food security, child care and access to meaningful income, which remain essential to ensuring that vulnerable families, children and youth maintain overall well-being.

This has led to high caseloads and challenging workloads for social workers, and large class sizes and complex classroom needs for teachers, creating conditions which make it extremely difficult, if not impossible to provide quality care and protection for at-risk families, youth and children. Family structures can be complex and require authentic and empathetic relationship-building to develop meaningful solutions; this is heightened for marginalized families.

These concerns have been compounded by shifts in the provincial education system. In January 2018 Nova Scotia replaced seven local school boards with one provincial advisory council. The stated aim was to centralize services, reduce costs and create more efficiencies in the delivery of education; however, shifting decision making from communities to top-heavy bureaucracies is a neoliberal trait where government services are treated like a business, rather than focusing on the needs of the people they serve, and the policies that generate better outcomes.

This crisis is driven by lack of political focus on the policies that lead to greater well-being. Nationally we have failed to keep pace with complex social needs, and over the past 20 years have reduced overall social spending, choosing instead to prioritize the interests of the affluent. Social expenditures in Canada fall well below the OECD average: 17.2 per cent of GDP compared to 21 per cent. This also represents a drop from the 1990s, when Canada was at 20.4 per cent. The impact on Canadian and Nova Scotian well-being has been dire.

As economists continue to point out, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can go up without affecting working and vulnerable Nova Scotians: GDP in Canada has steadily grown over the last two decades, but only the incomes of the richest 20 per cent of Canadians have actually increased. When success is judged by economic growth, political leaders respond with policies that value balanced budgets and competitive taxes, but as we've seen over the past 20 years, the well-being of the entire population has been jeopardized as the benefits stubbornly refuse to "trickle down" as we were promised. The claim that economic growth and expanding GDP will benefit all of society has been debunked many times now, most notably by the very people who invented it: the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

And yet the claim continues to be made, despite overwhelming evidence that this market-prioritizing dogma is at the root of:

- Rising inequality and the continued class divide, which has allowed the voices of oppressed to go unnoticed, eroded trust, and increased anxiety and illness for all;
- Governments enacting austerity policies (expanding corporate influence in the process) attempt to cut the cost of care, institutionalize new management systems, and centralize government services, leading to highly top-down bureaucratic systems;
- Entrenchment of the patriarchy, which devalues the work of professional care — predominantly done by women;
- Managerialism that devalues and deskills professional competence, and creates a framework which aims to run government services like a business searching for efficiencies rather than promoting human connection.

To address these trends, and their impact on the ability of Nova Scotians to receive the services and care that they rely on, our political goals require a fundamental paradigm shift. And this means ensuring that the goal of improving well-being is equally important as the goal of developing a strong economy. There is momentum; earlier in 2019 the government of New Zealand implemented its first ever well-being budget, which at its core recognized that their sole focus cannot just on growing the economy, but on enhancing the quality of life for all its citizens. This could be a gamechanger for how we define progress, and how we achieve it.

Nova Scotia — indeed, all of Canada — needs a similar focus.

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Quebec's (sadly) distinct education system

Stéphane Vigneault

The Mouvement L'école ensemble was launched by parents in 2017 to address connections between public financing, equity and school segregation, an issue that no government in Quebec has ever wanted to tackle. Until now.

We Quebecers like to pride ourselves on having some of the most progressive public policies on the continent. So anything that does not support this (mostly true) narrative is unwelcomed. But it's time to acknowledge that, when comparing provincial funding models, Quebec's system of education is not only the most unfair, it is also the least efficient. A report containing never-seen-before OECD data comparing provinces on equity was made public in October 2019 by the Mouvement : Quebec is dead last on every indicator.

The high degree of structural unfairness and inefficiency in Quebec's education system has been in *la belle province*'s political blind spot for half a century, but things are changing: more and more people, including key influencers in politics and the media, are starting to admit we have a serious problem.

How did we get here?

The Quiet Revolution

The Quiet Revolution was in motion when the Department of Education was created in 1964: prior to that point, the Catholic and Protestant churches had been in charge of education but, with the baby boom, the government was struggling to keep up by building new schools. And the Catholic Church still wielded enormous power in the province.

In 1968 the Union nationale government struck a deal to fund private schools (mostly former "collèges classiques" where the few francophones who had access at that time to secondary education were educated) with taxpayers' money. The Parent Commission, tasked by the provincial government under Premier Lesage to make recommendations in order to modernise Quebec's education system, backed this decision. As former commission member Guy Rocher recently recalled in an interview, the Commission came close to officially opposing the public funding of private schools, but the inherent give-and-take of such an exercise and the fear that a minority report would weaken the overall exercise eventually allowed the Church's position to prevail.

What was the Catholic Church gain soon became Quebec's loss; this public financing of private education would prove to be a one-way street to school segregation and its consequences.

A Vicious Circle

This public money allowed subsidized private schools to continuously increase their share of

the school market. Only 5% of secondary school students attended private schools in 1970: today, more than 22% of them do so. It should be noted that 93% of the province's private school students are in subsidized private schools, which charge tuition fees and screen applicants, further reinforcing socioeconomic segregation.

But rather than opposing the fiscal privilege granted to subsidized private schools, public institutions and education ministers instead decided to compete with private schools on their own turf: selection. Public schools officials wanted the same competitive advantage private schools had, i.e. the capacity to offer parents an exclusive environment for their children.

And so, in the 1990s, "projets particuliers" (selective public schools, or classes within schools) were created, with modes of selection that are still used to filter out kids who aren't the right "fit": registration, exam fees, exams, tuition (anywhere between $100 and $10,000), auditions, letters, mandatory parental involvement, etc. With a number of different focuses — international, sports, arts or alternative programming — the new "public" schools proved extremely popular with parents. Not only were most of them cheaper than private schools, they offered a comforting loophole for left-of-center parents who wanted the benefit of private-like schooling without actually leaving the public system.

The Department of Education does not make public any detailed picture of selective schools' attendance and, likewise, there isn't any public data on the socioeconomic composition of selective public schools.[1]

In a 2007 report, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation[2] estimated the proportion of pupils in selective public schools at 20%, describing this figure as "conservative". Testimonies the Mouvement has received suggest this figure is much higher today.

As a result of this socioeconomic "skimming", "regular" public schools have an over-representation of students with special needs who tend to require more support. Particularly in an era of underfunded and under-resourced schools, this composition of the "regular" public school classroom makes subsidized private and selective public schools more attractive to parents. And the vicious circle becomes even more entrenched.

Consequences

This three-tier school system led the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation to sound the alarm in a 2016 landmark report, *Steering the Course Back to Equity in Education.* The Conseil explained that "in all provinces or regions of Canada, students in disadvantaged schools have performed less well than those in privileged schools, but this difference is much higher in Quebec." The report clearly states that something is rotten in the state of Quebec.

Its findings are worth quoting extensively (emphasis added):

> The socio-economic status of Canadian students appears in effect to have relatively little influence on their score (OECD 2014). However, in every subject measured by PISA, **the difference in achievement between students from schools in disadvantaged areas and those in affluent ones continues to be markedly more significant in Québec than in other Canadian provinces or territories**. And yet social programs in Québec are considered to be more generous than in other provinces. The analysis also shows that **the stratification of the offer in compulsory education — brought about by a proliferation of selective special programs and private schools — is leading to an unequal treatment that tends to favour the more fortunate.** In other words, those who most need the best learning conditions are not benefitting from them, and this runs counter to the very essence of equity.
>
> **Rather than reducing social inequality, however, the Québec education system operates in ways that contribute to some extent to perpetuating it.** Children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with learning disabilities are overrepresented in public classrooms [...]. In addition, families from disadvantaged communities tend to be less informed about their rights or lack the capability to assert them. Thus, despite countervailing measures in place in these communities, the education system has barely made a dent in reducing these contextual inequalities**.**
>
> Competition in education goes hand in hand with the belief that not all schools are alike, and is feeding a **crisis of confidence that is weakening the public education system**. This crisis reinforces the tendency to group students by educational and or socio-economic profiles, **resulting in a form of exclusion that is opening the door to a multi-tiered school. Thus a gap is growing between communities,** with some institutions or classrooms viewed as less conducive for learning (shunned by those families who can) and working conditions more challenging (shunned by those teachers who can).

This issue is one of fairness or equity — or, in this case, *un*fairness and *in*equity. Disadvantaged and marginalized students (and this is true around the world) tend to perform less well academically

PHOTO SOURCE: LE DEVOIR WEBSITE

Moving Forward

Le Mouvement L'école ensemble was created by Gatineau parents in June 2017, in the leadup to the October 2018 provincial election, to advocate for an equitable system of public education.

Our goal is to have political parties include our two main demands in their platform:
1) Put an end to all direct or indirect private school funding and
2) Put an end to the selection of students in the public system for selective special projects, at both primary and secondary levels.

Our longer term goal (#3), once the unified public system we are calling for is put in place, is to consolidate aid to struggling students and develop an enriched learning environment for students who are high achievers, ensuring all kids are well-served and adequately supported within a common classroom.

We asked CROP to poll Quebecers on our three proposals and the results, released in January 2018, were overwhelmingly in our favour: almost 75% of Quebeckers were opposed to public funding for private schools; 65% wanted an end to student selection through admissions exams for public schools.

When we launched our movement, the term *school segregation* was always in quotation marks in the press. This is slowly changing. And as a result of our hard work and good timing, elected officials took a stand on school segregation in the National Assembly—a first!—bringing education critics of both the Parti Québécois and Québec Solidaire together on the same stage.

We received endorsements from a range of groups including the Federation of parent committees and the Commission scolaire de Montréal (the biggest school board in the province, and a unanimous vote at that!)

During the last electoral campaign, we organised, the night before the debate, a conference in Montreal with Finnish education expert Pasi Sahlberg. It gave the 150 assembled at the École nationale d'administration publique a taste of what a unified system could be. In Pasi Sahlberg's words, "In the 70's, Finns wanted to use education to even out social inequality. We discovered that equity also brings about excellence."

PHOTO SOURCE: JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL WEBSITE

PHOTO SOURCE: TVA WEBSITE

Top Montreal launch, June 2017 (Stéphane Vigneault, Anne-Marie Boucher) **Middle** Joint press conference with Alexandre Cloutier (PQ) and Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois (QS)

particularly absent the necessary supports. In a fairer system, such as Finland's, this difference in performance is mitigated. But in an inequitable system like Quebec's, inequalities at the starting line remain until the finish line. PISA researchers summarised the issue in October 2018's *PISA in Focus* newsletter: "Socio-economic status has a strong influence on students' performance, but in more equitable education systems more disadvantaged students perform well."

With more than 42% of the province's schoolchildren segregated (22% of children chosen by the subsidized private sector schools in addition to the [at least] 20% of children screened by public selective schools), we should not be surprised by Quebec's poor results and their consequences:

- A quarter of secondary school students drop out.
- Dropouts cost taxpayers $2 billion in annualised dollars according to a 2009 BMO study.
- A quarter of teachers leave the profession during their first five years in the labour market.
- 53% of 16–65 year-olds in Quebec have low or insufficient literacy skills.

So why are we ignoring this situation?

Political Mythology

Until now, two myths have allowed the private school lobby (the Fédération des établissements d'enseignements privés [FEEP]) to avoid any serious attack on its privileges. The first claims that subsidized private schools actually *save* taxpayers money. The second one states that private schools are simply better and therefore need to continue their exemplary work (to form the next generation of leaders, and to inspire public schools). These myths are held as facts by millions of Quebecers although they are built on sand.

Private Schools Save Us Money? Really?

According to Quebec's Department of Education, private schools receive 60% of their budget from taxpayers, and the remaining 40% comes from private school parents. Private school proponents claim that if private schools were nationalized, the remaining 40% would also have to come from taxpayers and this would prove too great a burden for the public treasury.

But the legendary 60% figure disguises reality, because it does not compare apples with apples; it does not acknowledge the higher cost of supporting special needs kids who are overrepresented in the public system, and it does not acknowledge that because public education is a universal commitment, all kids must have access to it and all teachers must be paid fairly, regardless of population density or location.

So, what's the right number? The best-known estimate came from the group of experts chaired by the former Quebec Ombudsman, Ms. Champoux-Lesage, who examined education financing in 2014. The group estimated that the cost to the state of a subsidized private student was 74.8% of that of an equivalent public student in high school, 63.9% in elementary school and 63.6% in preschool.

But to that direct funding we must also add *indirect* funding through tax credits. According to a study by a Université de Sherbrooke professor, tax credits for donations to private schools cost us between $16 million and $24 million per year. If we split the difference and add $20 million to direct funding, we reach an astonishing figure of 79% of public funding for *private* secondary school students. In other words, almost eight out of every 10 dollars needed to educate subsidized private school pupils comes from public funds.

That's a long way from the often quoted 60%.

But the private schools lobby also conveniently forgets that if its schools were not publicly subsidized, their students would not cost[3] the public purse a penny—another potential saving that must absolutely be taken into account. In Ontario, where private schools are not subsidized, 5.6% of secondary level students (in 2016) attend those schools, at zero cost to taxpayers.

In fact, we have calculated that eliminating the public subsidy to private schools and integrating private school students into public schools would save Quebec taxpayers $14 million each year (for secondary schools). And this says nothing about long-term gains (lower drop-out rates, better social cohesion) for our economy as a result of making the public system more efficient and more fair though redirecting of all public funding earmarked for private education towards public schools.

Private Schools are Not Better

The second myth is perhaps the most powerful; that private schools are simply better than public ones. Statistics Canada studied this in a 2015 report, and concluded that "Students who attended private high schools were more likely to have socio-economic characteristics positively associated with academic success and to have school peers with university-educated parents." In other words, private schools are not better: private school students have fewer challenges and obstacles, so what is at issue here is the selection of students and the resulting school segregation.

The myth that private schools are better is ingrained in the public conscience. Annual Fraser Institute rankings, dutifully reported by media anxious to help parents "shop" for the best possible schools, reinforce this idea. And even some lower-income parents sing the praises of

public subsidies for private schools. We occasionally receive feedback on social media from some financially-squeezed families saying that they don't take vacation so they can send their kids to private school—that it's a matter of "priorities." And isn't this the First Law of Being a Parent: wanting the best for your child?

Although the Department of Education does not publicize information concerning the income of private school parents, the Mouvement L'école ensemble analyzed data from Quebec children participating in the PISA exam and found that there are few low-income children in private schools. In fact, there are six times more disadvantaged children in public schools than in private ones (29.8% versus 5.6%). While this six-fold figure should have triggered an emergency debate in the National Assembly (like it did in France after famous economist Thomas Pikkety wrote about France's similar numbers in *Le Monde*), the ugly truth is that had we been able to extract numbers that isolated regular public from selective public schools, it's likely that the situation is even worse.

It's also notable that, to access this data, we had to go through PISA servers in Paris to get a better portrait of forces at play in Quebec's education system, but the results were not particularly surprising: we already knew (thanks to a private schools lobby report) that subsidized private families have a median income 184% higher than that of public families.

When presented with these numbers, we can, like the current Education minister Jean-François Roberge, say they tell us nothing new and maintain our unofficial school segregative policy. Or we can fight back for the common good.

Change is Coming

Attitudes toward school segregation are changing. Social acceptance of entrance exams, tuition fees, expulsion of unwanted students or other methods of screening children is falling. Last spring, education minister Roberge introduced Bill 12 which sought to clarify what additional costs schools can and cannot charge to parents, after a lawsuit launched by a parent who refused to pay a fee for her child's recorder. Thanks to the rising awareness of the causes and implications of school inequity in the province, all three opposition parties, including the Liberals, usually a vocal status quo force on the matter, took on the issue of tuition in selective public schools.

In the end, the majority CAQ government managed to pass its bill, putting for the first time in law that *the requirement for the state to provide free public education does not apply to selective public schools*. But the debate was intense. Le Mouvement joined other citizen groups calling on the Minister to focus Bill 12 on general fees—for recorders and the like—and set up a public commission to study tuition in selective public schools along with all matters relating to school segregation. All three opposition parties supported the idea. The Minister did not but, in the process, he was forced to admit his department had no clear portrait of the attendance of selective public schools nor any socioeconomic data about the students who attend them and publicly mandated his department to provide him with this information.

There are few things more difficult for politicians than taking away a privilege from current and potential voters. But the arguments against school segregation are backed by facts and science, and by the majority of Quebecers—and the odds against change are shifting. Distinguishing ourselves in Canada with the unfairness currently built into our education system needs to end.

And for the first time, it appears that it may.

Stéphane Vigneault is the coordinator of le Mouvement L'école ensemble, works in the art sector as a consultant, and lives in Gatineau QC..

Le **Mouvement L'école ensemble** campaigns against school segregation in Quebec. You can sign its petition at www.ecoleensemble.com. Individuals and organizations interested in helping the association achieve its goal of hiring a full-time employee can donate online.

Notes

1. Good socioeconomic data for the public system in general is not available. There are two public school socioeconomic rankings publicly available (SFR and IMSE), but they are poorly constructed indexes in which kids bring in their postal code's characteristics instead of their household's. Private schools are excluded from these indexes.

2. The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (CSE) is a public, arm's length advisory body for the Minister of Education and Higher Education.

3. (Editor's note) Andrew Scheer, until recently leader of the Canadian Conservative Party, had voiced his intentions to provide parents who send their children to private schools with a tax credit of up to $4,000 per child from the federal government if he was elected Prime Minister. He reversed this pledge before the election.

Testing, testing

A provincial scan of K-12 standardized assessment in Canada

Dylan Kelly

Standardized tests, a politically popular policy for politicians and some external groups, are a form of assessment which cover a particular topic and are meant to apply the same to every student at a certain level/grade. The results are presented as objective assessments of student success in specific areas of education.

Proponents argue that standardized assessments provide information to governing bodies about the education system to determine "achievement gaps" and propose various remedies (resources or focus) that might improve the students' ability to succeed (or at least improve test scores). Standardized testing is positioned as, at least theoretically, immune from indicators such as race, gender and class, and would therefore remove barriers to higher education by "leveling the playing field" for test takers. This form of assessment is promoted as more market-based or consumer-friendly: standardized test scores allow parents to track their child's progress in various areas to determine if the school is succeeding.

A number of arguments have been raised in opposition to a reliance on standardized testing to assess students' educational performance, in part due to the inability of this form of assessment to recognize or "score" topics that are not easily standardized—creativity, critical thinking, or outside-the-box approaches to problem-solving.

Although standardized assessments claim to be objective performance measurements of students' abilities, the very act of "sorting" students has deeply inequitable origins where race, gender and class are concerned. Socio-economic status affects education outcomes including standardized test results, which suggests that "success" on standardized assessments is significantly impacted by family wealth[1] and access to educational opportunities that, with the underfunding of education, are increasingly out of reach for students based on location and family income. That standardized tests apply equally to all students is problematic because certain students have different learning styles or special needs and may not perform well on these high-pressure assessments. Minimal accommodations made for students with Personal Learning Plans are no real solution when it comes to mandatory tests.

Another common concern is the issue of teaching to the test, where teachers will deprioritize or forego other classroom content to prepare students for the format and content of the standardized test. This suggests that these assessments are not directly linked to the content and learning objectives of a provincial curriculum, as teachers have to commit class time to teaching content (or even test-taking skills) not covered or prioritized during the regular school year. A related issue is the reduction of actual learning time in class in favour of test preparation, because at some level teachers and schools are being

assessed through students' performance on standardized tests as well.

When student scores on a standardized assessment are linked to perceived teacher quality—as they generally are—it puts tremendous pressure on educators, whose reputation is now linked to student performance on an assessment method that is deeply flawed, and also creates a high-pressure situation for students, which itself can impact test performance.

This pressure only intensifies when assessments are a graduation requirement or contribute to a portion of the student's final grade. Test results can also have implications for a student's self esteem and identity, as a failure on graduation requirement tests can lead students to question their future in education and may ultimately contribute to the decision to drop out of school altogether.[2]

Test scores also lend themselves to superficial school rankings which reinforces the "good schools = good test scores" narrative. Rankings of this sort often overrepresent private schools in the top-scored schools without fully controlling for factors including higher family income, more extracurricular activities and much smaller classes. It's also become a useful hammer in the anti-public school toolkit, meant to "convince people" of problems with the public-school system[3] and to advocate in favour of a more private, market-friendly model.

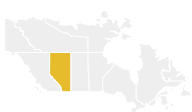
The association of student success, as determined by standardized assessments, with the language of work-place preparation is also problematic as it prioritizes shorter-term workplace demands over students pursuing educational interests that may not have an obvious or immediate employment-based application. This could have significant implications for student engagement if workplace demands and educational interests do not coincide.

In Canada, education is under provincial jurisdiction, which provides for some variation between provinces when it comes to content, structure, and assessment methods. Despite this ability for differentiation, all provinces have embraced—in one form or another—standardized testing as a method of assessment.

British Columbia

British Columbia conducts various standardized tests on K-12 students through Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) in grades 4 and 7; in the early 2000s the FSA for grade 10 was replaced with provincial exams.[4] The stated purpose of the FSA, which corresponds to provincial curriculum, is "to help the province, school districts, schools and school planning councils evaluate how well students are achieving basic skills, and make plans to improve student achievement."[5] Grade 10 provincial assessments for numeracy were introduced in 2018, a grade 10 literacy test starting in 2019/2020, and a grade 12 literacy test in 2020/2021.[6] The stated purpose of these Provincial Graduation Assessments (a passing grade is required to graduate high-school) is to ensure students have developed skills of numeracy and literacy as defined by the provincial curriculum, as well as the ability to apply, "knowledge, reason, and communicate effectively as [students] examine, interpret, and solve problems."[7]

Government policy changes regarding provincial standardized testing are unclear: the 2017 Ministry of Education mandate letter does not mention student assessment or use language generally associated with standardized testing (accountability, metrics, assessment).[8] Despite this, the Provincial Graduation Assessments demonstrate that the current BC government's goal is to not only maintain but enhance the amount of standardized testing in K-12 education, and continue the way in which this form of measurement is associated with assessment of student achievement.



Alberta

In Alberta, there are three types of K-12 standardized testing: the Student Learning Assessment (SLA), the Provincial Achievement Test (PAT), and Diploma Examinations. The SLA is administered at the commencement of grade 3 for literacy and numeracy to identify areas of student success, as well as where achievement gaps exist so teachers know where more work is needed to be done.[9] The SLA has been optional since 2018, based on a teacher's professional opinion as to whether it is best for their student's learning and development in the class.[10] The PATs are administered in grades 6 and 9 in English/French language arts, math, science, and social studies; the stated purpose of these assessments is to show Albertans

if students are meeting provincial standards each year, and to help schools and authorities monitor and determine where improvements are necessary.[11] Diploma Examinations are taken by students enrolled in grade 12 courses, and are a factor in a student's admission to university or college, making up 30% of the course's final grade. The stated purpose of the Diploma exams is to assess student achievement relative to the curriculum objectives, and to provide an assessment standard which remains consistent over time and across the province.[12]

Going forward, specific changes proposed by the recently-elected United Conservative Party are new literacy and numeracy assessments for grades 1, 2 and 3, and reintroducing the PAT for grade 3 students.[13] Premier Jason Kenny has also indicated his interest in reinstating the value of the Diploma Examinations at 50% (up from the current 30%).[14] This suggests that. overall, the current Alberta government is heading down a path of increased standardized testing for K-12 education, both in the number of tests administered and in the grade value attached to them.

Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan's K-12 education system the only form of standardized testing is the Departmental Examinations which are completed by students in grade 12 courses who have been instructed by a non-accredited teacher, homeschooled, or who are taking these classes as adult learners. The exam makes up 40% of the final grade in the course, and is designed to compensate for the lack of qualifications of the non-qualified instructor who would otherwise provide 100% of a student's evaluation.[15]

Back in 2013, the Saskatchewan education minister announced an education plan which included annual testing for every student; however, the government quickly backed away from this proposal after concerned teachers and parents pointed to a lack of consultation on the program.[16] The Education Ministry Plan for 2019-2020 references accountability as a way to improve student achievement, and the use of measurable outcomes to identify student levels in reading, writing, and math[17]—topics commonly the subject of standardized assessments in other provinces. Overall, Saskatchewan does not outline a plan to introduce provincial standardized tests; however, the language used, coupled with previous attempts to introduce assessments suggests this direction may be pursued by the current government.

Manitoba

Manitoba has various standardized tests throughout K-12 education, starting with the Grade Three Assessment in numeracy and reading, a Grade Four Assessment in French Immersion, and a Middle Year Assessment for grades 7 and 8 which covers math, reading, writing, and student engagement.[18] The purpose of these assessments is to inform parents (and the provincial education system) as to where students' level of achievement is at respective to their program objectives and grade level.[19] In grade 12 there are Provincial Tests for various courses which make up 30% of the student's final mark; these are meant to obtain information about a student's level of knowledge and understanding relative to the stated objective set by provincial curriculum documents.[20]

The 2018 mandate letter for the Ministry of Education and Training does not once mention learning, and only talks about 'development' in economic terms: the focus is on meeting the needs of the labour market and Manitoba industry. The only mention in the mandate letter of K-12 is regarding the goal of improving outcomes.[21] In the absence of a policy shift, we can only assume the prominent role standardized assessments currently play in K-12 education will continue.

Ontario

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) administers grade 3 and grade 6 assessments in reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as a grade 9 test for numeracy which, as a graduation requirement, contributes to 10% of a student's final math mark.[22,23] The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), administered in high school, is also a graduation requirement. It requires a 75% passing grade, while a fail requires the student to retake the test the following year; a second failure means the student takes a literacy course in grade 12. The goal of such standardized tests in Ontario, as stated by the EQAO, is to provide a measurable result of student achievement in accordance with the Ontario curriculum.[24]

The plan released by the current government regarding education included a commitment to modernizing the EQAO, and more effective use of data while focusing on equity. Interestingly, other themes the government indicates it wants to pursue, including parental engagement and citizenship, are all to be assessed from within this

frame of EQAO-based standardized assessment.[25] In particular the data angle seems the most important to the current government. The new chair of the EQAO board is an unsuccessful Progressive Conservative candidate, and the position has been increased from part-time (at $5,000 salary) to full-time (at $140,000 salary).[26] The current PC government demonstrates a direction of continued assessment of K-12 students.

Quebec

Quebec students take standardized tests called Compulsory Examinations in grades 4 (French assessment), 6 (math and English assessment) and 8 (Secondary II, French assessment). The test results contribute to 20% of a student's final grade in the specific course, and the stated purpose is to evaluate learning in particular subjects.[27] Students write Ministerial Examinations in grade 10 covering science, history, and math; in grade 11 there are English and French assessments, the purpose of which is to demonstrate achievement of the program objectives in accordance with the Administrative Guide 2015 Edition.[28] The Ministerial Exams constitute 50% of a student's final mark in the subject, and a pass on all exams is required in order to graduate.[29]

Quebec's provincial government has focused heavily on school board elimination, and has not made changing standardized testing policies in K-12 education a part of its stated mandate, suggesting that the status quo for assessment and data use will likely continue.

New Brunswick

New Brunswick's grade 2 English Reading Assessment, is currently being modified to focus more on literacy.[30] Additional tests occur in grades 4, 6, and 10 where students are assessed in reading, math and science.[31,32,33] Another secondary school assessment, the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), designed to test students' reading skills in accordance with provincial curriculum, is a graduation requirement; a "below appropriate achievement" mark means the student must take the English Language Proficiency Reassessment in a later grade.[34] The final form of standardized testing is the Provincial Examinations for various high school courses; a passing grade (60%) is required to get the course credit.[35]
The stated purpose of these various provincial assessments is to monitor student achievement so that teaching and learning can be improved, while also informing the public about the education system's well-being.[36]

The current government in New Brunswick was elected in 2018, but their provincial party platform provides a sense of their policy regarding standardized assessments (under the heading "have decisions made by teachers in classrooms, not politicians"[37]); to restore provincial testing cancelled by the previous government, and to prominently display test results on school and department websites—which suggests that the data collected from assessment results is especially important to the provincial government's education agenda. (Education and Early Childhood Development Minister, Dominic Cardy, also talks of using test score data to inform decision-making,[38] but what has been left out of the discussion of data are the classroom assessments of students that teachers carry out regularly.) Overall, it appears that continuation of standardized tests will continue for the New Brunswick's students.

Nova Scotia

The administration of all assessments in Nova Scotia, whether international, national, or provincial, is done by the Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS), a branch of the Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development. The first set of standardized tests, Nova Scotia Assessments, take place in grade 3, and cover numeracy and literacy. Students in grades 6 and 8 in both English and French Immersion programs are assessed in reading, writing and mathematics.[39] In grade 10, students complete the Nova Scotia Examinations in math (for both English and French Immersion programs), and English (for English students only). These secondary school examinations contribute to 20% of a student's final grade in said course.[40] The directives of PLANS are as follows: develop/administer program assessments to determine curriculum effectiveness, conduct student assessments to assist students to achieve outcomes, provide information to the government regarding achievement for education decision-making, help teachers understand assessment principals/practices, publish accountability reports for all assessments/achievements to teachers and public.[41]

The Education Plan (2015) justifies its focus on data and test results by raising concerns about Nova Scotia's national and international test scores, and intends to modernize education in the province by using student assessment results

to address achievement gaps and other issues.[42] The Education Reform Act (2018) reiterates the importance of evaluations to ensure accountability and to measure the performance of the education system.[43]

Prince Edward Island

In Prince Edward Island (PEI) K-12 student assessment is called the Provincial Common Assessment Program. The first set of tests—the Primary Literacy Assessment (PLA) and the Primary Mathematics Assessment (PMA)—occur in grade 3. Grade 5 French Immersion students take an Elementary Literacy Assessment (ELA), and grade 6 students take an ELA in addition to an Elementary Mathematics Assessment (EMA). Grade 9 students write the Intermediate Mathematics Assessment (IMA) which is worth 10% of their overall report card mark. Grade 10 students write the Secondary Literacy Assessment (SLA), and grade 11 includes a Secondary Mathematics Assessment (SMA) for certain math courses which makes up 25% of the final grade.[44] The stated purpose of the provincial testing is to indicate current student achievement relative to their grade level, which then is used to improve teaching, professional learning and decisions about resource allocation in education.[45]

A review of PEI's Provincial Common Assessment Program completed in February 2019, prior to the election of the current government, advocates for a continuation of various standardized assessments due to supposed general support, and in order to be consistent with models adopted by Canadian jurisdictions and other notable countries.[46] That said, the current government ran on a commitment to "[r]educe the frequency of provincial standardized testing,"[47] though there was no commitment to their elimination.

Newfoundland and Labrador

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is currently developing new Provincial Assessments for the 2019-2020 school year to cover English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3, 6, and 9.[48] The stated purposes of NL's Provincial Assessments is to compare student achievement to curriculum outcomes, and to provide the data to schools, teachers, and the government to inform teaching and learning decisions in education.[49] The next set of standardized tests are the Public Examinations for various grade 12 level courses, which contribute to 50% of a student's final grade in each class. The purpose of these Public Examinations is similar to the Provincial Assessments: to evaluate the cognitive domain of the course through student achievement on an exam based on curriculum outcomes.[50]

The Provincial Assessments were created for the 2019/2020 school year by the current government (re-elected in May 2019), indicating an ongoing commitment to the results and objectives of standardized testing. However, assessments, testing, or examinations in education were not mentioned in the current government's campaign platform,[51] suggesting that the current policies will continue unchanged.

Yukon

The Yukon is similar to British Columbia when it comes to the type of standardized assessments used: a Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is administered to students in grades 4 and 7 in writing, reading and numeracy. The stated purpose of the FSA is to provide a valuable indicator of subjects in which individual students to understand where more focus is needed, and to careate a snapshot of how well the education system is meeting students' needs.[52]

Neither the party platform of the current government from the election, nor the mandate letter for the minister of education, mention the current form of assessment or introduce any new standardized tests for Yukon students.[53,54] However, the 2018 "Yukon Government Performance Plan" mentions the FSAs and repeats the stated purpose of this assessment.[55] While this plan produced by the Yukon government does not mention introducing new standardized tests, it reaffirms the belief that the FSA is useful and will continue to administered in K-12 education in the Yukon.

Northwest Territories

The current K-12 education system in the Northwest Territories is based on Alberta's, including the various standardized tests. The first set of standardized tests in NWT is the Alberta Achievement Tests (alternatively the Provincial Achievement Tests), which take place in grades 3, 6 and 9 covering subjects like English and French language arts and mathematics. The stated goal of

administering these assessments is to determine if student learning is at the expected level, ensuring curriculum standards/objectives are met, informing the public on student success and identifying areas where students can improve.[56]

The second form of standardized testing in the Northwest Territories is the Alberta Diploma Examinations, which take place for certain grade 12 courses and make up 30% of the final grade in said class. The stated purpose of these exams is to certify student achievement is at the expected level and to maintain certain standards for the education system.[57]

The mandate letter to the minister of education, culture and employment does not mention plans for new standardized tests, but it does emphasize an accountable education system, specifically by making accountability a directive of the Inclusive Schooling Directive, and by the implementation of a comprehensive accountability framework.[58] The repetition of the term 'accountability', commonly associated in education with the use of standardized testing, suggests the government plans to continue using the current standardized tests, and the data they provide.

Nunavut

Nunavut's education system, like NWT's, is based on Alberta's K-12 learning, which also means the same standardized tests are used. While Nunavut does not conduct the Alberta Achievement Tests, the Alberta Diploma Examinations take place in this territory for select grade 12 courses and counts as 50% of a student's final mark. The purposes of the Diploma Exams are as follows: to demonstrate best practices in educational assessment; to meet the needs of students, parents, teachers and the public; and to ensure better quality teaching and learning.[59]

Nunavut has been criticized for its education system being insufficiently inclusive (a comprehensive external review was conducted in 2014-15). In 2016, in response to concerns being raised about the practice of social promotion, the education minister defended the system's rigour, called for more parental involvement, and suggested increased standardization would make it easier to deliver inclusive education.[60] There has since been a change in government leadership but no recent statements on whether increasing the number of standardized assessment might lead to different practices, according to the most updated Nunavut government website for the education department with Minister David Joanasie. While the new minister has not made any statements on increasing the number of standardized tests in Nunavut, the current government has demonstrated a willingness to continue with the already existing examinations.

Opposition

There is significant organizational opposition to the role and emphasis of standardized testing, and a number of provincial groups have mounted information-based campaigns to provide concerned citizen and parent groups with resources to push back against the standardization agenda. Some of the more vocal opponents are teacher federations or informal educator and parent alliances including the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario,[61] the Alberta Teachers' Association, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, Educators for Social Justice—Nova Scotia, and the Boycott EQAO Facebook group which often provide information regarding concerns with standardized assessments.

While the most effective method of opposing standardized testing is to receive an exemption from the school, not all students are in a position to do so. For those who choose to opt-out, or for parents who choose this on their child's behalf, different educational requirements can make this a challenge, particularly if the test is part of a child's final grade or a graduation requirement. In provinces or grades where this is not the case, opting out may be a more realistic option.

The BCTF provides a form which parents can fill out to withdraw their child from writing the FSA. Such a form ensures a clear process for parents, students and educators, and eliminates the confusion and guesswork experienced in other jurisdictions where the process for self-exemption is less transparent and consistent because it may be decided at the school level.[62]

The fewer students who participate in these standardized provincial assessments, the less representative and valuable the test data. This begs the question: at which point is the data so invalid that governments and third-party institutions will have to change how these assessments are conducted, or if they should be considered a valid assessment method at all?

Conclusion

The role of standardized assessments in education appears to be a policy direction embraced, to varying degrees, by provincial governments of all political stripes. However, concerns continue to be raised by educators, parents, and community groups about the usefulness of this tool as a method of determining education quality and student engagement. A number of provinces have experienced more concerted opposition;

the recent public consultations led by the current Ontario government revealed low levels of support for this form of assessment.[63] Other provinces, notably BC, have clearer processes for opting out, which eliminates guesswork or even the outright fear some parents and students may feel at challenging provincial education policy. One thing is certain: in the neoliberalization of public education, standardized assessment, and resistance to it, is certain to play a prominent role.

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As educational policy continues to rapidly evolve, we would welcome from readers any updates that may have been proposed or implemented after this research was compiled but prior to publication.

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Our universities/ our selves

Seven ideas to lift us up and bring corporatization down

Claire Polster

These days, the issue of mental health is receiving a lot of attention in our universities as elsewhere. This is due to a rise in rates of psychological distress among staff and students and increased efforts to support those suffering from it[1]. While this issue is absolutely important, at times I fear that too much attention is being placed on people's mental states, as opposed to the social structural conditions that give rise to them. Not only may this lead to misdiagnoses of peoples' troubles and to ineffective treatments for them, but it may also allow people to be blamed or pathologized for problems they did not cause and cannot resolve on their own. This was the case at several of the highly corporatized U.K. universities I visited in 2017, where I saw posters asking faculty members if they were feeling stressed, and advising them of counselling and other services the university made available. These posters were deeply troubling, for instead of acknowledging and redressing the brutal working conditions that were making people unwell[2], administrators were implying that difficulty coping with them was a personal failing for which faculty members should seek help.

While it would be valuable for those concerned with mental health on campus to attend more to its relationship to university corporatization[3], in this article, I want to suggest that those concerned about corporatization would do well to attend more to the issue of mental health, broadly understood as mental or inter/personal well-being. Many if not most analysts of university corporatization, myself included, have tended to focus on how the process transforms the structures within which people interact, rather than on how it transforms the dispositions of those who do the interacting. This is a serious omission, for, in a multiplicity of ways, corporatization dispirits and divides those who work and learn in the university, cultivating insecurity and self-interestedness instead of confidence and solidarity. This deprives us of crucial personal and collective resources we need to undertake and sustain resistance to corporatization, and thereby entrenches the process. If we see inter/personal dis-ease not simply as a side effect, but as an integral feature, of corporatization, it follows that, as part of our efforts to oppose the process, we should directly confront this issue. That is, we should develop strategies that rebuild and reinvigorate our spirits, commitments, and connections and, by lifting us up, help bring corporatization down.

Of course, raising spirits and rebuilding connections are not sufficient to reverse university corporatization. It is also true that these goals can be achieved indirectly, as byproducts of more direct challenges to corporate structures, such

as occupations, strikes, legal proceedings, and others. Nonetheless, given that these objectives may be less threatening and more appealing to members of the university community, and that they can increase the likelihood that other acts of resistance will succeed, there is good reason to pursue them. Indeed, because even the impulse to resist is unlikely to be sustained in a demoralized and fragmented university community, one might argue that right now, such efforts should even be prioritized.

In what follows, I offer seven ideas to fortify our resolve and resources to resist university corporatization. Most of these were shared with me by participants in a study of responses to corporatization in Canada and the United Kingdom[4]. While respondents offered many more wonderful ideas, I chose these for three important characteristics they share. First, for the most part, they are relatively easy to implement, in that they do not require much in the way of time or other material resources—though they do require courage and determination. Second, despite their simplicity, they pose potentially powerful challenges to corporate values and practices in the university, by laying bare their flaws and offering glimpses of healthier alternatives. Finally, all of these strategies are moving, both in the sense that they may stir feelings deep within us and, in so doing, help free and mobilize our energies to act. Although there is much to recommend these strategies, not all are suitable in all universities at all times. I offer them less as prescriptions for action than as means to inspire other creative initiatives that strengthen our capacity to make our universities otherwise.

One of the simplest yet most inspired ideas I heard was shared by a professor who, on a whim, placed a guitar in his department's lounge. This led to several guitar playing and singing sessions among department faculty and staff. This very modest act (and variations on it) can profoundly challenge corporatization's corrosive effects on our spirits and relationships. Perhaps most significantly, it defies the instrumentalism of the corporate university, by encouraging people to take time "out" and to do something for its intrinsic rather than utilitarian value. This break from the university's regime of time and the pleasurable experience of the moment can wake people up to the relentless productivism under which they work and to the toll it takes on their spirits, bodies, and/or minds. It can also arouse a desire to relate to their work with more ease and joy while heightening their displeasure with those institutional pressures and demands that prevent them from doing so. Further, in giving themselves permission to enjoy—not simply endure—in the university[5], faculty can recover a sense of their autonomy which is routinely diminished in the corporate university. This, in turn, may restore some of their self-conception as public-serving professionals as opposed to nervous employees and help stoke indignation over being treated themselves as the instruments of administrators' goals.

A further benefit of this action is its potential to re/build connection within the university. The experience of being and singing together can bring into sharper relief the loneliness and isolation that many faculty and others feel due to a lack of social interaction (as more people eat lunch in their offices behind closed doors, interact on-line, and/or work from home) and a growing tendency for colleagues also to relate to one another as means to their personal ends. At the same time that it may strengthen the desire for more and richer engagement among colleagues, this action can also generate the recognition and good will that open channels for it to take place. As with all the actions I will discuss here, this one may produce additional spin-off benefits that radiate throughout the institution. For example, the organic and authentic nature of the experience can help people see through if not challenge other aspects of the corporate university that undermine community and connection. These include the growing number of manufactured social events (like town halls and coffee breaks with the President) which carefully manage and monitor collective interactions, and the diminishment of common spaces (including university clubs and, ironically, department lounges) where more spontaneous interaction can occur.

A second excellent idea comes from an article challenging the growing use of ranking measures in corporate universities (including performance indicators like league tables and research impact factors, and professional designations such as member of elite academic society or holder of distinguished research chair) which feeds both the audit culture and the culture of stardom in the institution[6]. As part of a suite of strategies to resist these measures, the authors suggest that university members introduce speakers to audiences (and colleagues to colleagues) not with a list of their accomplishments and awards, but by addressing how their research has made a difference and why they are passionate about it[7]. In so doing, those making the introductions problematize and implicitly critique the relentless competition that sustains and advances corporatization. They also prevent participants from engaging in competition, if only for a moment, by withholding from them information they need to rank the person being introduced. This simple yet subversive act allows people to open more fully to the content of others' speech, without continually evaluating whether it exceeds or falls short of what one would expect from the holder of a particular position or award. It also allows them to relate differently to the speaker

themself and to approach them as someone with particular intellectual or social interests as opposed to a rival who is more or less successful than they. In turn, this experience may spill over into peoples' relations with others, reminding them that other colleagues too are not mere occupants of—or stepping stones to—a superior or inferior status, but are intrinsically valuable human beings with deep curiosities and commitments, much like themselves.

As well as helping to level and nurture interpersonal relations, such introductions can lift individuals' spirits. They may lead them to reconnect to what they value about their own work, instead of dwelling on the awards and accolades they have—or have not—received. They may also free them from the stress that comes from judging themselves in relation to the speaker (to determine whether or not they could do better than s/he who is ranked above or below them), allowing them to relax more fully into the presentation. The relief and refreshment that come from suspending the obsession with one's relative status can open space for people to recover a sense of their work as an end in itself and/or form of public service as opposed to a means of self-preservation or aggrandizement. This may also raise awareness of, and opposition to, other university practices that incite and reward competition, such as incessant inducements to pursue acknowledgements and awards, and splashy recognition events which shame and threaten some under the guise of appreciating and celebrating others.

Another laudable idea that is being implemented in at least one Canadian university is to hold in advance of every Senate meeting, a meeting between faculty members who sit on the Senate and the Executive of the faculty association. The aim of these meetings is to review the Senate's agenda, identify matters that might affect the association's and/or its members' interests, and develop collective responses to them. This practice can support well-being in a number of ways, not least of which is by combatting the individualization and individualism that sustain corporatization. In uniting faculty around a common goal, these meetings may lessen feelings of powerlessness and insignificance that are produced and reinforced by increased managerialism in the corporate university. These meetings may also lend greater meaning and purpose to academics' service work and thereby revitalize their investment in, and energies for, collegial governance. This positive change can beget others. For instance, it can discourage if not prevent the more cynical and opportunistic approaches to university service (such as treating it as a personal choice or as a means of self-advancement) that are promoted by the corporate university at the expense of the individuals who adopt them and/or the collectives to which they belong.

Such meetings can also strengthen relations on campus. They do this directly by creating a community among the participants who acquire all the supports and obligations that community entails. They may also do this indirectly, by reminding those who sit on Senate (and other collegial bodies) that they are there not as rootless individuals but as representatives of various constituencies to whom they are accountable—and by encouraging them to act accordingly. At the same time that they foster more interpersonal connection, these meetings provide opportunities for faculty to re/learn important collective skills that have atrophied or been suppressed in the corporate university[8], and to develop the confidence and fellowship that come from using them. This may motivate other faculty, staff, and students also to mobilize and organize to shape the university, instead of acquiescing or accommodating to the corporate status quo.

A fourth means of bolstering spirits and relations in the corporate university is to boldly affirm traditional and public-serving academic norms and values, as was done by those who produced the University of Aberdeen's Reclaiming Our University Manifesto[9]. This collectively generated document not only denormalizes corporate discourse and values, but, in offering an inspired and inspiring alternative vision of the university, offers a powerful antidote to the resignation to corporatization that pervades university campuses. These affirmations give those who are newer to the university the language to name, and means to think systemically about, what may seem to be personal discomforts or difficulties with the corporate status quo. They also validate the critiques that longer serving members have learned to quell to better cope with the institution and/or avoid derision or repudiation. Affirmations like the Aberdeen Manifesto can further lift peoples' spirits by rekindling those higher ideals and aspirations that first called them to the university, but are routinely sacrificed or trampled by corporate imperatives and exigencies. This may not only revive their longing for more fulfilling and meaningful academic lives, but also restore their conviction that such desires are right and achievable.

Both the process and product of such initiatives can build social capital on campus. As it did at Aberdeen, the process may allow people to engage and find common cause with members of the university whom they would otherwise not meet nor expect to ally with, and to discover and appreciate talents and experiences of colleagues whom they already know. It can also nurture solidarity and trust, for example, by enabling people to acknowledge—and together overcome—some of their fears of retaliation that

often hold opposition to corporatization in check. In bringing them together in something beyond and outside of themselves, this process also offers people a rich experience of belonging, which simultaneously highlights and lessens the isolation and vulnerability they often feel. This may reinforce their sense of individual and collective agency and also their feelings of responsibility to one another and to the university community as a whole.

A fifth idea is to craft or champion declarations, such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment[10], and to pressure university administrations to sign on to and be accountable for them. Though it shares some similarities with the previous idea, this one aims to change one particular feature of many universities through public campaigns, rather than to change the guiding vision of a single institution using its own internal processes. Such campaigns promote well-being on campus, particularly by helping people overcome the profound disempowerment that is cause and consequence of corporatization. They do this by dramatically reorienting individuals' stance in the institution, allowing—indeed requiring—them to act not as subordinates who ask superiors to consider their requests, but as equals and stewards of the institution who demand that it do better. The renewed appreciation of their own power, and the assurance and pride that come from exercising it, can reinvigorate those involved in these campaigns and dislodge deepseated beliefs that resisting corporatization is futile. It can also raise others' awareness and concern about ways they not only comply with, but internalize corporate expectations and, in Foucauldain fashion, domesticate and passify themselves.

Such campaigns produce many of the same interpersonal benefits that were addressed in relation to the previous idea, and extend connection and community across universities within and beyond national borders. Both the receiving of support and resources from university activists outside their institution, and the giving back of these to them, may boost the courage and determination of each university group in a virtuously circular manner, and spur others to undertake similar (or new kinds of) campaigns as well. Additionally, the production and promotion of these declarations may unite those inside the university with activists outside of it who support or share their goals (such as divestment and other forms of disengagement from fossil fuel industries). This can infuse fresh hope and vitality into these campaigns and those involved with them.

Whereas all the ideas presented thus far involve taking action inside corporate universities, the sixth involves supporting different kinds of institutions, specifically "free" universities, such as the Free University of Brighton[11]. More so than any of the previous ideas, free universities may enhance well-being by prefiguring non-corporate higher education and offering people a living example, if not full-on experience, of it. Free universities are especially beneficial for those who teach and learn in both corporate and free institutions. As one such informant noted, the pleasures and rewards of participating in an institution that truly accords primacy of place to teaching and learning can validate, in a visceral way, individuals' opposition to corporate higher education, and reinforce their conviction that it can and must be opposed. Additionally and perhaps more importantly, freedom from those corporate practices that corrupt and undermine higher learning make the free university a "space of resilience" for those who teach and learn in corporate institutions, which restores their spirits and capacity to resist them. Free universities also cultivate genuine collegiality and community among and between their teachers and learners who are the main decision-makers in these institutions. These relations, and the more respectful and humane policies that stem from them[12], further support the well- being of those who straddle both institutions and give them motivation and tools to transplant some of these positive conditions into corporate universities.

Those who do not participate in free universities may be uplifted by them nonetheless. For instance, colleagues' descriptions of governance practices in free universities can restore their own commitments to collegialism and institutional democracy (particularly as these descriptions call into question the value and necessity of swollen university administrations). More generally, colleagues' accounts of education offered and conducted freely and solely for the love of knowledge and the public good can renew their own dedication to the academic calling and the higher purposes it serves. It is worth noting that free universities may not only raise the spirits, but also the ire of those in corporate universities, by shining a light on the injustices and harms they endure, such as the unconscionably high fees that students pay for an increasingly impoverished education. So long as it is channelled in appropriate ways and at appropriate targets, this anger too may positively affect the dispositions and relations of those who work and learn in corporatized institutions.

The last idea is a clever twist on the corporate mapping projects that activists at many institutions have used to expose and critique university/industry partnerships of various kinds[13]. It involves "unmapping" corporate campuses to uncover and recover spaces that are or were intentionally non-corporate and public-serving, such as anti-oppression resource centres, childcare cooperatives, and community research units[14]. Unmapping projects may move

people by attesting to the continued presence of public-serving values and practices on campus and pointing them to places where they can enact and extend them. They may also rejuvenate people, by affording them opportunities to work *for* something they believe in, rather than *against* things they oppose. Further, in recounting the histories of the spaces they denote, "ummaps" can show that current struggles may be no more difficult than were those of the past, thereby lessening the sense of overwhelm that challenging corporatization can evoke and eliciting greater tenacity from its opponents. These accounts can also unearth an array of inventive if not irreverent strategies and tactics that were used to advance public-serving initiatives in the past, surprising and delighting those who oppose corporatization and igniting their creativity and imaginations.

Finally, unmapping projects can build relations on campus, both among those who do the actual unmapping and those who are called either to support existing initiatives or to resurrect others that have ceased operations. Additionally, they may link those who are involved in the present with those who were involved in the past (allowing the former to learn from, and put their own spin on, the latter's legacy) and connect them also to future members of the university community, as it is primarily for their sakes that these initiatives are undertaken. In forging bonds of solidarity and support that extend across time as well as space, unmapping initiatives can provide a bulwark against the privatization and self-interestedness that advance corporatization, and help revive the academy's public-serving ethos and mission—two of the most grievous casualties of corporatization. They may also help repair relations between the university and those members of the general public whose trust in and loyalty to the institution have been compromised by corporatization's numerous harmful effects[15].

Taken individually, and even collectively, the above ideas are clearly insufficient to undo the corporatization of our universities. Nonetheless, these ideas, and others like them, have considerable potential to undermine some of the conditions that underpin it. Corporatization is not only produced and sustained by changes to the policies and structures within our institutions: it is also produced and sustained by changes within our selves. Attempting to revive our aspirations and expectations as members of public-serving institutions and also to reestablish connection and solidarity within and beyond the academy is therefore neither trivial nor secondary work. Rather, it constitutes both a direct and indirect challenge to corporatization, undoing some of the inter/personal damage that holds it in place and paving the way for additional acts of resistance to follow.

Paradoxically, while the kinds of actions proposed here may be easier, in objective terms, to undertake than are other forms of resistance to corporatization, mustering the hope and energy to initiate them may be more difficult, precisely because of corporatization's demoralizing and divisive effects on our spirits and relations. I have no doubt that many readers who have persisted to this point will be more inclined to dismiss or forget the ideas presented here than to try them out, let alone invent any others. Yet, if even one of these ideas sparked any feeling of joy, recognition, or rightfulness in you—as all of them did in me—I urge you to hold fast to this feeling and to act on it in whatever ways you can. For these sparks can light the way toward greater ease and well-being not only for ourselves, but for all others currently struggling in and with the corporate university.

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Notes

1. See, for example, the 2016 Canadian release of the National College Health Assessment at http://oucha.ca/pdf/2016_NCHA-II_WEB_SPRING_2016_ONTARIO_CANADA_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.PDF and Karen Foster and Louise Birdsell Bauer, *Out of the Shadows: Experiences of Contract Academic Staff*. CAUT, 2018.

2. See, for example, Liz Morrish, *Pressure Vessels: The Epidemic of Poor Mental Health Among Higher Education Staff*. HEPI Occasional Paper 20, 2019.

3. I use the term "corporatization" to refer to the longstanding and ongoing process in and through which universities work more for, with, and as businesses. For a detailed discussion of this process and its impacts, see Claire Polster and Janice Newson, *A Penny For Your Thoughts*: *How Corporatization Devalues Teaching, Research, and Public Service in Canada's Universities*. Ottawa: Our Schools/Our Selves, 2015.

4. I conducted this study from 2016-2018. My interviews in the U.K. were carried out in the Winter of 2017 in collaboration with Dr. Sarah Amsler of Nottingham University.

5. I take this phrasing from A. Smith and F. Webster as cited in Oili-Helena Ylijoki, "Entangled in Academic Capitalism", *Higher Education*, 43(3), p. 300.

6. The audit culture refers to the growing use of standardized metrics to evaluate and reward academic performance. The culture of stardom refers to the creation within the academic profession of highly valued and privileged tiers of academic stars and superstars and the various dynamics this sets into motion. Both of these cultures generate a range of dysfunctions which harm individual and collective well-being. For more on this, see Deborah Rhode, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Scholars, Status, and Academic Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006 and Marc Spooner and James McNinch (eds.), *Dissident Knowledge in Higher Education*. Regina: University of Regina Press, 2018.

7. Nancy J. Adler and Anne-Wil Harzing, "When Knowledge Wins: Transcending the Sense and Nonsense of Academic Rankings", *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 2009, 18(10), p. 92.

8. These skills include how to use or uphold the institution's rules of order and how to craft motions—and strategies to get them passed.

9. The Manifesto (which rests on four pillars of freedom, trust, education, and community), as well as information about its history and current status, may be found at https://reclaimingouruniversity.wordpress.com.

10. This declaration, which is available at http://sfdora.org/read, calls for improvements in the use of research metrics on the part of individuals and organizations, including universities. In recent years, pressure from faculty and others has resulted in a growing number of universities signing on.

11. Free universities provide, at no cost, education that is decided on and provided by local people in free public spaces. They aim to reclaim education as a public good that is accessible to everyone. Although I focus here on ways in which free universities can fortify spirits and relations in corporate universities, I do not mean to imply that they are simply a means to this end. On the contrary, they are important and valuable institutions in their own right which provide many benefits to their participants and the broader society.

12. For example, at the Free University of Brighton, instructors are actively prevented from taking on excessive workloads in order to ensure that they don't burn out. This consideration and care contrast sharply with the disrespect and exploitation to which faculty—especially precarious faculty—are routinely subjected in the corporate university.

13. See, for example, https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/challenging-mcworld-second-edition p. 19.

14. See, for example, Ryan Hayes, *Unmapping the Corporate Campus: Cartography of a "Free University of Toronto"* available at http://www.blog.ryanhay.es/university-notebooks

15. For discussion of some of these effects, see Jennifer Washburn, *University Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education*. New York: Basic Books, 2005 and Jamie Brownlee, *Academia Inc.: How Corporatization Is Transforming Canadian Universities*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2015.

Familiarity breeds resistance

Harris-era parents know there's nothing innovative about Ontario's education cuts

Erika Shaker

I came of age as an activist and researcher when Mike Harris was elected Ontario premier. His education minister, John Snobelen, famously a high school dropout, was much more comfortable referring to students as "clients," parents as "customers" and teachers as "front line service providers," and spoke about "creating a crisis" to justify overhauling the system.

And so we got labour unrest, gutted public infrastructure, and a funding formula designed to pull over $2 billion out of public education. This has resulted in a number of trends which have only grown more prevalent: an insufficient basis of funding or other resources to meet the needs of all kids, particularly students for whom English or French was not a first language, or kids with special needs. Increased normalization of private financing to inequitably address the shortfall through fundraising, user fees, corporate and community handouts...which exacerbates the problem of how already-vulnerable communities are further marginalized. And continually deteriorating infrastructure, on top of a $16 billion backlog.

When elected, the Liberals implemented some good policy: full-day kindergarten remains a positive addition, though absent the wrap-around care it proved less transformative than it could have been. An updated Health and Phys-ed curriculum update was also welcome (though it became a political football in the provincial election, to a large extent the government reinstated it after cancelling it). And certainly the money the Liberals provided for various projects and top-ups was welcome, after years of deliberate and what seemed to be almost gleeful underfunding.

But things we consider to be a fundamental human right and a public good can't be provided through good will and temporary or quick-fix pockets of cash. They require codified policy, long term financial guarantees, and measures to ensure accountability.

Because the Liberals did not address the structural flaws of the Funding Formula, student needs still went unmet, and the systemic underfunding continued. So, when a government was elected that, on top of a flawed funding formula, further under-resourced public education, limited services, and in their media comments tried to pit teachers and unions against parents and students, we have what we're currently seeing across the province.

For parents of a certain age—like me—this all feels very familiar. Except now it's being done to our kids.

Currently we have a population increasingly disenfranchised, dealing with inequality and precarity which makes it even more difficult for people to build community and engage with each other, let alone be as involved in their kids' education as they would like. And because of overlapping vulnerabilities, this impacts some families and communities more than others. We also have the deliberate undermining of programs that exist to help mitigate this disengagement, or the money required to keep them operating in a dependable way.

To counter this disengagement we need to ensure that we are talking with and listening to each other, because this is the only way we can advocate for well-funded, high quality, publicly accountable schools, where kids' needs are met, and where educators and education workers have the resources required to meet kids where they're at, and communicate effectively with parents and caregivers. This commitment to broad engagement is fundamental to pushing back against the cuts that will not serve any of us well, and will disproportionately hurt those who are already most marginalized and vulnerable.

So long as the current funding formula remains in place, schools and kids will continue to be under-resourced, even if the government of the day is less right-leaning. This is why we need to reject arguments that maintain turning back the clock to just before this current round of cuts is good enough. It's not. And while I am deeply concerned about the direction of any Funding Formula review that this current government might undertake, we need to start thinking about not just protecting the schools we have now—which leave so many people out in the cold—but building a movement to advocate for the schools we need and that our kids deserve.

These days the government's rhetoric and policy direction is getting a rough ride. As a recent Environics poll makes clear, parents understand that larger classes do not build resilience. All school boards are experiencing cuts in total operating funding, in per pupil funding, or both. Mandatory e-learning does not create more choice for students. A market-based service model is extremely detrimental for kids with autism. Limiting course options for kids is short-sighted and contradictory. In five years there will be 6,000 to 10,000 fewer teaching positions (depending on which government number we're using). CCPA Ontario's Ricardo Tranjan mapped this to show what this means to communities across the province.

My partner—who I met during the Days of Action—and I have two kids; one in high school, one in elementary. They provide me with all sorts of opportunities to live my research and question my assumptions.

They've also given me insight into how differently kids learn, what works well for them, what doesn't, and how that can change. And, this provides me with a number of opportunities to really think about how I, as a parent, best work with their schools to support them.

Both my kids have had excellent ECEs, educators, education workers and administrators. These are people who have worked hard, listened well, and as patiently as possible navigated larger than optimal classes and the additional demands of school plays, school clubs and team sports.

My eldest is creative, but a fairly traditional learner. She takes instructions exceedingly well, has a good sense of what's expected, navigates social situations with aplomb, is emotionally mature, and has always been able to advocate extremely effectively for herself.

My youngest is less predictable, more out-of-the-box, with less patience for "playing the game," some of which of course has to do with how we socialize boys and girls differently. He needs more time to express himself clearly, more time to settle, and more breaks. Adults and caregivers require more time and patience to navigate his leaps of logic (and recover from their laughter at his quirky sense of humour).

I know my daughter will be shortchanged by what's being done to public education. My son, however, won't just be shortchanged. He will be damaged academically and socially by these cuts. He's more likely to be that kid who will get caught in the shuffle, whose silent signals of discomfort or confusion—that often look like disinterest—can go unnoticed in a larger classroom; whose requirements for a more flexible approach while he gets comfortable with his surroundings and what's expected of him are less likely to be met. And not because educators and education workers and schools aren't operating with the best of intentions, but because of the erosion of the system's ability to care for and meet the needs of those kids who are already more vulnerable.

Of course, we'll mitigate that to the best of our ability, with meetings and tutors and extracurricular activities and extra attention that the school can simply no longer provide—not for lack of trying, but because of the higher number of kids each educator and education worker is responsible for. He's one of the lucky ones. But access to a human right—and education is a human right—should never be about luck.

And surely our kids deserve more than, at best, being merely shortchanged.

Erika Shaker is Interim Director of the CCPA National Office and Editor of *Our Schools/Our Selves*. She is on Twitter at @ErikaShaker.

Poverty and education in a Winnipeg suburb

Jim Silver and Kate Sjoberg

There is overwhelming evidence drawn from decades of research in countries all over the world that poverty is a crucial factor in producing poor educational outcomes. The higher the poverty, the lower the educational outcomes. If governments were serious about wanting to improve education in Manitoba, they would take meaningful steps to drive down poverty levels.

Although poverty is particularly concentrated in Winnipeg's inner city, large pockets of severe poverty exist in various suburban neighbourhoods as well; three elementary schools in south St. Vital provide a clear example. Poverty levels in the neighbourhoods surrounding these three schools in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) are on par with those in the inner city.

Despite evidence that the three schools themselves are excellent, their outcomes are well below the average for the LRSD. This should not be a surprise; even before they start, the children's readiness for school is far behind the Divisional averages. Poverty—complex, multi-faceted poverty that includes various forms of oppression and causes multiple types of damage—is the problem.

To improve educational outcomes for children experiencing poverty we need a coherent and long-term anti-poverty strategy led by all three levels of government that includes reparations to Indigenous citizens and measures to support the success of all families. That is not happening, and low-income children suffer as a result.

In the absence of an effective anti-poverty strategy driven by the three levels of government, the Louis Riel School Division is working with neighbourhood organizations and parents to implement an innovative community development (CD) strategy, what we have called a "whole community" strategy, aimed at strengthening families and building community. The theory is that stronger and healthier families and communities will produce improved school outcomes.

The approach taken by the School Division has been to meet with and listen to parents and others who live in the community to try to determine what they believe is needed to strengthen families and build community. This is a CD approach.

Building on what community members have said, much has been accomplished in the past 18 months since an initial report was delivered to the LRSD. These are some examples:

- The co-location at the previously almost-empty Rene Deleurme Centre (RDC) of the EDGE Skills Centre, offering academic upgrading and EAL programming to almost 400 adults; the Morrow Avenue Childcare Program,

which will soon have 100 childcare spaces and will use the highly effective Abecedarian approach; and the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program, which last year worked to meet the needs of 800 newcomers. These programs and their co-location at the RDC are strengthening families and the community.

- The establishment at Lavallee School of Winnipeg's first new Boys and Girls Club in 15 years. The community recommended this after-school program for children. Research shows that Boys and Girls Clubs improve children's likelihood of success at school.
- The implementation of new Indigenous programs aimed at cultural reclamation to strengthen families and build community. An example is the Red Road to Healing program, which responds to the trauma so closely associated with complex poverty.
- The creation of a parent-mentor program modeled on a highly successful program in Chicago, which brings a select number of parents into each of the three schools to work alongside teachers and to undergo life skills training. This program, now working on its third cohort, is proving to be highly successful.

These new initiatives have been added to what is already a strong array of programs offered by the LRSD and by community organizations in the area, all of which serve to support what community members consider the outstanding work done by teachers in the classrooms of the three schools.

The engagement of community members in prescribing and creating new supports and shifts in approaches is driving community renewal, cultural resurgence and vitality. It is building healthier families and communities. Children growing up in healthier families and communities are *far* more likely to succeed in school.

This study has made clear two important things:

First, poverty has a dramatic and adverse effect on children's education. Any serious effort to improve educational outcomes in Manitoba must address the issue of poverty. This is not being done at all satisfactorily by governments.

Second, local school boards can play a significant role in reducing the negative impacts that poverty has on educational outcomes. The LRSD is being innovative in using a community development approach and working in partnership with community organizations and parents to strengthen families and build healthier communities. This is not a quick fix approach. However, in time, healthier families and communities will create the context in which children will thrive in school. The three schools included in this study are excellent; the problem is the poverty. The School Division deserves credit for understanding this, and taking action.

Jim Silver is a Professor in the UW's Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies, and a Research Associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba. **Kate Sjoberg** is a community worker and educator in Winnipeg. They are the co-authors of *Reducing Poverty to Improve Educational Outcomes; What a School Division and a Local Community Can do Together* (Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives–Manitoba).

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running for the NDP who became one of the faces of the national Our Time campaign.

"I was really honoured to be supported by the Our Time campaign and I've been pushing Our Time at every opportunity," she says. "It's important to recognize youth...are on the frontline of the climate emergency. They've asked for very reasonable things — healthy land, healthy food, clean water and clean air.... But [the Liberal government is] really focused on building a pipeline. Canada has one of the worst climate plans of all G7 countries. We are the least likely to meet climate targets."

Of the 35 candidates endorsed by Our Time, eight (including Gazan) were elected: Niki Ashton for Churchill–Keewatinook Aski (MB), Daniel Blaikie for Elmwood–Transcona (MB), Alexandre Boulerice for Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie (QC), Don Davies for Vancouver–Kingsway (BC), Peter Julian for New Westminster–Burnaby (BC), Matthew Green for Hamilton Centre (ON), and Jenny Kwan for Vancouver East (BC).

On election night, Gazan announced: "Our campaign was a testament to the power of a grassroots political movement. It was fuelled by people. It was funded by people. I think it shows the power of people and how that is going to lead to change in this country."

After the election

The first few weeks are critical for influencing the course of the new government. On October 28, Our Time organizers from Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal occupied the House of Commons to call for immediate climate action and a Green New Deal. Twenty-seven Our Time activists were arrested for this action, receiving tickets for trespassing and a one-month ban from Parliament Hill. Several MPs, including NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, later tweeted their support.

In the following days, we reached out to all 338 MPs to deliver a mandate letter calling for a public pledge to make a Green New Deal a top priority when the House resumes. When the *Monitor* went to print, 17 had accepted the pledge. New Westminster–Burnaby MP Peter Julian filed a GND private member's bill in the House of Commons in December.

Separate from these political moves, non-governmental members organizations of the Pact for a Green New Deal will release their plan in early 2020. Importantly, it will be based on the priorities of the 150 communities visited during last year's GND tour, and emphasize the needs of Indigenous, low-income, newcomer, racialized, and young people. The last thing we need is for the language and spirit of the Green New Deal to be co-opted to appease calls from the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments for more pipelines and corporate handouts for the fossil fuel industry.

"Jason Kenny had a "I love Oil and Gas" jersey on at the Grey Cup. People don't love oil and gas, they love working, working themselves out of poverty, having a roof over their head," says Gazan. "We need to change the rhetoric from an 'oil and gas' issue to 'I need to have a job' issue."

What's next

The latest UN assessment gives us a mere decade to hold global temperature increases to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. According to Camfield, the movement should prioritize finding a consensus on what climate justice means and how to achieve it in this urgent political context. "We need a strategy of escalation to exert power on the federal government for what's needed," he says.

Students continue to organize "Fridays for the Future" climate strikes. A strike in Winnipeg on November 29 included a round dance organized by Idle No More activists, as well as a clothing swap. A global follow-up to the millions-strong September 27 climate rally is planned for the spring.

Here in Winnipeg, Our Time and the CCPA-Manitoba recognize the need to build stronger relationships with the Indigenous community and beyond. We know that any struggle for a Green New Deal must take direction from those who are most dispossessed by fossil capitalism and most exposed to climate change. We do not wish to reproduce in our organizing spaces the undemocratic relationships of exploitation that have gotten us to this point. We need to unlearn the oppressive practices we frequently deploy, often unconsciously, even when our hearts are in the right place.

There is a lot of pressure to act now, but building relationships and trust takes time, as does learning new skills. With that in mind, several Our Time¬–Winnipeg organizers recently participated in a direct action training session organized by the Indigenous youth–led Strawberry Heart Protectors and the Indigenous Peoples Power Project.

"We need the grassroots *and* electoral politics," says Gazan. "We can move it if we mobilize people and lift up people's voices." M

Hannah Muhajarine speaking at a rally in July outside CBC headquarters in Winnipeg. PHOTO BY CAM CANNON

Work Life

LYNNE FERNANDEZ

How will the new government respond to an economic crisis?

FAR FROM ALTERING the risky behaviour that precipitated the 2008 financial crisis, bankers, financiers and corporate CEOs have grabbed government handouts and continued on their merry way. Corporate mergers and stock buybacks have benefitted their bottom lines, while the global economy stalls in the face of trade disputes, war, and hot spots of growing civil unrest. Our federal election revealed deep regional divides that reflect the discontent found around the world. These developments make the threat of another economic downturn truly alarming.

Former Bank of England governor Lord Mervyn King counts himself as among those worried about a repeat of 2008. He notes that after the Great Depression, there was a fundamental intellectual change in our understanding of the financial sector and how it needed to be regulated. With the right rules in place, a more rational economy—one that benefited the majority of society—was possible.

Decades of lobbying by the financial sector eventually eroded those regulations, and the 2008 crises ensued. Canada's banking sector would be held as an example to the world of how proper regulation protects countries from these sorts of crashes. But nothing could shield us from plummeting demand for exports, which dropped 16% over three quarters in 2009, and a stunning 22% decline in investment over the same period. At one point, 430,000 Canadian workers and 8.7 million Americans had lost their jobs.

Unfortunately, the sort of reforms that ushered in a period of calm after the Depression have not been seriously considered in the U.S. or Europe, adding to experts' worries. King argues, "no one can doubt that we are once more living through a period of political turmoil. But there has been no comparable questioning of the basic ideas underpinning economic policy." His warning is particularly dire considering the following post–Great Recession challenges to the Canadian economy.

- Canada's relatively weak recovery since the 2008-09 recession was largely built on household consumption facilitated by historically low interest rates. But those low interest rates have resulted in worrisome rates of household debt, with the debt/income ratio at 177%. Canadians are ill-equipped to take on more debt to stimulate the economy.
- Corporate debt is also at record highs, but many corporations have not invested in the real economy; they've spent lavishly on mergers and other financialization schemes that boost shareholder value (and CEO salaries) without stimulating the economy.
- Interest rates can't go much lower, so that tool can't really be used again in the event of a recession.
- China was relatively untouched by the crisis and was buying Canadian resources, keeping our exports moving. China's economy is not nearly as strong today and cannot be counted on to play the same role in the future.
- As King reminds us, the global economy is "stuck in a low growth trap," and the post-slump recovery was weaker than the recovery after the Great Depression.

These conditions mean that the next recession could be longer and deeper. Nonetheless, there are some practical policies that could be lined up to support workers when it hits. One program that needs attention is employment insurance.

Former CCPA economist Armine Yalnizyan found that in the 1970s, 85% of unemployed men and 81% of unemployed women were eligible for EI. In the Great Recession those percentages had fallen to 45% of men and 38% of women. This weakening of the EI system meant that workers' demand for products and services remained weaker than it should have.

The Canadian Labour Congress believes that a system overhaul to better meet workers' needs is urgently needed before we find ourselves in another recession. Donna Wood's research found that there was a gap between those who need coverage and those who are eligible to receive it. Benefits are too low to meet workers' needs and there are many workers who pay into the system but who cannot collect benefits.

Governments should be rolling out measures *now* to combat climate change, including spending on green infrastructure and retraining workers in the oil and gas sector for new jobs. Training of this nature should be part of the EI reforms.

When the next recession hits, governments should be ready to ramp up these investments to keep workers employed and prevent a catastrophic collapse in demand, and advance a transition away from fossil fuels. Having a plan in place now would also go a long way to addressing western workers' understandable fear of job loss and uncertainty regarding the region's future.

No one knows when the next downturn will arrive, but arrive it will. Will a minority government rise to the occasion, or will partisan bickering sideline the changes workers will so desperately need? Given the potential severity of the next economic downturn, the parties better find a way to move ahead with policies that work for all Canadians. M

LYNNE FERNANDEZ IS THE ERROL BLACK CHAIR IN LABOUR ISSUES AT THE CCPA-MANITOBA. HER COLUMN, WORK LIFE, APPEARS REGULARLY IN THE *MONITOR*.

The good news page

Compiled by Elaine Hughes

A floating solar farm just south of the Dutch town of Zwolle, about 60 km east of Amsterdam, was built in a record six-week period in 2019 and will yield enough energy to power 4,000 homes while cutting 6,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. / The private owner of a solar farm in East Sussex, England, claims that inverters, which usually convert solar power to electric current, can also smooth out volatility in the grid, saving 400 million British pounds (about $690 million) that would otherwise be spent on network upgrades and new solar plants. The inverters would, the company says, stop voltage in the grid from rising too high on blustery nights when there is more wind power generated, and they would prevent voltage from falling too low on still nights in the winter when demand is high. / Los Angeles' transportation department has bought 130 electric buses, the largest order in U.S. history, from Chinese manufacturer Build Your Dreams. The vehicles will be built at the firm's Lancaster plant about 120 km from L.A. city hall. Not to be outdone, New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority has approved a US$51.5 billion (almost $68 billion) capital plan that includes 500 new zero-emission electric buses. Columbus Ohio's Yellow Cab company aspires to be fully electric within a few years. / Forbes / Guardian (U.K.) / Cnet / Observer (U.K.)

In collaboration with the University of Kentucky, a Kentucky City school board has launched an all-girls academy for science, technology, engineering and math (the STEM fields). The program, currently for 150 girls from kindergarten to Grade 2, hopes to expand into grades 3–8. / Italian Education Minister Lorenzo Fioramonti announced that, beginning September 2020, all state schools will dedicate 33 hours per year (one hour per school week) to study climate change, as well as geography, mathematics and physics, from the perspective of sustainable development. / Canadian pianist Angela Hewitt will become the first woman to receive the City of Leipzig's Bach Medal at an award ceremony in June 2020, at which she will perform from Bach's Goldberg Variations. / A five-year Harvard University study has confirmed the poet Longfellow's 200-year-old assertion that music is indeed a universal language of humankind, pervading social life in similar ways across the world. / Associated Press / Reuters / CBC News / Harvard University

British food retailer Tesco has pledged to remove one billion pieces of plastic packaging weighing 4,000 tonnes from products in its stores by the end of 2020. / The U.K. government has called for an immediate halt to fracking (hydraulic fracturing of deep shale rock by pumping water, chemicals and sand into the ground at high pressure) after a new study claimed it was not possible to rule out "unacceptable" consequences for those living near fracking sites. / The Pennsylvania state government will spend US$3 million (almost $4 million) on two three-year studies on the possible links between fracking and childhood cancers. / The Ulcinj Salina wetland covering 15 square km in southern Montenegro, a former salt works, has been saved from development thanks to local pressure from the Save Salina Campaign. The marsh will be declared a nature park, but campaigners continue to pressure the government for the identity of the site's private owners. / Three Tjiwarl women from western Australia, Shirley Wonyabong, Elizabeth Wonyabong and Vicki Abdullah (pictured), have been awarded the 2019 Peter Rawlinson Award for their decades-long campaign to protect their country's environment and culture from proposed mining projects, including Canada's Cameco uranium mine at Yeelirrie. The women, along with other Tjiwarl traditional owners, have spoken up for their country and culture on eight annual one-month walking tours, around campfires, in politicians' offices, on the streets of Perth and in western Australia's highest court. / Reuters / Guardian (U.K.) / Associated Press / Mongabay / Mining Watch

Tjiwarl women Shirley Wonyabong (left), Elizabeth Wonyabong and Vicky Abdullah, winners of the 2019 Peter Rawlinson Award.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAURA DOYLE

SABRINA WILKINSON

When will Canadians have the right to repair?

IN MAY 2019, a private member's bill that would have given Ontario consumers the right to repair their electronic devices was voted down in the provincial legislature. The measure aimed to give consumers the access and resources needed to fix and modify their gadgets, appliances and vehicles, ranging from cellphones to tractors.

The Liberal MPP behind the initiative, Michael Coteau, emphasized that the bill would save consumers money and reduce environmental harm. The Ford government wasn't interested.

Despite this setback, right-to-repair efforts have gained momentum in Canada and around the world. In the United States, two Democratic presidential candidates, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, have called for federal legislation to give farmers the right to fix their tractors and equipment. As of 2021, manufacturers in the European Union will need to make spare parts available to professional repairers, though unfortunately not consumers, for up to 10 years.

In particular, our reliance on expensive digital devices in our social and professional lives has led consumers and politicians of all stripes to hold up the right to repair as a necessary principle in a connected world. Advocacy organizations, such as OpenMedia in Canada, have helped shine a light on this dialogue.

Indeed, even with strong opposition from manufacturers like Apple and John Deere, both of which profit from specialist repair schemes and keeping the code in their computers and tractors inaccessible to consumers, the right to repair movement has burgeoned in recent years. Among other arguments, industry players suggest that intellectual property rights and security and safety concerns should limit consumers' rights to fix their devices.

In Canada, some provincial politicians, like Coteau, are taking the debate seriously. Research reveals that Canadians are widely supportive of the right to repair. And in spite of manufacturers looking to stifle this momentum, there are initiatives to put the issue on the new federal government's agenda.

Provincial action

In part inspired by activism in the United States, Coteau's Bill 72, which entered the Ontario legislature in February 2019, sought to require "brand holders" such as cellphone manufacturers to provide consumers, at their request, with "the most recent version of the documents, replacement parts, software and other tools" needed to fix their electronic products. The legislation allowed companies to charge customers for these resources, but at limited rates.

Although the Ford government voted down his initiative in May, Coteau says the right to repair isn't a dead issue in Ontario or other parts of Canada. "The whole process of companies monetizing the process of repair and controlling the product exclusively is something that needs to be addressed, so I don't think this issue is going away," he tells me.

In Quebec, Bill 197, a private member's bill sponsored by independent MPP Guy Ouellette in April 2019, similarly aims to bolster consumers' right to repair while deterring planned obsolescence, where producers design goods to quickly break down or become outdated. The scheme would have manufacturers affix a label to household appliances that lists the average time before an item needs repair.

Similar to the Ontario bill, Quebec's legislation would require companies to offer replacement parts and other resources "at a reasonable price and on reasonable conditions." It would also ensure that the warranties of goods sold in Quebec remain intact even if items are repaired by non-specialists. If successful, the initiative could serve as a guide to other provinces and territories.

Importantly, new right-to-repair rules in Quebec could also give an important boost to the idea of a national law.

While the NDP and Greens did promise national legislation during the recent election campaign, the topic got little airtime and was not championed by the Liberals, Conservatives or Bloc Québécois.

Industry strategies

At the same time, opposition to right-to-repair efforts in Canada and around the world is active and well-resourced. In the United States and Europe, "any time a bill gets proposed, companies like Apple, Samsung, John Deere, Microsoft will be knocking at the doors of the legislatures and lobbying against these bills because it affects their bottom line," says Rodrigo Samayoa, digital campaigner at OpenMedia.

Samayoa adds that in Canada, where advocacy in support of the right to repair is not as prevalent, there is less lobbying. Yet, as Coteau tells me, Canadian politicians are petitioned on this issue too. "During the [provincial] process there were many people that appeared out of nowhere to defend the big companies," he says.

And these lobbyists have undeniable influence. In 2018, the California Farm Bureau undermined its constituency by signing off on a deal crafted by the Equipment Dealers Association, which represents John Deere and other manufacturers. Alongside other commitments, the document states that farmers won't reprogram "electronic control units or engine control units [and download or access] the source code of any proprietary embedded software or code."

With the digitization of the agricultural sector, such measures effectively bar farmers, many of whom have the necessary know-how, from repairing their equipment independently.

Outside policy development settings, manufacturers use other means to limit whether and how consumers can tinker with their tools. "[T]hey use a combination of the technology...with warranty and contractual arrangements," says Leanne Wiseman, associate professor in law at Griffith University. If a vehicle is in need of repairs, it's often that the owner's "local mechanic can't access the technology in the car to find out what's wrong in the first place." That driver might also have their warranty invalidated for seeking support from an unauthorized source.

Under public pressure, Apple recently introduced a program that grants select repair businesses free access to company resources like tools and training. But to no one's surprise, the initiative has a few catches. For one, these measures aren't made available to consumers. Another limitation is that the program only offers resources for fixes not covered by warranties.

Power to the people

Like in the United States, some of the hardest hit by the lack of right-to-repair legislation in Canada may be the country's farmers and small manufacturers of farming equipment.

"As more closed technology systems are introduced into equipment, many of the innovative farm implements made by [smaller manufacturers] will no longer work on large equipment," Scott Smith, an aircraft electronics technician living in rural Saskatchewan, wrote in a CBC op-ed last June. "All of this has a direct impact on rural Canadians and diminishes our ability to participate in the economy."

The right to repair gives consumers, workers and citizens agency where their limited power is so often undermined. "We do not want a world around us where our access to the technology we build and incorporate into our lives is limited," Coteau says. Rather, he adds, people should be given the rights, tools and resources they need to safely and securely fix their things or hire someone of their choosing to do it for them.

Of course, allowing consumers to readily repair their tools and devices has obvious environmental benefits, too. Canada is one of the greatest generators of waste in the world, with each Canadian producing roughly 673 kg every year. If there were easy and effective ways to repair our gadgets, who knows how much of this waste we might divert from landfills.

The December 5 Speech from the Throne outlined the new minority government's priorities. While climate change and renewable power featured prominently, there was no mention of the right to repair. To be fair, many Canadians still aren't well-versed in the debate or the ideas behind the policy. "There's a big education piece that needs to happen for people to realize this is a big issue," says Samayoa.

But a growing interest in the issue internationally and at the provincial level, alongside vocal campaigns for the right to repair, may eventually put pressure on the Trudeau government to act, possibly in co-ordination with the Greens and NDP. As all Canadians—not just farmers—become increasingly reliant on expensive digital tools, a right to repair makes economic and environmental sense. M

ASAD ISMI

Stalemate in Ecuador

Mass protests reverse Moreno government's austerity package, but authoritarian dangers lurk.

DURING THE LAST months of 2019, large-scale protests against neoliberalism, corruption, inequality and poverty were flaring in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Indonesia, Algeria, France and Chile. The mass protests in Ecuador in October were provoked by an austerity agreement signed by the government of President Lenín Moreno with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a $4.2 billion loan. In it, Ecuador had promised to fire thousands of state workers, lower public sector salaries, raise taxes, cut public investment and increase gasoline prices by 30%.

This last promise particularly angered protesters, who "paralyzed the economy" for 10 days, stopping Ecuador's oil exports in the process. The IMF's loan conditions are notorious in the Global South for imposing neoliberal "structural adjustment" on recipient countries since the 1980s. Moreno's latest deal was called out for what it was: an unreasonable, unnecessary and ideologically driven bargain with the country's conservative political forces and the economic elite.

The demonstrations in Ecuador lasted from October 3 to 13, culminating in an agreement between Moreno and Indigenous protesters whereby the president cancelled the austerity agreement and the demonstrations ended. Moreno's security forces' brutal assaults on protesters left seven people dead, 1,340 injured and 1,152 arrested.

Riot police detain demonstrators in Quito protesting Lenin Moreno's cancelation of fuel subsidies in early October. REUTERS/DANIEL TAPIA.

"In a country that has seen very little unrest on a significant scale for the last 12 years, the deaths of seven people in less than 10 days is anything but normal," write journalist Mohammed Hamarsha and linguist Cloe Perol in an article for the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA). The article quotes a volunteer who was helping the Indigenous protesters and who holds the Moreno government responsible for the violence. "We are Ecuadorian people; we are all united in this," she tells them. "And many of us are outraged by so many deaths for so much violence, that it is by the state, by the national police, and the military."

The protests began when transport workers went on strike against cuts to fuel subsidies, triggering the Moreno government to call a national emergency. Two Indigenous organizations, the Confederation of Indigenous

Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), joined the striking workers on the streets.

When the transport unions struck a deal with the government—a guarantee of some kind of relief from higher oil prices—the Indigenous groups took a leadership role in the protests, bringing 7,000 people to Quito, Ecuador's capital. They were soon joined by labour unions, students and other citizens' groups. All told, an estimated 40,000 protestors would face off against the police and army that attacked them with guns, tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons. The government temporarily moved its offices to the coastal city of Guayaquil.

Indigenous nations make up 7% of Ecuador's population and are disproportionately poor compared to other citizens. Increasing fuel prices would have been especially hard for Indigenous small farmers who depend on cheap transport to bring their goods to markets affordably. One Indigenous bean and squash farmer who went to Quito to protest told *Bloomberg News* he spends about $120 per month on transportation and is concerned his costs would rise steeply if the reforms went into effect.

"The Moreno government wants to force us to accept these economic measures but will forgive high amount of debts of bankers and large companies," says Ñusta Sánchez (Kichwa), an Indigenous youth fellow with Cultural Survival, in an interview posted to the organization's website. "They are violating our rights to express ourselves, to live in a quiet place and more than anything else we have the right to protest because we disagree. There are people who have little and these measures cause more poverty."

"The loan was not needed by Ecuador," says Andrés Arauz Galarza, who was general director of Ecuador's central bank during the socialist government of former president Rafael Correa (2007–2017). "Ecuador had sufficient ways to finance its public expenditures with taxes, oil revenues and domestic debt. If necessary, it could issue bonds in the capital markets.

"However, Moreno asked for the IMF loan to anchor the economic policy in the medium term towards a neoliberal agenda," he tells me. "Most important in the agenda was the privatization of the central bank governance and the privatization of public assets."

Moreno was vice-president under Correa from 2007 to 2013 and ran for office on a leftist platform as a candidate of Correa's party Alianza PAIS. But after winning the presidency in 2017, Moreno rejected Correa's progressive policies and shifted to the right—giving a military base to the U.S., handing over Julian Assange to British authorities and inviting the IMF into Ecuador.

Guillaume Long, who served as Ecuador's foreign minister under Correa, tells me Moreno inherited a stable economy in spite of two very difficult years (2015 and 2016) when the price of Ecuador's commodity exports collapsed causing "the biggest external shock since 1948." Correa was able to shorten the recession "through the implementation of a number of measures to protect national production and employment, and thanks to a major tax reform," says Long. By May 2017, when Moreno took office, "the economy had recovered and was growing at 2.5% again."

According to Long, the fake economic crisis that Moreno has invented was firstly meant to hurt Correa, who is his main political opponent in Ecuador. The president accused Corea of orchestrating the protests from Belgium, where he currently resides, and of planning a coup against the current government.

The second reason the government is fomenting panic is "to prepare the people for the shock therapy Moreno and his economists wished to carry out," Long adds. "Essentially a pro-elite, neoliberal structural adjustment program that would deregulate the economy and compromise the development model privileged during Correa's government."

To justify austerity measures, Moreno argues that Ecuador's budget deficit and external debt are too high and need reduction. While both have increased over the past five years, so has Ecuador's GDP. Meanwhile, Moreno's economic policy, which went into effect in August 2018, included tax amnesty provisions that have resulted in about US$3 billion in corporate taxes being forgiven by his government. Cancelling fuel subsidies, had the IMF-agreed plan gone ahead, would have raised only US$1.3 billion for the government in a US$103-billion economy.

"What is truly interesting to witness is how Ecuadorians have become wise to this manipulation," says Long. "A majority of Ecuadorian citizens are deeply opposed to these policies and to the IMF and its recipes."

The Ecuadorean national assembly unexpectedly scuttled the rest of Moreno's neoliberalization plans, at least for now, by rejecting his proposed monetary and tax reform package on November 17, 2019. "[T]hat would have meant a full neoliberal revolution in the tax, planning, fiscal, monetary and financial deregulation sphere," as Arauz puts it. But Ecuador's elite has nowhere else to go and Moreno remains very much their man in government.

"Moreno does not really exist politically," says Long. "He was sustained during the protest…by the elites and the army. He is essentially a weak puppet, used by those who wish to banish Correa from political life in Ecuador.

"It is important to understand that the only way the current authoritarian alliance has managed to keep 'correismo' at bay is by jailing its leaders," Long continues. Immediately after the end of the protests, the government initiated "a major crackdown on the democratic opposition…something which takes us back to the…military dictatorships of the '60s and '70s, and something we are seeing throughout South America at the moment."

The police raided the home of Paola Pabón, governor of the province of Pichincha, arrested the Correa ally and accused her of supporting an armed rebellion. Several other opposition figures got the same treatment while still others fled to the Mexican embassy where they have been granted asylum or left the country.

Drawing parallels to the right-wing coup last year in Bolivia, Long says "this is the most authoritarian it has been in Ecuadorian history, certainly in my generation, and arguably for decades." M

CCPA DONOR PROFILE

Meet Lynda Lange

Every few issues, the *Monitor* gets to know one of the CCPA's incredible supporters. Here we speak to Lynda Lange of Toronto, Ontario. Lynda is Emerita Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto and an active member of Grandmothers Advocacy Network.

Hi Lynda, whatchya reading?

The Return of History by Canada's Jennifer Welsh (House of Anansi Press, 2016) is a terrific, well-written little book that exposes the fallacy of the claims that global trade freedom is inevitable at this, "the end of history." I am also reading *The Story of the Jews* by Simon Schama (Penguin, 2017). Schama is a highly respected historian who happens to be very readable. Opposing anti-Semitism was my very first political consciousness growing up in Winnipeg. It is a sad thing that instead of fading into history, it is now on the rise.

Tell us about a person who made a big impact on your life or ideas.

As a young leftist and very early "second wave" feminist, I greatly admired Gloria Steinem. I went to hear her speak only a year or so ago in Toronto. She is in her eighties and her politics are still highly admirable!

What made you decide to become a CCPA supporter?

I clearly remember the shock of the wave of neoliberal ideology that began in the 1980s. The idea that "greed is good," that more and more "free" trade was inevitable, that social programs must be lessened in order to cut taxes, because the rising tide of wealth would "lift all boats" (it did not). And all of it presented as if, as Margaret Thatcher said, There Is No Alternative (TINA).

When I heard about the CCPA, I knew at once I had to support it because the development of well-researched policies other than the above was crucial—to show that there are alternatives. I have been impressed over the years by how well the CCPA has disseminated its good work, clearly gaining the attention of mainstream news outlets and hence many Canadians.

What one policy could Canada enact today that would make people's lives better?

A national child care system. It reduces poverty and enhances gender equality by enabling women to participate more easily in economic and other activity outside the home. Also, our newly re-elected prime minister promised to plant two billion trees to combat climate change. Great! Let's get going and do that.

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The CCPA is incredibly grateful to all its supporters without whom we could not do any of the progressive research and advocacy we do. We are especially thankful for those supporters who have switched to monthly giving. If you would like to know more about monthly giving and why it is important for the CCPA, please contact Katie Loftus, Monthly and Legacy Giving Officer, at 1-613-563-1341 ext. 318 (toll free: 1-844-563-1341 ext. 318) or katie@policyalternatives.ca.

PHOTO BY HUGO MORALES, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Feature

EDGARDO SEPULVEDA

Inequality's offspring

Why Chile woke up

ON OCTOBER 25, 2019, more than one million people marched in the streets of Santiago and other cities across Chile to demand structural change to reduce that country's extreme inequality, to replace the dictatorship-era constitution, and to protest against the government's excessive and indiscriminate use of force to quell mass social protests that started October 18.

After an impressive, decades-long period of economic growth, Chile is now Latin America's highest-income country and has been a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) since 2010. The irony of Chile being asked to join this "rich nations club" is not lost on the demonstrators. The country's economic model has funnelled most of these gains toward an oligarchic elite made up of hyper-wealthy families whose interconnected companies run much of the economy, and whose scions exert significant political influence in Chile.

Pension security, health care and education are largely provided on a for-profit basis. People feel exploited having to pay inflated prices for basic services and are demanding that the government change the free market policies first imposed during the 1973–1990 dictatorship. In addition to privatization, the dictatorship reduced taxes, opened up the country to free trade and broke up unions. Starting in the 1980s, that "neoliberal" playbook would be followed in the U.K., the United States and Canada under Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney and their successors.

But nothing has driven protestor anger more than the knowledge that these harsh economic policies have been perpetuated by all seven of Chile's post-dictatorship governments, including five led by centre-left or centrist presidents. Referring to the modest fare increase in the Santiago subway that sparked the mass demonstrations, the saying goes: "It is not 30 pesos, it is 30 years."

Not surprisingly, most Chileans have turned away from the electoral process. For Chileans who believe that the market and politics are rigged, taking to the street was the only remaining way to be heard and to demand respect and justice.

Inequality

The inequalities and injustices against which the protestors in Chile are raging are multifaceted. They include inequality before the law—impunity—as corporate collusion and other types of white collar crimes, political corruption or sexual abuse

in religious institutions appear not to be prosecuted, or with the perpetrators given relatively light sentences. They also include ethnic inequality, as Chilean Indigenous peoples continue to fight against centuries of mistreatment; and gender inequality, as women consolidate long-denied political and social gains. With respect to economic inequality, which I focus on here, it is possible to show how Chile's oligarchic democracy has narrowed the scope of politics to matters that are not likely to challenge concentrated wealth.

We can measure income or wealth inequality by focusing on the share of national wealth captured by a certain percentage of the population, say, the top 1% or the top 10%. Or we can look at one of a series of indices that capture the shape of the distribution of income, the most popular of which is the Gini index. The Gini varies between 0 and 1, with 0 meaning no inequality (with all persons having the same income) and 1 meaning the most inequality (one person has all the income). Very high inequality has been shown to have a number of negative social, political and economic effects and is also considered by many to be morally repugnant.

Economic inequality has long been of concern in Chile, the enduring legacy of Spanish colonial economic institutions first imposed on the region's Indigenous peoples. These institutions have produced a rigid social class system based on genealogy, income and race, wherein the many

Nothing has driven protestor pain and anger more than the knowledge that these harsh economic policies have been perpetuated by all seven of Chile's post-dictatorship governments.

feel aggrieved by the privileges and impunities of the oligarchic few. To put today's rage against inequality in historical and international context, Figure 1 tracks inequality over the last century, as measured by the share of income held by the top 1% in Chile and four other countries including Canada.

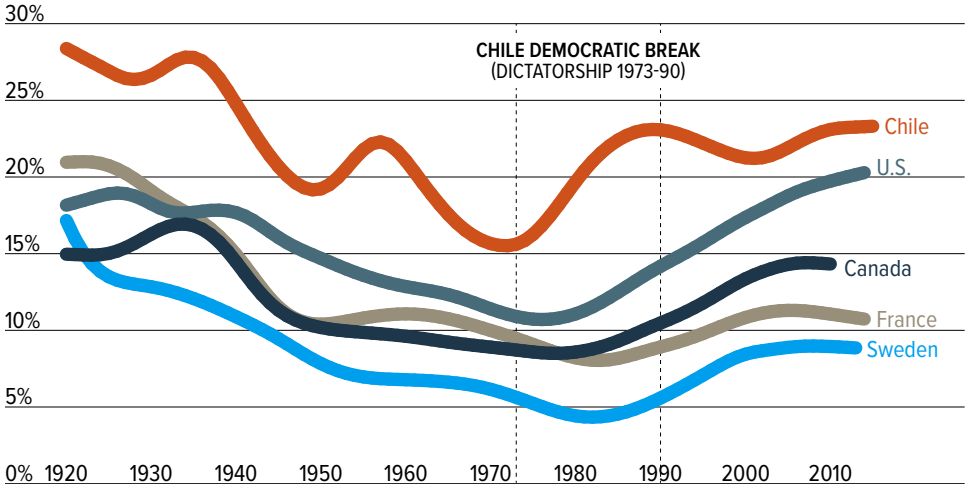
The graph shows that inequality in Chile and the other countries slowly declined over much of the 20th century, only to climb back up starting in the 1970s and '80s. The general decrease and then increase in inequality is due to a complex combination of historical events (the Great Depression, Second World War, the fall of the Soviet Union, etc.) and economic policies (the introduction and then decline of progressive taxation, rates of unionization, etc.) in each of these countries. Differences in economic policies explain much of the variations among countries around the general trend.

Chile's inequality is higher and has been more variable than the other countries, reflecting its oligarchic legacy, smaller size and historic reliance on the export of a small number of raw materials. But Chile's situation also reflects its recent political history.

Privatization, free trade, union repression and the dismantling of fledgling welfare institutions during the 17-year-long dictatorship resulted in an unprecedented jump in inequality in Chile that came earlier and was more severe than in the other countries, including the U.S., where policies have raised inequality to levels not seen in a century. Canada's inequality also increased starting in the 1980s, but not as much as that of Chile or the U.S.

I include France and Sweden in this and other charts to counter the selection "bias" that would result if Chile was compared only to the U.S. and Canada. I also include them to demonstrate that high inequality is not inevitable: the socialist and social democratic governments in power in France and Sweden in the 1980s mostly continued with inclusive growth policies and did not adopt the neoliberal policies implemented by conservative governments in the U.K., U.S. and Canada, and as a result their inequality increased less and later.

FIGURE 1 TOP 1% SHARE OF INCOME



SOURCE: WORLD INEQUALITY DATABASE, *INCOME INEQUALITY IN CHILE SINCE 1850* (WEBER) AND AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS

Permanent austerity

What are some of the symptoms of extreme income inequality and why have Chileans now woken up? One is the primacy of the market over social services. The oligarchic strategy is to reduce taxes and cut public funding of social services so that the services people need can be provided by the for-profit firms that they own.

Indeed, a key demand of the Chileans marching in the streets is increased public financing of social services, including those for retirement, health and education. Tax revenues in Chile hover at about 20% of GDP, which is

well below the average of more than 35% in our other comparator countries. But this is a matter of policy choice, not national income. Those same countries — Canada, the U.S., U.K., Sweden and France — had comparable tax revenues well before they reached Chile's current GDP in the 1990s.

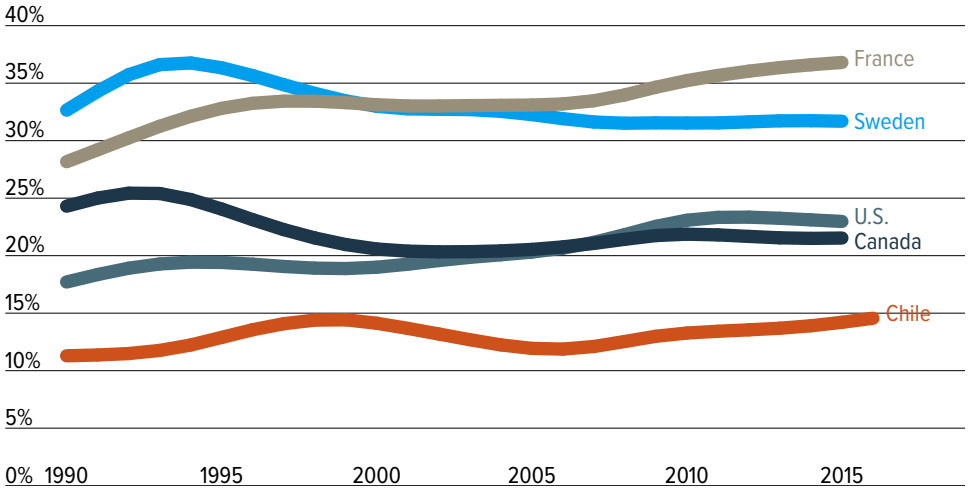
Some progressive economists in Chile have called for an increase in revenues to fund social services in the order of 5% of GDP in the medium term, but even that would only get Chile one-third of the way to the average of the other OECD countries. Given the historical social debt built up after half a century of austerity, the longer-term objective may be closer to an increase in the order of 10% of GDP.

Low government revenues mean less ability to provide social services. Figure 2 shows that Chile funds pensions, health care, education and other social services at about half the rate of the other countries. This is done in Chile in order to provide economic space for the privatized provision of services, and thus Chile has parallel public and private systems in all sectors.

The publicly financed systems are designed to be universal and have relatively modest or no user fees or contribution charges. In practice, however, many middle-income and almost all high-income Chileans opt out of what they perceive to be lower quality public systems by subscribing into a retirement or health plan offered by a user-fee-based, for-profit private provider. In fact, many of the grievances of the marchers are directed at these economic institutions—the private retirement plan administrators ("AFPs"), the private health care plan providers ("ISAPRES") or the for-profit universities.

As we see in Figure 2, public funding has barely budged since the end of the dictatorship. This is because none of the successive governments undertook the structural economic reforms to provide the free, quality and universal health care or education that Canadians, the French and Swedes take for granted. This means that, as in the U.S., Chileans pay about 50% of health expenditures privately. But the impact is worse in Chile because health care plans are paid for out of pocket by individual Chileans rather than by employers as in the U.S. By comparison, private health expenditures average only about 25% in Canada, France and Sweden. A comparable situation holds for education and retirement security.

FIGURE 2 PUBLIC FINANCING OF SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES (% OF GDP)



SOURCE: OECD SOCIAL EXPENDITURES DATABASE AND EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS, AND AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS

Chile's parallel public/private system perpetuates high market income inequality because it relegates lower-income households to generally lower-quality public systems that are less conducive to building (education) and maintaining (health and retirement) human capital. At the same time, the privatized systems allow for the creation of financial capital, further concentrating oligarchic wealth.

Chileans' struggle for comparable public services to those of other industrialized countries highlights the need for Canadians to protect what prior generations in Canada have achieved. The reduction of 3% of GDP (all levels of government) in social expenditures since the 1990s shows the precariousness of past gains. It is why university fees are so high in Canada, leaving students with huge debts; why hallway medicine exists; and why social assistance rates are even more inadequate than before.

Redistribution

Democratically elected governments in Chile have also failed to reduce income inequality. They could have done so by redistributing income, for example by taxing higher-income households and providing cash transfers to targeted groups. Canada's federal old age security (OAS) and guaranteed income supplement (GIS) programs, the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), and provincial social assistance (welfare) are prime examples of such transfer programs.

Redistribution is measured by the change in inequality after taking into account how market income is modified by such taxes and transfers into "disposable" income. Figure 3 shows how much inequality was reduced in Chile and our other comparator countries since 1990 as measured by the change in the Gini index. We can clearly see how little Chile has redistributed income since the end of the dictatorship. Both Canada and the U.S. have about three times the level of redistribution, while Sweden and France are even higher.

And so while Chile, the U.S. and France start off with high market income inequality (Gini indices of about 0.50) and Canada and Sweden with lower Gini indices of about 0.44 for the latest numbers, redistribution reduces market inequality to around 0.30 for Canada, France and Sweden, 0.40 for the U.S, but barely budges it in Chile to 0.46. Similar to the 1% measure, this Gini number confirms Chile's rank as one of the most economically unequal countries in the world.

So, what does it mean to be in the bottom economic half of the

population in Chile? It means your employment income is low because the minimum wage has been kept low by market-friendly legislation and the labour market is marked by precarious and informal jobs at the bottom end. Unemployment insurance is meagre and only available to designated contract workers, not those labouring in the large informal sector. There is virtually no social assistance if you become destitute. Private health insurance premiums are unaffordable, so you make do with the underresourced public health system.

There is no public pension in Chile like the Canada Pension Plan; instead, it is mandatory to pay into for-profit retirement funds (if you are lucky enough to be a designated contract or permanent worker). Day-to-day you pay higher prices for many goods and services because many sectors, including banking, foodstuffs, medicines, etc., are controlled by a small number of oligopolistic firms often owned by the oligarchic few.

Low incomes and high expenditures lead many Chileans into debt. Indeed, the median debt service ratio—the amount of disposable income devoted to service all debt—for a Chilean household with debt at the bottom half of the income distribution increased from 20% to more than 27% in the decade to 2017. That is not mostly mortgage debt or asset investment but student and retail and other consumption-oriented credit card debt. Many households are living paycheque to paycheque and have to borrow to make it to month's end.

Of course, this is not a uniquely Chilean phenomenon. Many lower-income households in Canada and the other countries, including the working poor and those on social assistance, are in a similar situation and have to borrow and resort to food banks. But at least they can rely on some high quality, publicly funded social services like health care.

Redistribution is fundamentally a political choice and social contract with real societal consequences. In principle, in a democracy people decide on the level of redistribution and the provision of public services by electing a government that will carry out that program. But extreme inequality appears to short-circuit that process. An oligarchic democracy seems to limit the scope of the politically possible, regardless of citizens' wishes.

Disenchanted citizens

Can democracy counteract oligarchic power? Research suggests that voter engagement, a critical democratic input, is suppressed by increasing inequality and that this effect is particularly pronounced in post-dictatorship countries where democratic governance does not deliver on citizen expectations. This certainly describes Chile, where political parties vying to form government have competed on narrow economic platforms that have delivered economic growth without economic justice.

To take into account differences in voter registration, researchers often use voting age population (VAP) turnout as an indicator to measure voter turnout. Figure 4 presents VAP turnout for Chile and the comparator countries from 1964 on, for presidential elections in Chile, the U.S. and France and parliamentary elections in Canada and Sweden.

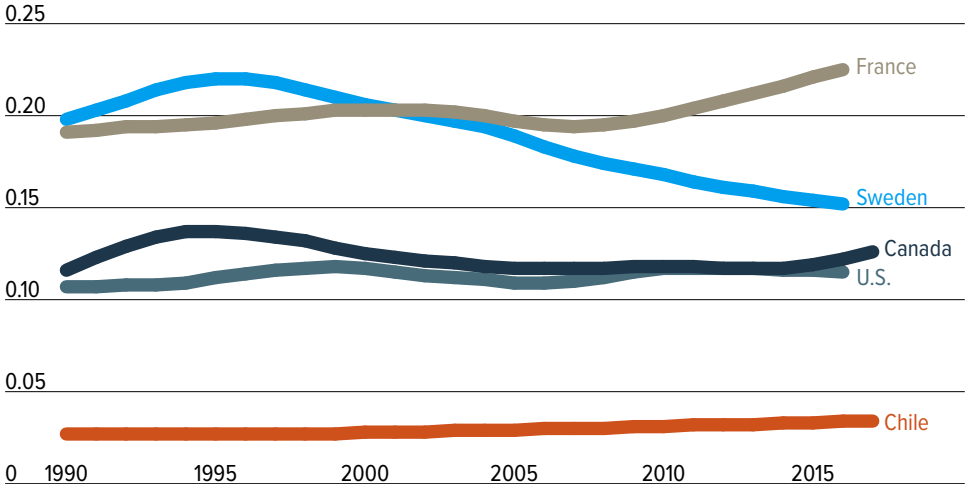
We can see that VAP turnout in Chile was low compared to the other countries in the 1960s and peaked at 86% in the first post-dictatorship election of 1989. After that there was a precipitous decline in Chile, to well below 50% in both the most recent presidential elections, including the one in 2017 that elected the current president. In contrast, VAP turnout in the other countries has been steady or declined moderately over the last 55 years.

The euphoria of being able to cast a ballot for the first time in a generation in 1989 soon turned to disappointment and ultimately outright disgust with politicians and the electoral process after a series of governments offered similarly inadequate economic visions. Lack of citizen engagement is a hallmark of oligarchic democracy: why bother playing if you know you'll lose? The electoral process ends up driven by those who can commit the most resources to maintaining the status quo.

Is reform possible? Since October 25, a parade of political leaders from the left and sometimes from the right have apologized for not having "heard the people" and not doing enough to reform or change the neoliberal economic model. But many in the centre and centre-left governments in Chile seemed to actually believe in what they were doing, much like the "Third Way" governments of Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and Jean Chrétien/Paul Martin. All adopted the mantra of maintaining the "responsible" neoliberal policies established by earlier conservative regimes.

The political situation in Chile has been in a dangerous negative feedback loop for some time. The political spectrum is narrowed to promote and defend concentrated wealth, making

FIGURE 3 REDISTRIBUTION (MARKET-DISPOSABLE INCOME GINI INDEX)



SOURCE: OECD INCOME DISTRIBUTION DATABASE AND AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS

government policy less responsive to citizen demands. This leads to citizen disenchantment and exit from the political process, which in turn results in decreased political competition against concentrated wealth.

What's next?

At the time of writing, Chileans were still massively protesting in the streets. The current conservative president, one of the wealthiest men in the country, has offered only modest one-off initiatives, but no medium or long-term plans to reduce inequality and improve quality of life. Opposition demands for serious reform, including a multi-year plan for Chile to finance quality universal social services, appear to have fallen on the deaf ears of a government committed to the neoliberal model.

Along with this economic incrementalism there has been positive news on the constitutional front: a congressional agreement to establish the framework to review and replace the dictatorship-era constitution that constrained certain economic policies. The process was top-down and driven by a highly discredited congress, and the agreement was not unanimous. But it now appears that Chileans will decide on whether they want to start this constitutional process in a historic plebiscite in April.

While the mass peaceful protests have continued, so has the destruction of property and looting, and the pitched battles with the police. As in other countries, there is often a "first line" of protesters that engage the security forces, often violently, using the mass peaceful protests as cover. In this volatile context, public attention has focused on strategies to achieve social peace, while ensuring justice for those killed and injured by the police and the military.

Human rights organizations have accused the security forces of excessive and indiscriminate use of force. Five confirmed deaths from live ammunition or beatings by the security forces and two suspicious deaths in custody are being investigated. Thousands of protestors and security personnel have been injured, including hundreds of demonstrators with serious eye injuries or loss of vision from the use of anti-riot shotgun pellets by the police.

The police continue to hold more than 1,000 of the more than 20,000 that have been detained. Human rights entities have documented ill treatment, sexual abuse and torture of some detainees. The national police, whose image had begun to be rehabilitated after their role in the dictatorship, will need another generation of real reform, including stronger political oversight, to be trusted by most of the population.

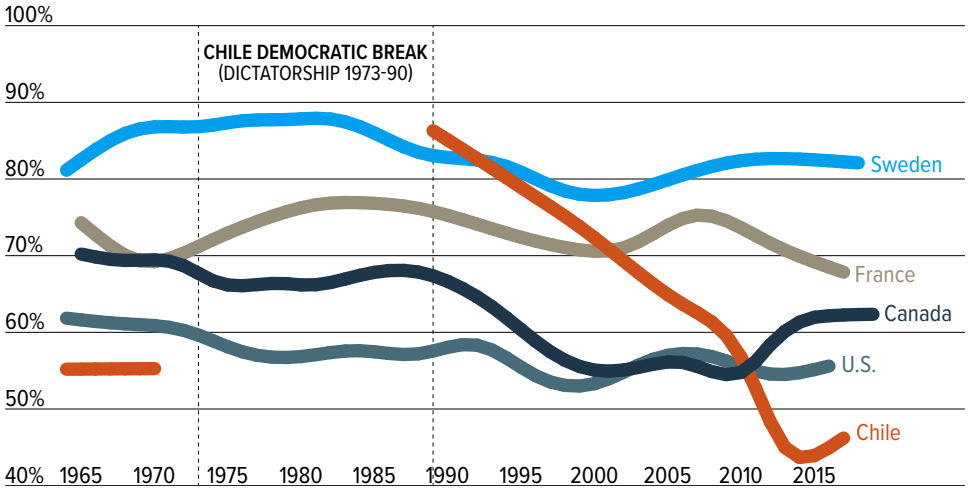
Chile's path is uncertain. Mass mobilization has not yet resulted in the structural reforms that would provide Chileans with what most advanced democracies have had in place for generations: policies to substantially moderate income inequality and to finance high quality, universal social services. There is no administrative or economic constraint to implementing these policies in Chile. But that has never really been the issue. Rather, until October 25, the political space was so narrow that structural reforms did not seem feasible.

Chileans generally support the mass peaceful demonstrations because they have opened up political space that can result in change. They abhor the vandalism and looting and are tiring of the street barricades and battles with the police. Most also acknowledge that the perpetrators are often dispossessed, lower-income youth that have borne the brunt of Chile's class injustices and permanent austerity—inequality's offspring. Thirty years since the end of the dictatorship, it is well past time for Chile to move beyond minor tinkering at the margins and begin addressing the structural issues bringing Chileans into the streets.

Chile's struggle against inequality matters because it is not theirs alone. Starting with the 2011 Occupy movement, this generation has seen protests against inequality with limited policy impact. But as income and wealth gaps continue to widen, the policy debate in the U.S and elsewhere about the dangers of inequality is now the most robust in a century. Inequality in Canada is less pronounced, but we should also be very concerned that the top 1% of Canadians hold 17% of total wealth and that many policies seem designed to favour them.

We see how political and economic ideas cross national boundaries. Chile's dictatorship-driven jump in inequality came earlier and was more severe than in other countries. Does today's democratic call for economic justice in Chile signal the break in the 40-year increase in inequality there and elsewhere? Canadians can and should feel emboldened to insist on a turnaround in this country, too. Policies to reduce income and wealth inequality, and to counteract the outsized influence of the few over the many, are the least we should expect from government today.

FIGURE 4 VOTING AGE POPULATION TURNOUT



SOURCE: IDEA VOTER TURNOUT DATABASE AND AUTHOR'S CALCULATIONS

A VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE WITH ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC DATA AND ANALYSIS ORIGINALLY RAN ON THE PROGRESSIVE ECONOMICS FORUM ON OCTOBER 31 AND CAN BE READ AT WWW.PROGRESSIVE-ECONOMICS.CA.

REVIEWED BY JOHN W. FOSTER

No benign superpowers

CLAWS OF THE PANDA: BEIJING'S CAMPAIGN OF INFLUENCE AND INTIMIDATION IN CANADA

JONATHAN MANTHORPE

Cormorant Books, 2019, $24.95

FEW DOUBT THAT relations between Canada and China are in crisis, the most acute in 50 years. In a September column in the *Globe and Mail*, veteran journalist Jonathan Manthorpe said the situation has "pulled into sharp focus the fundamental incompatibility of the values held by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Canada." This, he wrote, raises "very legitimate questions, both about the overly optimistic views of the relationship held by a succession of Canadian governments in the past and the extent of the ties Canada should pursue with [China] in the future."

Manthorpe elaborates these themes in *Claws of the Panda*, a book-length critique of Communist Party avenues of influence in Canada and the often muddled responses of Canadian governments. According to the author, Canadian attitudes toward China, from official recognition of the People's Republic to today, were not just optimistic but based on a "naïve" understanding of the country.

Missionaries and their children

Examining the earliest days of official relations between Canadian governments and pre- and post-revolutionary China, Manthorpe lays a good deal of responsibility at the door of the "Mish Kids," offspring of Canadian missionaries in China. Because of language and field experience they were influential before the 1949 revolution, and on return to Canada often gained positions of influence in government and academia.

It may be useful to remind readers that Christian missions and their progeny were only one dimension of imperial power in 19th and 20th century China. While Chinese labourers were being imported to build the Canadian Pacific Railway, Canadian clergy and their families were being exported to south, western and northern China to evangelize and educate.

In 1888, the suggestively named Presbyterian Jonathon Goforth left Toronto for the Middle Kingdom, following in the steps of English and Scottish divines. Dozens (later hundreds) of Canadian Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians followed. That these initiatives were possible owed much to the dominance of foreign powers in China, gunboat "diplomacy," the victories in the Opium Wars and the "unequal treaties" in the 19th and early 20th century.

Manthorpe gives particular attention to the role, in the early 1940s, of United Church missionary James G. Endicott, who provided intelligence reports from Sichuan to the U.S. Office of Strategic Services and engaged the CCP's Zhou Enlai's co-operation as well. Endicott's friend, Lester Pearson, was in the Department of External Affairs, whose staff were also recipients of his China assessments. (Endicott's son Stephen, a distinguished academic, passed away recently.)

"The Mish Kids had considerable empathy for China, which they understood to be a fragile, conflict-ridden, developing country that posed no threat to Canada," wrote UBC professor Michael Byers early last year, summarizing Manthorpe's case. "This benign understanding of China made Canadians easy targets for the Chinese regime."

Recognition and after

The book moves on to the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations in 1970, with Manthorpe surveying the early evolution of Canadian engagement in chapters suggestively titled "Romance meets reality," and "Reality bites." He points out that Canada's "formula" for recognition, i.e., "taking note" of the People's Republic's claim to Taiwan, led to many other negotiations and agreements with other Western governments. Not least was the slow advance in U.S.–China relations, from Nixon's July 1972 visit to Beijing to full diplomatic relations in January 1979.

The challenges of mapping avenues of influence are evident in the decades leading to Canada's official recognition of China in October 1970. Were particular personalities "friends of China," "agents of influence," "espionage agents," or something else? It depended on what the CCP expected as results of the engagement. Attention is given to key figures including academic Paul T.K. Lin and Diefenbaker's agriculture minister, the Honourable Alvin Hamilton. China's cultivation of Canada had strategic priority beyond the nation itself: it was aimed squarely at our giant neighbour.

Early in his study, Manthorpe asks whether Canada can change China, noting such items as the Trudeau government's hopes for a trade deal that would include human rights and environment-related elements. He concludes in the negative: "Far more pertinent is the question, is China changing Canada?" His book examines many of the ways in which the Chinese Communist Party has spent decades establishing networks and influencing Canadian political, commercial, media and academic discourse, "to its advantage."

The interpenetration of population is significant, with 1.56 million immigrants from Greater China living in Canada and, for instance, 300,000 or more Canadians in Hong Kong. Given the diversity of Canadians of Chinese origin, the CCP, aware of dissident elements working to change China, is "intent on maintaining an espionage network in Canada that keeps watch on these people and intimidates them when necessary." Manthorpe advises

that it is wrong to regard the issues in racial terms; the focus must be on the Communist Party as a particular regime at a particular stage in history. The party, he writes, sees "the Chinese diaspora as an asset to be used and abused."

While much of the latter portion of the book surveys the history of bilateral relations, it also provides detail on a number of particular dimensions, many of them as fresh as yesterday's newscasts: Chinese interest in acquiring access and control of natural resources, including the energy sector; CCP control of both state-owned and private companies and their operations abroad; security and intelligence concerns regarding Huawei and other firms, etc.

Of particular concern is the influence of the CCP in Canadian politics and its interference in elections. The issue can be visited in municipal, provincial or national theatres. The role of a number of Chinese institutions and Communist Party arms such as the United Front Work Department, or local "friendship" and cultural societies, in sponsoring activities by such Canadian organizations as the Union of British Columbia Municipalities is one example of China's engagement here. Ensuring that Canadian universities and school boards receive invitations to visit China thanks to the Confucius Institute or Chinese consulate is another.

Manthorpe gives useful attention to matters of "intelligence" and the extent to which it has been influential or ignored in Canadian policy and action. The background to the 1997 secret report, "Chinese Intelligence Services and Triads Financial Links in Canada," which was produced jointly by the RCMP and CSIS (in Operation Sidewinder), makes for fascinating reading. The mix of actors included not only the often brutal triads, but prominent business elements in Hong Kong and Canada.

What should be done with the report provoked conflict between the police and CSIS, leading to review by the Security Intelligence Review Committee (which then included Bob Rae and Frank McKenna). SIRC critiqued the CSIS/RCMP report as "deeply flawed" and concluded there was no evidence of immediate threat or that any threat was being ignored. Still, Manthorpe concludes that "other public material has emerged to support the thesis that the CCP has worked assiduously to influence Canadian media, academia, businesses and political life."

A relationship in crisis, policy in question

Since *Panda*'s publication, relations have been thrown into greater crisis by the arrest in Vancouver of the Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in pursuit of an extradition agreement with the U.S., and the apparent reprisal arrests of two Canadians in China. Sanctions against Canadian agricultural and other exports to China, and waves of spillover from the mercurial U.S.-China trade negotiations, further complicate bilateral relations. Meanwhile the democracy protests in Hong Kong, which in themselves should give us pause regarding an extradition agreement with China, have burned strong for half a year.

Recently, Manthorpe told a journalist that the crisis may actually be a good thing for Canada. "We have been in a state of self-delusion about our relationship with China for a long, long time," he said. "China has been using us and has been setting up agents of influence and otherwise operating in Canada against our interests for 60 or 70 years."

Unequal treaties revisited

One—perhaps the chief—omission of the Manthorpe study is the lack of serious consideration of the Canada-China Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) of 2014. Osgoode Hall Law School professor Gus Van Harten, in his critical study *Sold Down The Yangtze*, provides essential insights into why this deal is tragically lopsided.

"Unlike in NAFTA, Canada did not get any new access to China's market for exports of Canadian goods, in exchange for Canada's concessions on investment," Van Harten writes. "Canada simply accepted powerful protections for foreign investors, in a situation where Chinese investors own more assets in Canada than the other way around."

Global and Mail reporter Robert Fife (left) and Jonathan Manthorpe at a book launch organized by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute last year.

A memorable element of opposition to the agreement was a legal challenge initiated by the Hupačasath First Nation of Vancouver Island. The case argued that Aboriginal rights under the Canadian Constitution would be injured by the agreement. The case was dismissed by the Federal Court in August 2013 and an appeal was denied by the Federal Court of Appeal in January 2015. In between, the Harper government ratified the FIPA.

As Van Harten points out, the FIPA was lopsided for another critical reason: its long "zombie clause," to use a critical descriptor of a dangerous feature of bilateral investment treaties. Even if Canada gave notice in 2030, for example, of its intention to terminate the FIPA with China, the treaty would continue in effect for Chinese investments until 2045. Worse still, the Canadian government is not bound to be transparent about Chinese lawsuits against it. We could be threatened with significant costs without public disclosure.

Clear eyes

Given the scale and complexity of relations with this great power, Canadians are well advised to study this *Panda* and several more current publications about China. As Manthorpe concludes, we "need to understand that the CCP's China is not going to be a benign superpower. No superpower is." M

REVIEWED BY FRANK BAYERL

Whose streets? Google's streets.

THE SMART CITY IN A DIGITAL WORLD

VINCENT MOSCO

Emerald Publishing, August 2019, $33.33

"JUST GIVE US a city and put us in charge." That quote from Eric Schmidt, founder and former CEO of Google and its parent company, Alphabet, may seem a little immodest taken out of context. But it encapsulates one vision for the city of tomorrow, the smart city.

A smart city can mean many things. Usually it involves the application of computer communications (the "internet of things") to enhance the operations and maximize the efficiency of a city. The proposed renovation of Toronto's port lands district by Alphabet-owned Sidewalk Labs offers a Canadian exemplar.

In partnership with the City of Toronto and the federal government, Sidewalk has planned a futuristic community of apartments and condos, offices, schools, parks and shops equipped with the latest internet technology to gather and use data about just about everything. Traffic signals adjust to the flow of traffic. Monitors track noise and pollution. Underground tunnels keep delivery trucks off the streets. Heated bicycle paths and sidewalks melt snow. Networked thermostats and cameras promise more efficient use of energy in buildings and faster emergency responses to traffic and other problems.

"But perhaps the greatest opportunity for information collection," enthused the mayor of Squamish, B.C. in 2017, "is to envisage every citizen as a potential sensor, collecting information, measuring, mapping, crowdsourcing and ground-truthing their reality, and the potential for greater collaboration between academics, the private sector, governments and its citizens."

In his new book, Vincent Mosco, a professor emeritus at Queen's University, asks some pointed questions about this vision for the smart city. For example, how is privacy and data confidentiality affected by this approaching urban future? And how will the technology of the smart city change how we govern ourselves?

Google and other smart city advocates assume the private sector is best equipped to organize municipal life by applying business principles to public sector functions such as security, traffic management, housing, education and community development. Singapore, on every list of the most advanced smart cities, is also one of the world's most privatized, intensely monitored, and unequal in terms of income.

The issue of who governs a smart city is key. Mosco identifies three models or tendencies. In one, the government, primarily the nation-state, is responsible, as in Singapore. In another, private corporations are the major decision-makers—a kind of 21st century version of the old company town, but with robots. The Facebook-developed Willow Village in California is one example of this model, alongside Elon Musk's Yarrabend project in Australia, and Belmont, Arizona's smart city, which is loosely associated with Bill Gates.

In Mosco's third, preferred scenario, citizens run the show with a commitment to democracy. Only Barcelona, Spain has tried this approach so far, but Mosco is enthusiastic about its potential. Some 40,000 Barcelona residents have contributed ideas to help build the project, putting citizenship ahead of technology. Deals that would lock the city into long-term contracts with large tech firms are ruled out. Public ownership of data and the use of open-source and open-licence software are priorities.

Mosco reviews the history of attempts to make cities more livable and reduce the blight of industrialization. The garden city movement, Le Corbusier's technocratic vision of totally planned cities, Brutalism, Jane Jacobs's organic city, and Richard Florida's creative city were all very different attempts to maximize the positive forces of urbanization and reduce its negative impacts. Florida's vision is, in fact, only a small step away from the smart city.

Mosco's skepticism of technological utopias leads him to prefer what is known as "municipalism," the view that city-level government offers the best opportunity for democratic participation. It incorporates many elements of Jacobs's philosophy of urbanism with its emphasis on street-level experience and human-scaled neighbourhoods. Municipalism is significant, Mosco says, because it recognizes "that cities derive their intelligence from their people." He sees it as offering an alternative to elite-driven neoliberalism and authoritarian nationalism.

In the case of Toronto, Sidewalk Labs seems to be losing the public relations battle over its proposed waterfront development. It looked bad when former Ontario privacy commissioner Ann Cavoukian, who had been a consultant on the project, resigned over concerns about data protection. A recent decision by Waterfront Toronto limits the project to the original 12 acres of Quayside district land (the company wanted much more space) and requires that any data collected will be treated as a public asset—not the company's property. Sidewalk has also agreed to work with local developers.

While many decisions on this project are yet to be made, this assertion of public control, along with Barcelona's democratic leadership, give hope that smart city developments can be handled with adequate concern for the public interest. M

PAIGE GALETTE

From Cheechako to Sourdough

Reflections on northern living and surviving while being black

BACK IN 2014, friends of mine invited me to visit them in the Yukon.

"The Yukon?" I thought. "What the fuck am I going to do there? Black people don't go north, let alone the Yukon."

But with a heart full of love for these friends, who assured me that the Yukon was a magical place, I left for my first visit to the North; my first time travelling on my own. I still remember boarding the flight to Whitehorse on Air North, which I later found out was owned by a First Nation in the territory.

I was nervous. I thought to myself, "What the hell am I doing, going to a place so far north and by myself?" The friends I was visiting weren't Black. So, as much as I believed them when they said the Yukon was magical, I began to panic. All I knew is that I was heading to a hunting area.... Would I get shot? Would I be asked questions about my Blackness and forced to contend with inappropriate stares? Would I be the only Black person in town? What if my friends lured me into a place where their whiteness and privilege prevented them from seeing the dangers that were present for Black and racialized folks? The experience of travelling to somewhere new is often fraught for Black people. Wherever we go, we need to consider whether or not we will be treated with dignity. Add the fact that I am a woman, queer, and unapologetically outspoken; I was truly nervous. But I needed to leave the city.

While leaving the airport in my friend's car, I looked in the rearview mirror and gasped at the multitude of mountains looking back. "If you think these mountains are pretty, just wait until we take the road to Skagway (Alaska)," my friend said. As I walked in the streets of Whitehorse, I couldn't help but notice the number of Indigenous people. Suddenly I didn't feel so alone. Yukon is home to fourteen First Nations, eleven of which are self-governing. This is a fact that is barely discussed in Canadian history, politics, or education. I hold a bachelor's degree in social sciences and political science. Never did we learn about Indigenous governance. But I was required to learn about the colour of the carpet in the House of Commons and the Senate. Am I surprised? Absolutely not. This country is founded on colonialism, racism, and genocide. I was ashamed that I had assumed that white people had power and control in this land simply because that's what I was used to seeing.

Needless to say, my visit was spectacular. I ate berries from backyards and public trails; I was taught to forage for Labrador Tea; I saw northern lights for the very first time. I did things I hadn't done in a really long time, but that I loved: camping, hiking, exploring. On my last day in Whitehorse, I hiked up a mountain with my friends to see the sunset; I sat down on the fresh ground, cracked open a beer, and tears started flowing. At first I thought it was because of the winds and the fact that I was going back home and probably wouldn't see my friends again in a while. I thought I was sad. But when I took the plane back home to Ottawa the next day, I started to sob uncontrollably. I cried tears of joy, I cried tears of sadness, but most of all I cried because I was able to breathe! That was it! I knew I'd be back.

Galette is interviewed by CBC's Natasha MacDonald-Dupuis in 2017.
PHOTO FROM MACDONALD-DUPUIS'S TWITTER FEED.

The following winter I was invited to come up to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, to visit a friend. I figured if I was going all the way up there, I might as well stop by Whitehorse in the Yukon. And there I was, so far north, only this time in the beginning of winter. I was so "misplaced," even my phone would die from the cold as soon as I took it out of my coat. I was cold. But I didn't care. I was facing mountains. The same ones that had taken my heart a year prior. The sun would rise near 11 a.m. and go back down near 3 p.m. The sun was almost nonexistent, yet the darkness was calming, soothing, and best felt with a burning fire. That year, winter was different; during my Yukon visit we played in the snow all day, went tubing in the Carcross Desert. I wasn't once cold. I was glowing. I felt like a kid again.

I remembered being a kid in London, Ontario, building houses made out of snow on our front lawn. I'd invite my neighbours for "lunch" in my made-up

Yukon is home to fourteen First Nations, eleven of which are self-governing. This is a fact that is barely discussed in Canadian history, politics, or education.

kitchen. Most of the other kids couldn't sustain the cold and would make up an excuse to run back home. I didn't really have that many friends growing up, and as a result I realized that it was nice to not have to share my "snow house" with anybody else. I hadn't played in the snow for such a long period of time in so long until that Yukon visit. Growing up I often cursed the snow. As an adult living in Canada I'd ask myself why the hell was I still living in this cold-ass place. Yet, after one experience of Yukon winter, I had a different, a very different view: She (winter) was gorgeous! A wonderland to discover, so inviting. With fauna that seemed so mysterious, like out of a fantasy novel. There was caribou, elk, bison, arctic fox and lynx. Due to the lack of humidity, I felt this winter visit was so much warmer than winter in Toronto, Ottawa, or Montreal—all places that made me despise winter. People here were laughing, always wanting to do things outside and be cozy inside. I'd meet up with a friend of mine, who is visibly racialized, and I allowed myself to ask the real questions: Are there Black people here? Other racialized people? Could I move here? Would I be happy? Could I find community? Sure, I give credit to my friends: they were the ones to invite me up to visit in the first place. But the greater credit goes to my friend Reem: she inspired me to be who I am and to embrace my love for camping and hiking and loving the North's winter while still being true to myself. She showed me that we poCs can enjoy life not fitting "the norm." We can still do those outdoor sports and activities and not let ourselves down or betray ourselves. I decided to take a bold step and move north.

Leaving Toronto was easier than I thought. Sure, I was rattled with anxiety, depression, and fear, but my activism had always pushed me in unfamiliar territory. At this time in my life, the price of my activism was catching up to me—I was receiving real threats from people with power and influence, as well as your average asshole trolls. I read descriptions of me online that were so vile in ways I had never seen or imagine possible. I'd be belittled with the most hurtful words, criticisms of my Blackness, my queerness, and my intelligence. People who I had never seen or met before wished ill on my well-being and pain on my friends and family. I saw darkness everywhere I went. I couldn't breathe. I knew I needed to leave, to go. If I were to survive in this world, I needed a place that allowed me to be me, to love myself, and a place where I could escape when things would get wild again. I say "wild again," because (a) being Black in Canada, you can't seclude yourself from racist bullshit. There is no place, not even one as big and diverse as Toronto, that will protect you from haters, racists, misogynists, and white supremacists. Our country is founded on white supremacy, and its roots run so deep. It is everywhere. And I say "wild again" because (b) being unapologetically outspoken means shit will sometimes pop off, no matter how hard I try. And trust me...I've tried! Being Haitian, I like to think that I can never be tamed in my activism, in my quest for social justice. It's in my blood, it's in my history, and it's in the generations of my ancestors and in the generations of my futures. I need to be able to speak my mind.

And so I packed my car and drove across the country, refusing to look back. I couldn't look back. The view in front was too sweet to take my eyes off of it. However, the decision to move was complex. Firstly, I needed to acknowledge that it was complex to move and create a life for myself on land that isn't mine. I often think about whether or not I'm participating in a modern-day colonialism, one where I chose to move somewhere, without being invited or consulting the First Nations community in that place. I truly believe in decolonization and that by decolonizing, Indigenous people will be free. But I also feel like a fraud for settling in a location where I wasn't invited. I'm still conflicted by this. Modern-day settlerism. It doesn't feel good. Second, I am extremely privileged to have been able to move away. I left my family, my friends, my community. Leaving made me feel so selfish. I was fortunate enough to have the funds, to find employment, and to have friends to take me in while I found a place to live. But leaving is not that easy. As Black people, it can be hard to leave a place you know has all your needs, your community—especially for a place so unfamiliar, so unknown. I think of the displacement of refugees seeking a place to live, to be alive, to be free, to breathe. I think of the barriers that borders place in front of people seeking refuge. I think of the tests that migrants have to go through and pass in order to prove they are able to "conform" to the white supremacy already rooted in this country. Leaving and coming, travels and migrations: they are hard processes and complex ones.

I left Ontario with absolute peace of mind, and I left no one—not family, child, dependant—behind. I left without the need to conform or to prove and declare patriotism. I left easy, while my people, Haitian people, are at the United States–Canada border seeking refuge, a promise of a better future and opportunities, while facing sacrifices, a generous colder weather, and isolation.

I'd be a great liar if I were to say I'm living a perfect life in Whitehorse, free to be me, to show my Blackness, to live carefree. My new life in Yukon has still been marked by anti-Blackness. For example, at my work, when I straighten my natural hair, I still get reactions from colleagues: "I didn't recognize you." There are only two Black people at my workplace of over 300 employees. I am short (four feet, eleven inches), with a very distinguishable tattoo on my

forearm and a nose piercing. And yet I was still "unrecognizable" because my hair was straight. Similarly, as president of a not-for-profit's board of administration, I get questioned every day about my intentions and actions. I get undermined constantly, even by fellow board members. All of this is steeped in anti-Blackness. When meeting new people, I get asked how "my people" react to x, y, and z. I get questioned about the fact that I've never been to my homeland, Haiti, when Becky, Julie, Chad, and Matt all went on at least three to four "missions." And yes, I still get told that my anger with white people wearing so-called dreads at music festivals is unwarranted. Don't let my Instagram account fool you—anti-Blackness is alive and present in Yukon.

But there are also lots of great things, worth taking into account, about living in the North. First off, the impact of the self-governing First Nations people is tremendous. I've never lived in an area where people, white people, question their own actions and impacts with the intention of respecting First Nations people. Living in Yukon is living on recognized First Nations territory. A lot of this is due to policy changes and implementations as well as consultations with and directions from First Nations peoples. Their strength, tenacity, and resilience has made it that the North is a much more welcoming place for racialized people as these changes positively impact the lives of people from marginalized communities.

In Whitehorse, a government town, instead of seeing buildings and streets named after Wilfrid Laurier, Mackenzie King, and other nonsense slave owners, as I've experienced in Ottawa, there are names of First Nations people, and there are First Nations cultural centres able to host a variety of events and feature the First Nation's history, art, and culture. Hunting, trapping, and fishing season are done with intention, and with recognition of and respect for First Nations culture. For a Black person like me, who may feel displaced, it's quite comforting to know white people don't own everything. It permits me to feel safe and hopeful, as reconciliation with Indigenous people will bring liberation of other racialized people, including Black people, on Turtle Island.

I moved in May of 2017, and finding community, let alone Black community, proved difficult. I left Toronto with other people's fears put onto me. From close friends to family members to co-workers and bosses, everyone seemed to have an opinion on how I was going to live in the North. Yet most of them had never visited or lived there. Alone, scared, and constantly questioning this move, I left friends and family with very little warning. I knew I was going to be told not to leave or that opportunities, such as work or partnerships, too good to pass up would suddenly arise, as they had done before. I especially didn't tell my Black friends until much later because I knew I would be made a fool of. "You going where there's snow? The hell? Where are you going to get shea butter? You gonna be dusty as hell!" Well, to my surprise, most Black friends offered to send up care packages, which was so touching. I felt cared for and, in a sense, permitted to go. I did feel like I was leaving my Black fam behind, to suffer alone rather than to experience pain together, at a political time when friends and close family members were being attacked in the public eye in the media or social networks. It was nice to know that, even though it wasn't up to them, I was to go and my leaving was accepted, and that if things didn't work out, I'd be allowed back. That's a tough one with community. Leaving is hard, but not being allowed to come back, that's heart wrenching.

The Black people I have met were also people who, like me, lived in big cities, mostly Toronto, and left with a need for adventure and the need to breathe!

Because Yukon, especially Whitehorse, gets filled up with tourists in the summer, most Yukoners are gone during the months of May through August, camping, exploring, anywhere away from the tourists! Others, who stay, don't want to get emotionally attached to tourists who are just passing through. To this day, I get asked if I plan on moving back, even though I have changed my health card, license plate, and gotten a (real cute) puppy and continuously make my apartment a home. It wasn't until autumn, when winter started creeping back, that people started opening themselves and their homes to me.

And suddenly, I was introduced to Black people! That's the thing about winter; she can be real sweet, if you're ready to welcome her. But she can cut you real deep if you neglect her, speak ill of her, or don't welcome her! People would ask me what equipment I had for winter, and because I had already visited in wintertime, I was prepared. What I wasn't prepared for was finding my Black community. You can have all the warmest gear for winter. If you don't have your people, your Black family to enlighten you and make you happy, people to trust and keep you cozy, it's as though you have nothing.

The Black people I have met were also people who, like me, lived in big cities, mostly Toronto, and left with a need for adventure and the need to breathe! When meeting Black people, I wasn't offered clothing or winter gear, but rather hair products, well-seasoned food, talks on and reviews of Black culture/Black movies, and invitations to family gatherings. This also was offered by First Nations people I met. My first Christmas in Whitehorse was definitely not lonely. I was invited to a multitude of family gatherings and dinners and met extended family members of new friends and acquaintances. That's the thing with community, it's rooted in culture and love. Because I was welcomed in such manners, I feel the necessity to continue doing the

To become a Sourdough you need to survive and earn your right of passage, so to speak, by surviving winter.

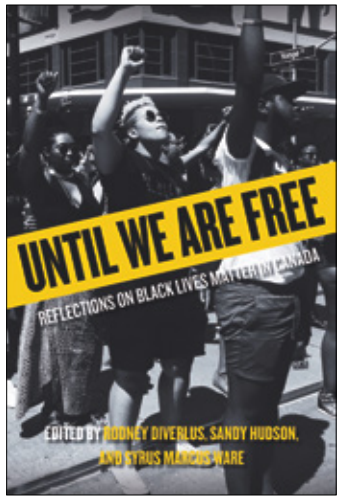
same for others. Whenever I see Black people, I don't offer clothing and winter gear—I know they'll find such things with ease. What they won't find easily is community. We are so spread out, all over the territory, it can be months before we meet each other. The times I had seen the most Black people were in gathering places, such as public talks with Lawrence Hill, author of *The Book of Negroes*, who is currently writing about and researching the history of Black soldiers who helped build the Alaska Highway and their encounters with First Nations people. Or meeting Auntie Antoinette. I put the "Auntie" in front of her name, as she really has been an auntie to me, even if we've mostly encountered each other across great distances. When asked if there are Black people in Yukon, one of the first names to pop up is Antoinette. Owner of Antoinette's Caribbean restaurant and very involved in the Yukon community, she shares her story with Black people she barely even knows while welcoming them to her "Northern" life. Another place I've found Black people are community centres and gyms! Winter hits hard with thirty-five to forty degrees below Celsius. We have to stay motivated and active, even despite the lack of sun! The first time I walked in the Canada Games Centre (a gym/community centre), my jaw dropped as I had never seen so many Black people and Black babies in Whitehorse! I'm sure they were equally shocked when they saw me. We'd exchange smiles so big with a feeling of hugging each other, similar to the scene in *The Colour Purple* when Celie is reunited with her sister and family. But instead, cognisant that white people are constantly watching (and probably with the RCMP on speed dial, 'cause you know...white people!), we exchange nods and smirks à la Black Panther, and carried on our workout or whatever business we had going. Every time I leave a Black person's presence without making conversation, internally I melt, hitting myself in the forehead, like, "gahh, what are you doing, go back, go back!" But unless they were visiting, I am relieved with the thought that we will see each other really soon!

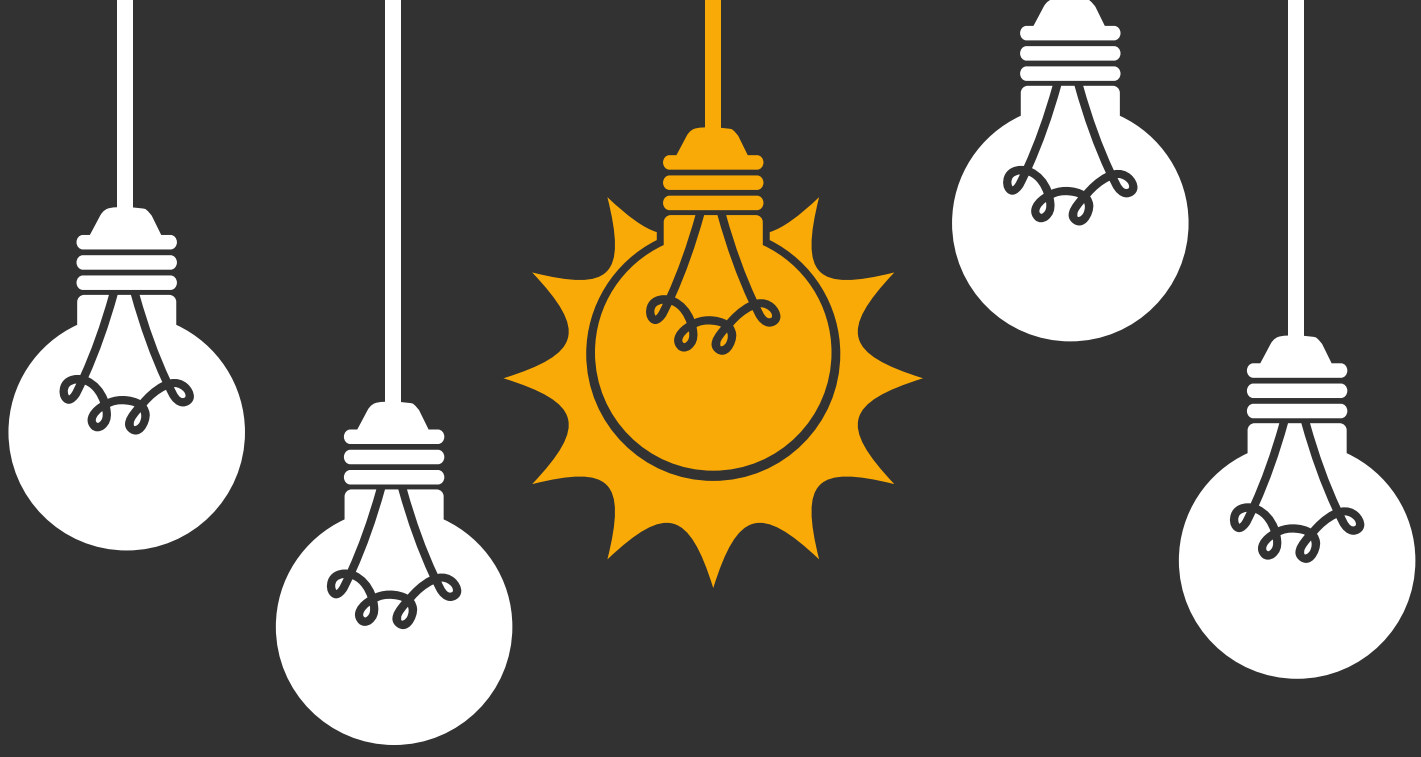
That's the thing, Black people, we are everywhere! Even in the smallest of towns, in the furthest of lands, in the coldest of winters: we are here. And we've been here for a long time. In the Yukon, Black history goes as far back as the Klondike gold rush, and even includes their contribution to the construction of the Alaska Highway. Yet, Black history in Canada is not taught and barely shared from a northern perspective. Which is not surprising when Black people's reaction to northern living is fear, confusion, and angst. We tend to fear the unknown. And when we are in a country that openly celebrates its racist history and refuses to acknowledge and remedy its practices, policies, and laws rooted in white supremacy, the fear of the unknown is doubled. We fear for our lives, and we tend to limit ourselves by missing what could be another way of living: one that is guided by First Nations practices, culture, and rituals. A way of living that would lead us to decolonization, progress, and thus, liberation.

In Alaska and Yukon, a term used to describe a new person in the North is Cheechako. A Cheechako is a person who has yet to survive a winter. As you continue to live in the North—some will say after having survived one winter, others will say five years, and still others will say over ten-plus years—you become a Sourdough. Legend and history have said that the term comes from settlers who would come through the North for the Gold Rush and would carry their sourdough starters through the harsh winters, in order to keep their culture alive. In other words, to become a Sourdough you need to survive and earn your right of passage, so to speak, by surviving winter.

I would argue that being a Black in the North, not only do we survive every day, but we also face the winter's challenges in addition. If I am able to write, to speak, to breathe, today, it's because my ancestors have survived. Northern living for Black people, in my opinion, is just a testament that we are far more resilient than what others make of us. We shouldn't fear moving to the North because of the winter; we have, and continue to, survive much worst. This is an ode to northern Black people, such as myself, who continue to defy all odds put against us. M

EXCERPTED AND ABRIDGED FROM THE FORTHCOMING BOOK, *UNTIL WE ARE FREE: REFLECTIONS ON BLACK LIVES MATTER IN CANADA*, EDITED BY RODNEY DIVERLUS, SANDY HUDSON AND SYRUS MARCUS WARE, AND PUBLISHED BY UNIVERSITY OF REGINA PRESS. THE BOOK WILL BE AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK ($22.95) THIS FEBRUARY (BLACK HISTORY MONTH).





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The state [in capitalist societies] is primarily and inevitably the guardian and protector of the economic interests which are dominant in them. Its 'real' purpose and mission is to ensure their continued predominance, not to prevent it. ***—Ralph Miliband***