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Book reviews in the *Monitor* are co-ordinated by Octopus Books, a community-owned anti-oppressive bookstore in Ottawa.

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CONTENTS

BIG DATA, BIGGER QUESTIONS

The world is coming to terms with the threats posed by unregulated surveillance capitalism. But what is truly new about the digital economy, where is it taking us, and which of its worst features might we fix with some good old-fashioned regulation?

With contributions from Jenna Cocullo, Larry Kuehn, Fenwick McKelvey, Tanner Mirrlees, Elizabeth Warren, Meagan Bell, Stuart Trew and Lindsey Bertrand.

STUART TREW

Mine your own business

GOOGLE (ALPHABET), Facebook, Microsoft, Apple, Amazon. These and other big tech stalwarts top lists of most valuable and most trusted companies. Their gadgets (iPhone, Nest, Alexa, Surface), web-based applications, music and film streaming platforms (Spotify, Netflix, Apple Movies) and cloud hosting services (OneDrive, Amazon Web Services) have transformed how and how much we use the internet to communicate with each other, shop, eat, access our news, entertain ourselves and manage our lives.

The products themselves are cheaper by the day and many of them—like Gmail, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Google Maps, etc.—are free... with a catch. In order to use these services you must agree, willingly or not, to hand over varying amounts of personal data to a private company, and consent to letting that company store it, sort it, and possibly sell it back to other, unknowable clients vying for your attention. More data gives a company a more accurate picture of individual tastes, but also (with the right algorithm) an eagle's view of broader trends—in demographics, health, soil quality, the weather, political opinions, you name it.

Companies, governments, political parties and anyone else with a vested interest in affecting your behaviour or changing your mind will pay handsomely for this information. No wonder everyone is getting into the data-mining game, as Shoshana Zuboff ponders at length in her new book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. The information is free or extremely cheap to come by, but it can generate massive profits dwarfing anything you would expect to earn from more tangible economic activity.

Just ask Mark Zuckerberg. In the last 10 years, his Facebook has become extremely wealthy and powerful by monopolizing and repurposing the personal records of more than two billion people and counting. Ad sales were the driving force behind Zuckerberg's data grab, growth the justification for essentially stealing contact lists from your phone and email. But the real end game, writes Zuboff, "is the rendering of our lives as behavioural data for the sake of others' improved control of us." As long as this is happening in a largely unregulated way, "there is no exit, no voice, and no loyalty, only helplessness."

Zuboff is only the latest in a growing list of people asking important questions about where the so-called digital revolution is taking us. Are we the consumer in the data-mining equation or the product? Is there a limit to how much personal information can be mined and privatized by Silicon Valley's digital darlings and their mushrooming global competitors? Is "surveillance capitalism" really any different from regular capitalism applied to the digital realm? Can we separate out the good bits from the bad? Where does the state fit in? And is there anything we can do to change course?

These are not easy questions to answer. As Siva Vaidhyanathan, author of *Anti-Social Media: How Facebook Disconnects us and Undermines Democracy*, told the *Financial Times* earlier this year, "Thinking about the problem of Facebook is much like thinking about the problem of climate change. In many ways, it is too big to wrap our minds around." We give it a shot anyway in this special issue of the Monitor, which the CCPA offers cookie-free and without terms of service.

Letters

Correct, but not right

In the article, "My neighbours are falling for right-wing populism. What can I do?" (January/February 2019), Ricardo Tranjan claims that "Political correctness is a social and cultural shift toward thoughtful and inclusive language, actions and interactions aimed at creating safe space for the participation of all." These aims are laudable, but they are almost the opposite of what I have experienced.

My experience of "political correctness" is of its being used as code by holier-than-thou elements of the left, to demarcate the boundaries of cliques—small groups of people who regard themselves as cutting-edge radicals. In reality, their attitude will never have the mass appeal required to change society. Knowing and memorizing "politically correct" terminology is used by many to bolster their own sense of superiority and to exclude those not "in the know." It sometimes has little to do with genuine commitment to truth and justice.

During my childhood my parents used to tell me they were "correcting" me whenever I expressed rebellion against the status quo. The very word "correct" gets my back up, evoking the most uptight, self-righteous and doctrinaire elements of the so-called left. No wonder right-wingers use it to mock us! Otherwise, great article.

Anne Miles, Gibsons, BC

Bravery in the face of corruption

What a refreshing moment in Canadian political history. An Indigenous woman speaks truth to power and to the country about how much back door political influence is used to protect giant corporations. All wealthy corporations hire full-time lobbyists to weasel their way into the power structures of Western countries using threats of job loss and relocation to bend our politicians to their will. The deferred prosecution agreement was initiated to get corporations out of legal quagmires that they themselves created.

One can tell which governments are most hijacked by corporate power by seeing who has these DPAs in place. Unfortunately, we are one of those countries. We will never get the power of choice back to the people in democracies if we continue to allow corporations to have such tyrannical influence. Times are ripe for change and brave souls like Jody Wilson-Raybould are initiating change through opening the doors to back room sleazy dealings that have taken over institutions of power.

June Mewhort, Woodville, ON

Missing in action

Excellent articles on the theme of workers' strikes in the March/April 2019 issue. My own experience has been that of membership in the United Steelworkers of America and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation. The historical rundown of significant strike actions is a useful and concise contribution, but it has two prominent flaws in my opinion.

The first is that it totally ignores the 1997 political strike of teachers in Ontario. That strike lasted two weeks and was an unprecedented joint action of political militancy. Instead, you chose to mention only the rotating one-day rallies of the broader labour movement 1995–98. Those actions paled in significance to the teachers' strike, which involved 100,000 members of secondary, elementary, francophone and Catholic unions.

Unfortunately, the broader labour movement—Ontario Federation of Labour and the private sector unions, not to mention the Canadian Union of Public Employees who were equally affected by the regressive legislation to public education under the Mike Harris reactionary regime—did not join in at the decisive moment to support the teachers with sympathy strikes as public sympathy had reached a peak. Instead, the OFL leadership demurred and made vague noises about future actions, which were quite minor in comparison. It puzzles me as to why that political strike has been buried in the historical memory.

The second issue of contention is the twice-mentioned use of the word "defence," a euphemism that capitalist states use to soften the appearance of aggressive militarism. Why not use the department of war or of militarism or of imperialism? Why should we in the left succumb to the terminology of capitalism? What makes you think that the British were defending themselves in the Balkans? Perhaps it was the other way around.

Gord Doctorow, Toronto, ON

Corrections

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal is not legislation, as stated in the March/April 2019 issue, but a non-binding resolution setting out goals, aspirations and principles for a broad-based, 10-year national mobilization for economic transformation in the United States. Thanks to Murray Reiss for pointing out the error.

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

New from the CCPA

Ontario continues to cut services

The first budget of Doug Ford's Conservative government, released in mid-April, will do serious damage to the public services Ontarians depend on, according to the CCPA-Ontario. "Cuts like these don't make Ontario 'a place to grow,' they make it a place where people have to just try and survive," says Senior Economist **Sheila Block**. "This is a bad news budget."

Ontario's Financial Accountability Office (FAO) has estimated that program spending needs to rise by 3.5% per year in order to maintain public services at current levels, given inflation and population changes. The first Ford budget, on the other hand, holds program spending growth to an average of 0.8% a year over the next three years, representing a cut of approximately 2.7 percentage points compared to current levels.

"Health care spending had to grow by 4% per year to keep up with the need, and in this budget it grows by 1.6%. School spending had to grow by 3.4% to keep up with the need, and in this budget it grows by 1.1%.," Block says. Outside of health care and schools, things look even worse: funding for post-secondary education, social services, justice, the environment and other areas will shrink by 0.2%.

A week before budget day, Block and **Ricardo Tranjan**, another economist with the CCPA-Ontario, released a report, **Ontario Has Options: Alternative fiscal paths for the 2019 budget**, which included a plan for sustainably and equitably raising provincial revenues in order to pay for needed social service enhancements. The CCPA plan would include:

- Reversing the Ford government's tax cuts, generating $3.3 to $3.4 billion in revenues. This includes reinstating the cap-and-trade system, some of the proceeds of which went to repair social housing, schools and hospitals.
- Increasing corporate tax rates to generate an additional $2.4 billion in revenues in 2019–20.
- Moderately increasing either the Ontario harmonized sales tax, or personal income tax rates for those making over $43,000 in annual income, which would add up to $11.9 billion in provincial revenues by 2022-23.

"Ontario doesn't have a spending problem—we already have the lowest per capita program spending of any province—but we do have a serious revenue problem," Block says. "If this government is serious about fiscal responsibility and, as it claims, 'protecting what matters most,' we need to raise taxes."

Community health centres in focus

British Columbia, under the current NDP government, is looking more closely at the community health centre (CHC) model as part of a larger health care reform effort. A new report from the CCPA-BC by **Andrew Longhurst** and **Marcy Cohen** supports the move and highlights what the province can learn from experience with CHCs throughout North America.

"Today in the United States, there are approximately 1,370 CHCs across the country, delivering care to almost 28 million people," write Longhurst and Cohen. "This large, non-profit and community-governed sector plays a vital role as the social safety net for the broader primary care system."

In addition to health care professionals, CHC teams can also include mental health counsellors, Indigenous elders and social workers who help address issues related to social housing, education and language barriers.

If this care model is underdeveloped in B.C., it's mainly due to opposition from Doctors of BC (formerly the BC Medical Association), which opposes non–fee-for-service forms of physician compensation. Longhurst and Cohen point out that many medical graduates would welcome alternatives to fee-for-service payment (e.g., a salary) that would provide predictable income as well as a pension and other benefits.

New hires at the CCPA!

The CCPA is pleased to announce that **Randy Robinson** will be our new Ontario Director. Randy's areas of expertise include public sector finance, the gendered rise of precarious work, neoliberalism, and labour rights. Most recently, Randy was the supervisor of communications and campaigns for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). Prior to this role, he was OPSEU's first political economist during the Great Recession of 2008-09 and was instrumental in shaping the union's response to provincial austerity policy.

The CCPA's national office is also happy to welcome **Arushana Sunderaeson** as our new development assistant. Arushana has a bachelor of political science (with a minor in media studies) from Brock University and is experienced in fund development, event management, communication, policy and public affairs. She has volunteered in various organizations including YWCA Canada, North York Women's Shelter, and Social Planning Toronto. "I am proud to call myself a feminist and I am passionate about helping others," she says.

You can follow Arushana and Randy on Twitter: @ArushanaS and @RandyFRobinson.

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

Up Front

DANYAAL RAZA | NATIONAL

A small step on the long road to national pharmacare

One year ago, as part of Budget 2018, Bill Morneau heralded the creation of an advisory council on the implementation of a national pharmacare plan, to be led by former Ontario health minister Eric Hoskins. The council released an interim report earlier this year, which called for the creation of a national drug agency, the development of a comprehensive, evidence-based national formulary, and an investment in drug data and information technology systems. These three recommendations were offered as the foundational elements of a national pharmacare plan.

The 2019 federal budget, released in March, allotted $35 million for a new Canadian Drug Agency tasked with creating an evidence-based list, or formulary, of prescribed drugs and negotiating prescription drug prices on behalf of the public. Given the scope of the budget, the investment is relatively modest, but that is likely because much of the infrastructure to do this currently exists.

The heavy lifting on new drug evaluations is largely done by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH), an independent not-for-profit jointly funded by federal and provincial governments. As a part of their mandate, CADTH evaluates clinical, economic and patient-oriented evidence on drugs. These evaluations are used by public drug plans across the country to determine what drugs are, and are not, worth paying for, though there is little pickup of these recommendations by drug plans administered through private insurance companies.

On the issue of pooled negotiations with pharma, the Canadian Drug Agency will likely build on the foundation established by the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (PCPA). Founded in 2010, the PCPA already conducts joint provincial/territorial/federal negotiations for brand-name and generic drugs on behalf of publicly funded drug programs. Created in part to help level the playing field with pharma, the PCPA began joint negotiations for a limited list of six medications. Today, that list is 60. With the hundreds of drugs currently being paid for by public drug plans, this is still modest.

The big question is whether Canada's approach to national pharmacare will be a single-payer or multi-payer system.

Though the Budget 2019 pharmacare announcement is promising, it does not increase access to prescription drugs for people in Canada. At best, it can be seen as the beginning of a much broader wave of health care reforms. The big question of whether Canada's approach to national pharmacare will be a single-payer or multi-payer system remains unanswered. We won't hear more from the federal government's advisory council on this question until it presents its final report in June.

What we do know, from both peer-reviewed medical literature and the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), is that a universal, public plan would be superior to a "fill the gaps" approach. According to the PBO, universal public pharmacare would improve access to lifesaving prescription drugs while also reducing spending by $4 billion. Other research has found that adopting the best practices from around the world would result in savings of $4 to $7 billion. In contrast, two decades after Quebec adopted a mixed public-private "fill the gaps" approach to drug coverage, Quebecers have among the highest per capita drug spending in the country.

While we wait for the big question of a single- vs. multi-payer program to be answered, we can expect plenty of backlash from insurance companies and the pharma industry. They will continue to fight back against any measures that reduce their market share, their prices or their profits. Health care reformers will need to hold the government's feet to the fire. The Trudeau government has backed off on price reforms before. Budget 2019's commitment to fair and affordable drug access for all, regardless of region or income, should not suffer the same fate.

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BEN PARFITT | BRITISH COLUMBIA

Deferred prosecution agreements (or get out of jail for a fee)

Deferred prosecution agreements—or DPAs—are much in the news these days thanks to former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould's momentous resignation from the federal cabinet. DPAs are a corporate get-out-of-jail-free card or, more precisely, an avoid-jail-and-pay-a-fine-instead card. They became a reality in Canada last year after being slipped into a 500-page federal omnibus budget bill and later passed into law.

As Canadians now know, the DPA option seemed tailor-made for SNC-Lavalin, the Montreal-based multinational that faces federal criminal prosecution over alleged payment of $48 million in bribes to Libyan officials. The government's calculus appeared to be that with DPAs in place, the federal prosecution service could abandon criminal proceedings and take the soft glove approach instead.

The trouble was, federal prosecutors rejected entering a DPA with SNC-Lavalin. Wilson-Raybould refused repeated entreaties by her cabinet colleagues and senior political staff to intervene. She was demoted to Minister of Veteran Affairs and eventually ejected from the Liberal caucus. If any good comes from the ongoing controversy it may be in realizing this: the SNC-Lavalin affair is part of a much broader story where corporate malfeasance can be swept under the rug.

Corporations are rarely charged for breaking the rules. And when they do face consequences for their actions, the penalties are often so laughably low they engender further bad behaviour. Consider these corporate environmental infractions in Beautiful British Columbia.

Load Em Up Contracting Ltd., a company licensed in B.C. to haul hazardous wastes, was penalized in 2015 for "knowingly submitting false information" about the wastes it transported. The penalty? A paltry $575 fine that represented the only time since 2006 (when digitized records became publicly available) that any waste handler was penalized under B.C.'s Hazardous Waste Regulations.

In 2015, Synergy Land Services Ltd. submitted falsified documents to the provincial Oil and Gas Commission (OGC). Geographical locations and the stated work to be done were changed without the knowledge of the professional archaeologist whose signature appeared on the documents. Despite assertions that it treated such actions "very seriously," the OGC let Synergy off with a warning. A $500,000 fine could have been imposed.

In 2018, the OGC discovered that pipeline builder Kinder Morgan violated B.C.'s Water Sustainability Act not once but four times. The company improperly reported water that it was using and it laid down meshed plastic mats in streams, preventing fish from spawning. The company was fined $230 for each violation of the act, for a total fine of $920.

In July and September 2018, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development sent enforcement officers to inspect 49 large dugouts and dams near the community of Dawson Creek. The region is prone to droughts and is home to some of the most intense natural gas industry fracking operations in B.C. The inspection blitz followed media reports generated by freedom of information (FOI) requests made by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The FOI documents revealed how natural gas companies built as many as 91 dams on Crown and private lands, typically without first obtaining required permits and licences. The dams were all built to capture freshwater used in fracking operations. Just four "violation tickets" were issued—totaling $960—even though offences under the Water Sustainability Act carry fines of up to $1 million.

The list goes on. But perhaps the most egregious example of all involves two of those 91 unlicensed dams. Both were built by Progress Energy Canada Ltd., a subsidiary of Malaysian state-owned Petronas. The two dams in question qualified as "major projects" under B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Act. One was as tall as a seven-storey building and was later found to have serious design flaws that could have caused the dam to collapse. Progress was legally required to submit its plans to the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) before building the dams. It didn't. Other dams built by the company also violated provincial water laws and dam safety regulations.

The matter was referred to provincial Crown counsel in June 2018. Under the Environmental Assessment Act criminal proceedings must be launched within three years of an infraction first coming to light. Since the EAO learned of the two major unauthorized dams in summer 2016, very few months remained before Crown counsel would lose options to prosecute.

Two litmus tests for deciding whether to initiate criminal proceedings are whether a prosecution is in the public interest and whether the prosecution has a reasonable chance of succeeding. That Progress built the dams without referring them to the EAO first is undisputed. That doing so carried potential environmental and public health and safety risks is not in doubt either. What is in doubt is whether there was the political will to do anything about it.

As the Wilson-Raybould affair so vividly underscores, there's the public interest and then there's the political interest. When political and corporate interests dovetail, it's the public interest that is all too often sacrificed.

BEN PARFITT IS A RESOURCE POLICY ANALYST WITH THE CCPA-BC. A VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN THE PROVINCE NEWSPAPER ON MARCH 31.

SHERRI BROWN | ONTARIO

The cold calculus of care for children with autism

On February 6, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services Lisa MacLeod held a press conference with her parliamentary secretary, Amy Fee, to announce sweeping changes to the Ontario Autism Program.

I have a nine-year-old son, Quinn, who is non-verbal, profoundly autistic, and also has epilepsy and a severe intellectual disability. We, too, have waited on the lists the minister spoke passionately that day about "clearing." MacLeod repeatedly cited how only 25% of Ontario's 30,000 children with autism are currently receiving treatment, while over 75% of children are languishing on waitlists.

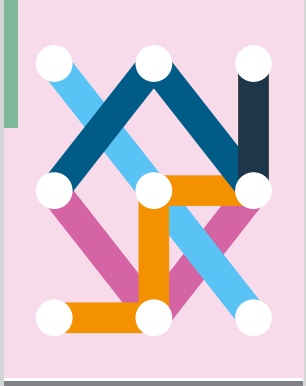
The Ford government's solution to this crisis, however, was to demolish the previous program that provided needs-based treatment services, and instead implement a cash payout of up to $140,000 per child's lifetime (deemed a "childhood budget"). For children entering the new program after the age of six, the amount is capped at $55,000. If your child, like mine, was diagnosed at age 3, this would entail approximately $20,000 per year until the age of 6, and $5,000 per year until the age of 18.

This is the model of autism service in British Columbia. We left B.C. in 2017 because of this model and its failure to provide need-based treatment for Quinn. I should have known better. Neoliberal policy reform is viral in Canada, and the Ontario government's announcement proved that the adage holds true: "wherever you go, there you are."

In the days and weeks following this announcement, parents, educators and allies across Ontario vociferously and unrelentingly opposed these changes. There were constant protests at Minister MacLeod's constituency office, a large protest on the lawn of Queen's Park, intense social media and community-based pressure, and allegations with supporting evidence that government attempted to pressure applied behaviour analysis (ABA) stakeholders, including the professional ABA providers' association, ONTABA, to support the changes or face "four long years." Parents and allies were united in their vocal opposition to these changes, and moreover, very clear that they would continue to protest.

On March 21 and April 2, Minister Macleod announced that the program would have some new "enhancements." These included the elimination of income testing for childhood budgets, a six-month extension to ABA programs for children currently receiving services, the addition of eligibility to purchase occupational and speech therapies with childhood budgets, and finally, a commitment to conduct provincial consultations on developing a needs-based approach to services.

What remains, however, are the capped childhood budgets, the age caps and the failure to address clinically-indicated needs in the new Ontario Autism Program. Parents and allies wondered why the province forged ahead with a new program that ignored need, that capped services, and seemingly now asks parents to pay for all autism-related services (ABA, speech, occupational therapy, and respite) through a single envelope. Minister Macleod lauds these changes as offering "choice" and "eliminating the waitlist," but the new Ontario Autism



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Regulatory Nosedive

Compiled by Jenna Cocullo

2015

The year managers at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) delegated safety testing responsibilities for Boeing's 737 Max to the company itself. The company's safety assessment of the MCAS (Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System) was later found to be flawed, miscalculating both the strength of the MCAS, which automatically causes the plane's nose to tilt downward when sensors determine the angle of attack on takeoff is too steep, and its tendency to reset after a pilot overrides it.

$12 million

Amount paid by Boeing to the FAA in late 2015 after an investigation found the company was routinely not following protocols designed to protect against production errors, and that incomplete paperwork was signed off as complete. "None of these matters involved immediate safety of flight," Boeing spokesman Doug Alder told media at the time.

5

The number of pilots that had reportedly raised concerns over Boeing's new aircraft after their planes suddenly titled downward while the autopilot function was engaged.

346

Number of people who passed away on two 737 Max planes that went down over the past six months. A Lion Air flight crashed in Indonesia in October, killing 189 people. The second accident happened in March, in Addis Ababa, taking the lives of 157 passengers, including 18 Canadians.

62

The number of countries that have banned the Boeing Max 8 and 9 planes. Fifty-one countries enforced a complete ban on the model including the United States, where the aircraft is produced. Eleven countries did not issue a ban but had the plane voluntarily grounded by their airlines. Ethiopia's government did not issue a ban, leaving it up to Ethiopia Airways to do so.

March 13

Canada decides to ground all 737 Max planes—a day after a Europe-wide ban was announced and two days after China grounded the planes—citing "new information." The new information in question may have been the Trump administration's decision, also on March 13, to take Boeing's plane out of the sky.

44

Number of airlines that fly the Boeing 737 Max, including Air Canada and Westjet, who collectively operate 41 jets.

SOURCES Associated Press, Seattle Times, Quartz, CBC News, Business Insider, Global News, Politico.

Program is truly about asking parents to accept the elimination of needs-based, clinically appropriate services for their children with autism spectrum disorder.

The childhood budgets are, in my view, the most disturbing and worrying aspect of the new program. For those who muse, "those amounts don't sound so terrible," consider that there are no other health conditions that ration and deliver publicly funded treatment in this manner. You are not offered a childhood budget for bone fractures or diabetes or cancer and told that once your child turns 18 they will be expunged from the system, only to enter an equally, if not more, cruel adult system. You expect that they will be provided needs-based treatment as determined by medical and health personnel. So, why is this the case with autism?

One of the core reasons is because the primary evidence-based treatment for autism, applied behaviour analysis, has traditionally been delivered in Canada under ministries of children and/or community services. Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder and disability and most public services delivered to persons with disabilities fall under the political umbrella of family and community services. Public services in Ontario and Canada for persons with disabilities, particularly developmental disabilities, have long and horrific histories of underfunding, institutionalization, and poor care and treatment. Autism is sadly embedded within this archaic framework. Rather than working with families, treatment professionals and experts on a modern and effective treatment and support framework, Minister MacLeod and the Ford government are driving it further into chaos.

Over 40 years of clinical and systematic review of ABA unequivocally demonstrates its efficacy for children and adults, making it the treatment of choice and best practice in the professional and medical literature and community. The evidence further confirms that intensity is critical to symptom improvement and skills gains. Children need to have access, generally, to 20–40 hours weekly of treatment, and interventions must be sustained and/or monitored to prevent regressions in symptoms, skills and behaviours. In the U.S., after extensive advocacy and some legal appeals, 48 out of 50 states now mandate that public and private health insurance providers must provide clinically appropriate ABA treatment services for persons with autism spectrum disorder.

This type of treatment is expensive; a 40-hour weekly treatment protocol costs approximately $80,000 to $100,000 per year. But please juxtapose this figure with the lifetime costs of treating a child with a heart condition, diabetes or cancer, or even the hundreds of millions spent on non-life-threatening conditions such as hip and knee replacements. Ultimately, I have no idea what it costs to treat cancer, fix a diseased aorta or repair a fractured femur. And you know what? That's fine with me. I don't want to know, because I don't want to live in a society where we coldly ration essential health care treatments.

We pay these costs through our tax dollars because not only is a single-payer system like ours demonstrably more cost efficient, it is also more just and caring. But if we do need to justify the treatment of autism, the Senate already did so, in 2006, in its report titled "Pay Now or Pay Later: Autism Families in Crisis," which highlighted the extensive future public, individual and familial costs of failing to treat autism across the lifespan, and in particular during childhood.

The Ford government's announcement provoked so much fear, panic, and anxiety because this policy change is grossly punishing to children and families. Most will not be able to afford the out-of-pocket costs (for my child that equates to $80,000 in treatment costs minus $5,000 in government funding, and I am a single parent working full time). For those that can afford treatment, it will likely be at greatly reduced intensity levels.

Imagine you or a family member acquires a health condition or disorder, where a treatment exists that will greatly improve your symptoms and long-term prognosis. Instead of assessing your needs and delivering that treatment, the government hands you a cheque for $5,000 (and a bureaucratic nightmare of endless paperwork).

What do you do? Do you go into debt? Do you quit your job to care for that family member? Do you deny them the treatment they need? Do you live with the crushing guilt of providing minimal or subpar treatment because that's all you can afford? For my child with severe autism, with a childhood budget of $5,000 per year, the last shred of hope I retain is that perhaps the recently announced consultations on need-based services will begin to address his complex needs. Given the Ford government's aggressive cuts and policy changes to public education and health care, I am not optimistic.

The fight is not over, because there are so many questions and challenges remaining with the new Ontario Autism Program. There are also clear answers that the Ford government has so far ignored: regulate the system, provide ABA under our current public health care system, and fully and properly fund needs-based treatment for all individuals with autism.

DR. SHERRI BROWN IS A RESEARCHER, WRITER AND AUTISM ADVOCATE LIVING IN WITH HER SON IN OTTAWA.

WORTH REPEATING

"Come on, let us shoot."

The grainy video footage shocked the world when it was released by Wikileaks in 2010. It showed civilians in a Baghdad street on July 12, 2007 being gunned down by U.S. troops hovering overhead in their Apache helicopter. A dozen people were killed in the attack, including two Reuters journalists. On April 11, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange was taken into custody by British police after Ecuador withdrew his asylum status. Assange had been living in the Ecuadorian embassy in London since 2012. The U.S. has requested his extradition on charges he conspired with former U.S. intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to acquire classified information.

GARRY NEIL | NATIONAL

It's time to stop trading away Canadian culture

In 2018, Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly proudly proclaimed that Canada successfully negotiated a cultural exemption in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). In 1987, Flora MacDonald, then Mulroney's minister of communications, made the same claim at the conclusion of the Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) negotiations. Neither minister was being entirely honest. In fact, both those agreements, and the NAFTA in between, brought changes to Canadian cultural policies and restrictions on our policy-making.

To understand why Canada needs cultural policies and how these are affected by trade agreements, we can compare Canada's television and film industries. Canadian television is successful. We celebrate our stars, we watch Canadian dramas, comedies, documentaries and children's programs, and these programs are increasingly popular abroad. In 2017-18, we produced 1,222 TV movies, series and other shows, with a total production value of over $2.7 billion. That same year, we produced 105 movies with total budgets of just over $0.3 billion. U.S. movies took 89.7% of the Canadian box office while Canadian English-language films "reached" an anemic 1% market share.

The writers, directors and actors who tell stories in television programs and films are generally the same people, using the same infrastructure. Canadians succeed in Hollywood. So why the huge discrepancy? It's because in television we have a wide array of effective policies that support production and exhibition of Canadian programs and we don't have strong policies in film. It's about more than funding, since 54% of the total budgets of Canadian television productions came from public sources (CBC, tax credits, Canadian Media Fund, Telefilm, etc.) compared to 59% of total film budgets. The key difference are the important structural measures, including CRTC rules, restrictions on foreign ownership, and requirements to fund Canadian content and give it a preferential place on television schedules.

During the Canada–U.S. trade negotiations in the late 1980s, the federal government was considering a policy to require that a Canadian company distribute all films imported into Canada (since they invest in Canadian movies) and the introduction of a cinema screen quota. In a leaked memo from the talks, a U.S. official reported Canada had agreed "to solve (Motion Picture Association of America president) Jack Valenti's problem." While the government vehemently denied the report, it's no coincidence that the film distribution policy was greatly weakened and no quota introduced.

The Canada-U.S. FTA established the template for how Canada negotiates culture in trade agreements. The federal government agreed informally to change policies in publishing and movies, the text of the final agreement required Canada to implement several measures, and advertising was included. The "cultural exemption" is further limited by the "notwithstanding" clause that authorizes U.S. retaliation against any cultural policy. Successive trade developments have forced changes to many Canadian policies, including ownership rules, magazine policies, CRTC regulations and copyright. Challenges for Canadian culture are compounded by the unwillingness of governments to regulate digital distribution. The Canada–U.S.–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA, or "New NAFTA") strengthens the cultural exemption, but it too requires changes to two CRTC rules, policies on retransmission of broadcasting signals, and Canadian copyright laws.

Which brings us to CPTPP. Despite Minister Joly's proclamation, there is no cultural exemption in the 11-country free trade pact, which is now in force. The CPTPP's e-commerce chapter exempts "broadcasting," and Canada sought to protect cultural policy space by taking a limited reservation against commitments in various other chapters that could impact cultural policies. As a result, Canada can maintain existing cultural measures or make them weaker, but cannot strengthen them. There is also an assumption in free trade deals that governments will eventually eliminate such "non-conforming" measures.

Not only did Canada negotiate weak protections, our own reservations limited future policy options by committing that they would not "discriminate against foreign services" or "restrict access to foreign online audiovisual content." What Canada achieved in the final hours of CPTPP negotiations—the main basis of Joly's assertion—were side-letters with each partner country removing these limitations on Canada's reservations. The core weaknesses remain.

Here's a concrete example of what could happen if Canada were now to strengthen film distribution policies. As a Japanese company, Sony Pictures, a major Hollywood studio, could file a strong case under the CPTPP's investor–state dispute settlement system on the grounds its business in Canada had been severely restricted. Canada could be forced to compensate multinational firms (with a presence in a CPTPP country) for cultural policies favouring domestic producers and domestic content.

It is critical for Canada to take a fresh approach to culture and trade issues that includes a contemporary definition of culture focused on cultural expressions (rather than cultural industries), a refusal to admit the U.S. into CPTPP unless it incorporates the USMCA cultural exemption, and a cultural co-operation approach based on mutual support of relevant UNESCO conventions.

GARRY NEIL HAS WORKED FOR 40 YEARS IN ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY IN CANADA AND INTERNATIONALLY. HIS BOOK, CANADIAN CULTURE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: THE IMPACT OF TRADE DEALS ON CANADA'S CULTURAL LIFE, WAS PUBLISHED IN APRIL BY JAMES LORIMER & COMPANY LTD.

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THE

SURVEILLANCE ECONOMY. *NOW.*

JENNA COCULLO
ILLUSTRATION BY JESSICA FORTNER

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IT IS THE turn of the 20th century and the second industrial revolution continues to transform the human environment. The world no longer looks the same as it did 80, 40 or even 20 years ago. Concrete and steel landscapes fill the skyline. Nearly half the U.S. population now lives in cities — catching up to rates seen in Britain a half-century earlier — with railways and telegraph lines shortening the distance between them. Mortality rates are decreasing and lifespans slowly lengthening as the exchange of money and consumer goods increases in a first wave of globalization.

While the industrial revolution was paving the way for a new standard of living it was not without its costs, some immediate and some slowly creeping up on us. Only now are the majority of people and most governments beginning to realize that this leap forward was the beginning of climate change. Back then, humanity was the proverbial frog in a pot of boiling water: it would be generations before we took note of deteriorating air, water and soil quality, global temperature increases, and the existential threats to fragile ecosystems from our ways of producing, trading and consuming. Like all revolutions, the consequences of industrial capitalism were knowable only in hindsight.

If Shoshana Zuboff is right, we are in the midst of a new revolution nestled within the digital leap forward of the Information Age. The data gathering activities of online communications giants, starting with Google, are transforming capitalism as radically as Henry Ford did with mass production. This *Surveillance Capitalism*, the title of Zuboff's new book, presents a novel set of problems some of which, much like climate change, threaten our human potential on this Earth. The good news, she writes, is that if we start talking about these threats now we might avoid another unforeseen catastrophe.

Just as industrial capitalism claimed the world's natural resources for economic benefit, now in the digital age multi-billion-dollar industries are expropriating our private experiences to produce behavioural data that will ultimately be used in the marketplace. Instead of slowly changing our climate, Zuboff and other scholars of the digital economy fear that this time around we are changing human nature. This new threat is called surveillance capitalism.

Companies profit under surveillance capitalism by collecting information on our social-psychological behaviour, running it through opaque algorithms and using it to predict and even promote human behaviour that is valuable to other companies. Corporate actors are saturating online spaces, vying for attention from the endless possibilities of niche markets their products can cater too. The economic pressures have created an information ecosystem of monitoring and sharing data from our personal online social spaces with the goal of turning a profit through the regulation of our actions.

Just as the Industrial Revolution came with many advantages, such as more cost-effective production leading to cheaper goods, and eventually improved quality of life, so does data collection and processing in the Information Age. Most of the benefits come down to the quantity and quality of the information we can now gather about almost everything.

- **Self-optimization:** Philosopher and media theorist Marshall McLuhan posited that technology is an extension of ourselves. Cars, by helping us get around faster, are extensions of our feet. Computers, by helping us work and process information more effectively, are extensions of our brains. In the digital age new tools like the Fitbit or Apple Watch are extensions of our self-knowledge. They help us keep track of the steps we take, laps we swim and hours we sleep. This is known as self-logging or, as *Wired* editor and writer Gary Wolf dubbed it, the "quantified self." These devices,

through data collection often operated by GPS technology, have the potential to improve personal well-being in some cases: a new asthma inhaler can track when and where someone has had an asthma attack, for example, which helps us better understand the environmental factors contributing to these events.

- **Societal optimization:** The so-called internet of things (IoT), a term coined in 1999, refers to the extension of internet connectivity—not between people but between physical everyday objects—creating an ecosystem of devices that can communicate and interact amongst themselves. Most common applications are found in the home (the "smart" TV is now ubiquitous, but wider "smart home" services can connect power usage, security and voice-command features). According to the United Nations, the global population is expected to rise to 9.6 billion people by 2050. If nothing else changes in the way we produce and commute, that will mean more cars on the street, less land, and complicated food logistics. Engineers are developing self-driving cars connected through 5G networks that have the potential to take people where they need to go without everyone having to purchase vehicles of their own. Additionally, "smart" agriculture is promising farmers the ability to monitor their soil remotely through ground sensors that relay the information to smartphones.

- **Optimized services:** Applications such as Google Docs, Facebook Messenger and the iPhone wallet app help us work, communicate and store information more efficiently. There are even more complex applications that make once highly specialized tasks such as video editing and web design easier for the average person to do themselves. Where we once had to know how to code to build a blog, today people can use sites with predesigned interfaces that let you drag and drop content where you want it.

It's easy enough to list the benefits of a networked, online world, which Silicon Valley prophets do regularly, loudly and often unrealistically. But people are also coming to know and understand the dark underbelly of this new reality, in which most of the information, the "smart" technology and networks through which we communicate are owned privately, by corporations with no scruples about violating basic privacy norms—and frequently breaking the law—in the pursuit of rapid growth. Our consent and societal control of these technologies is severely compromised where the market and profit motive determine the shape of things to come.

The mass production of products in the age of industrial capitalism and the collection of data in the age of surveillance capitalism differ, according to Zuboff, in that producers and consumers were once dependent on each other for the profit motive to function. Corporate owners controlled the means of production and had most of the power under industrial capitalism, but workers and consumers could keep that power in check by organizing for a fair share of the wealth they generated, on the one hand, and boycotting unethical products on the other. In the age of surveillance capitalism, Zuboff claims, these counteracting forces are no longer interdependent.

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"Instead of labour, surveillance capitalism feeds on every aspect of every human's experience," writes Zuboff. To be more precise, she says that "behavioural surplus," and not labour power, is the new raw material from which profits are taken—from all of us rather than the workers on the shop floor, in the retail outlet, at the call centre, or any other place where employers direct the work of employees. In a world where data collection is always turned on we have lost our bargaining chip (our labour) because Big Data does not need it for the profit motive to function. Furthermore, this ecosystem of information is controlled by only a handful of companies. How can we, the public, even stage a boycott when we have so little understanding of how the exchange of data works, or where the pressure points might be?

The power structures in the marketplace are shifting, and conversely we are relinquishing what little control we once had. In addition to accumulating behavioural capital (our private data) and surveillance assets, firms are also accumulating our rights. The system "operates without meaningful mechanisms of consent," Zuboff explains. If you want to use your GPS, you must give up your location. If you want to download iTunes, video-call friends or use any of Google's apps you must agree to their terms and privacy agreements. There is no negotiation in the digital marketplace. It is a unilateral relationship, one in which we have no guarantees of safety or protection, and no way of claiming our information back once it has been collected.

The term corporatocracy has emerged in recent years to describe a society that is governed by and for large corporations. Corporate influence on the nation-state and governance is not a new idea, but digital capitalism is furthering that power shift. Most firms have collaborative agreements with states, be they democratic or authoritarian.

DON'T LIKE HOW I OPERATE? SUE ME.

A selection of antitrust and anti-competition lawsuits against Big Data.

GOOGLE

EUROPEAN UNION
US$5 BILLION

2018: The European Commission found that Goggle had used the mobile operating system to illegally cement its dominant position in search.

EUROPEAN UNION
US$2.7 BILLION (2.5% OF GOOGLE'S 2016 REVENUE)

2017: The European Commission found that Google unfairly steered consumers to its own shopping platform through its search engine thus denying them a genuine choice.

RUSSIA
US$6.75 MILLION

2016: Google fined by Russian Federal Antimonopoly Service for preinstalling apps on Android phones.

UNITED STATES
US$22.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT

2010: FTC found Google liable for misrepresenting "privacy assurances to users of Apple's Safari internet browser."

MICROSOFT

EUROPEAN UNION
US$1.35 BILLION

2008: For failing to comply with a 2004 judgment that required them to release information to competitors after they were found to be violating antitrust laws.

EUROPEAN UNION
US$666 MILLION

2004: Fined for violating antitrust laws and ordered to release key Windows code to rival software developers.

SOUTH KOREA
US$32 MILLION

2005: Fined for blocking competition.

FACEBOOK

UNITED KINGDOM
US$654 THOUSAND

2018: For allowing third party developers (Cambridge Analytica) to access user information without sufficient consent.

UNITED STATES
ONGOING

The Washington Post reported in February that the FTC is negotiating a multi-billion-dollar fine for privacy violations. This will be the biggest fine the privacy watchdog has ever tried to impose.

COUNTY COOK, ILLINOIS
ONGOING

Suing Facebook over Cambridge Analytica scandal and influencing voters.

BELGIUM
US$281 THOUSAND PER DAY, OR UP TO US$112 MILLION

2015–18: A Belgian court rules that Facebook must delete data it is collecting from users visiting third-party sites without the users' consent.

AMAZON

CANADA
$1 MILLION CAD

2017: An investigation led by Canada's Competition Bureau found that the company was tricking customer into believing products sold on Amazon were cheaper.

UNITED STATES
US$1.2 MILLION

2018: The Environmental Protection Agency settled a case accusing Amazon of selling pesticides not licensed for sale in the U.S.

EUROPEAN UNION

In September it was reported that the EU is looking at launching an investigation to determine whether Amazon violated antitrust laws by using data from third-party sellers to determine "the next big thing."

In March 2016, China's National Development and Reform Commission revealed that more than nine million airline and speed-train tickets had been denied to citizens with a low social credit. The social credit score was adopted a few years prior in order to determine which citizens were trustworthy and which were not. Each person starts off with 1,000 points and every time they litter, smoke in a non-smoking area or get in a fight they lose points. If they volunteer or pick up garbage from the street they gain points. Those with low scores have been blocked from purchasing high-end travel options and receive higher mortgage rates or are flat out denied loans.

While most of this surveillance has been done the old-fashioned (human) way in China, as the country develops its own "smart" cities, including a network of facial recognition security cameras, the Communist Party will eventually have the option to spy on citizens wherever they go. The potential of these systems to chill dissent and undermine pro-democracy movements in China is significant. But wherever they're applied, these technologies are ultimately designed to control and alter human behaviour.

Democratic states are also developing technology-enabled blacklists and have enlisted the help of the private sector to aid in their campaigns. In 2013, Edward Snowden revealed that the National Security Agency (NSA) was tapping into users' private Yahoo and Google accounts through approved court orders. The U.S. surveillance agency had also been secretly tapping into the companies' data centres—evidence that even if private consent and privacy practices are improved, our information is at risk of being leaked to, or stolen by, government officials. As Zuboff points out, state surveillance agencies learned how to do this from the private sector: Google, Facebook and other Silicon Valley firms make billions on data mining of the legal and illegal variety.

SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM AT SCHOOL

GOOGLE MOVED into the school system more than a decade ago, but the recent expansion of Google Suite for Education, and the introduction of an education management system called Classroom, significantly increase the company's presence there. By some reports, at least half of U.S. students are already on the Google program. In Canada, the company's digital educational tools are used extensively in Alberta and B.C., and probably other provinces as well.

The Google Suite includes many of the standard tools Google offers free for anyone who signs up: word processing, spreadsheets, "hangouts" for communication, a web calendar, presentation slides, and the storage to hold it all. Classroom is a system the teacher uses to give assignments, keep track of marks, send messages to students and generally link with any of the Google tools. Every student who is using G Suite must have a Gmail address and it must be in their real name.

Every one of Google's tools collects data as it processes information and stores it in the cloud; Google servers are located around the globe and connected, of course, by the internet. What happens to all this data created by and about students—besides, of course, its use by the teacher and student? That is a question that every parent may want to ask.

As Shoshana Zuboff describes in *Surveillance Capitalism*, Google collected masses of data from our searches—*behavioural surplus*, she calls is—before setting out to monetize it. Suddenly, the internet was targeting ads at us directly, based, we would learn, on the data we had provided by using Google's services.

Google says: "There are no ads in G Suite for Education core services, and students' personal information won't be used to create ad profiles for targeting." It also says the data belongs to the school districts and will never be sold. But many non-core services linked to Classroom, including apps developed by independent companies (and even some by Google), may not be covered by this privacy policy.

YouTube, for example, which Google purchased in 2006, is not a core service, but it is extensively used in student creations and instructional information. Though Google-parent Alphabet is cagey about how much ad revenue YouTube brings in, the company assures us it is significant. Beyond its advertising potential, who knows what value the viewing details and other Google usage data furnished by students provides the company.

How has G Suite grown so large so quickly, without much serious look at the implications? The simple reason is that it is cheap and easy. Schools are challenged to provide the technology claimed as necessary for "21st century learning." Google offers free software, free unlimited storage, and it relieves school districts of many costs of administering systems. Google's Chromebooks are popular because they don't require additional software or a big hard drive. They connect students to Google Classroom with only a Wi-Fi connection.

Google is making an offer it seems that schools cannot refuse. But at what cost? We're far enough into the digital age to have learned that with "free" services the user becomes the product, though Zuboff prefers thinking of *behavioural surplus* (personal information) as the raw material for surveillance capitalist exploitation. In either scenario, the data we provide to Google, Facebook, YouTube, etc., is the source of those companies' economic value—and we have no control over it.

When (or if) parents are asked to sign authorization for enrolment in Google Suite, do they know what is going to happen with their children's data? Are those who are asking the parent to sign even fully aware of all the implications? We need to be vigilant about the collective implications of the amount and type of data collection taking place in education—as well as in the rest of our lives. **—Larry Kuehn**

In the age of surveillance capitalism we are no longer the customers of data-based goods and services. For Zuboff we are the raw material from which Big Data's profits are extracted. This, she claims, is a first in the history of capitalism. Google first served the public as the top internet search engine on the web. It now exists primarily to serve advertisers. Information about customers and subscribers, collected across a vast network of Google apps and services, is now marketed to advertisers to precisely predict and shift our behaviours. "We no longer exist to be employed and served, we exist to be harvested," writes Zuboff.

But if the raw materials are different than they were under industrial capitalism, the driving force behind surveillance capitalism—endless growth—is exactly the same. As companies seek to expand their profits they are compelled to expand the quantity and types of data they collect. This new age of capitalism is now a part of the fabric of our everyday lives. It has moved beyond the workplace to infiltrate our homes, our cars, our bodies and our relationships.

Engineers are developing "smart" homes that have the capacity to aid seniors, like those living with dementia, but also the potential to make the surveillance of human life complete. As a fridge door opens a speaker comes on informing them to close it. Lights sense when they get out of bed and motion detectors inform them that it is still nighttime, so they should go back to sleep. Most impressive is the use of machines that can monitor breathing levels and movements throughout the house, and take a person's pulse—information that is sent to caregivers but also stored in the cloud.

One of the most common features of a "smart" home is the Nest thermostat, bought by Google in 2014 for US$3.2 billion, which is Wi-Fi enabled and networked. According to the company, Nest "aims to learn a user's heating and cooling habits to help optimize scheduling and power usage." But the value of the device, according to *Wired*, "lies not in the hardware itself but the interconnectedness of that hardware. As the devices talk to each other, by building an aggregate picture

of human behaviour, they anticipate what we want before even we know."

Should a user choose not agree with a data miner's terms of service agreement, be it Nest or any other connected device or app, they will no longer be able to receive important updates. A detailed analysis of Nest and the companies in its ecosystem, mentioned in Zuboff's book, revealed that a user would have to review nearly 1,000 contracts to determine who can have access to their data. Furthermore, engineers have proven that they can bypass the Nest software and alter the behaviour of a participating home. Our most private space, and the information on what we do there, is no longer safe.

The 20th century housewife was one of the first mass marketing successes in an age of broadcast communication. Ad men imparted upon them the desire to buy more household products to live up to the image they had created of the modernized American home. The first stage of advertising instilled feelings of inadequacy, to convince us to want the manufactured life they presented before us.

As competition from near-identical products emerged, companies had to distinguish their products by playing off people's personalities and feelings. Are you a Subaru Outback or Toyota Venza kind of person? Adventurer or family person? Only end-of-year sales numbers could determine if the branding was working.

With the advent of online targeted marketing, companies can predict with better accuracy that their desired demographic will be exposed to their advertisements. Click-through rates are better, because they show advertisers who is clicking on a banner ad promoting their goods or services. But techniques have moved well beyond that simplistic function. Advertising evolved from making us believe we wanted something to knowing exactly what we want, and from catering to our general personalities to pinpointing exactly when and where we are most likely to do something. Where is the computer user mousing over? How long are they holding their eyes on your ad as they scroll through an article. All of this and more data can help Google, Facebook, Amazon and other surveillance capitalists discover a single user's probability that they will click on a link, and to make predictions on their future behaviour.

"Prediction products are sold into a new kind of market that trades exclusively in future behaviour," writes Zuboff. "Surveillance capitalism's profits derive primarily from these behavioural futures markets" Advertisers can predict that expecting parents might be looking for a new car and display to them an ad of that brand new Venza on Facebook, while their neighbour next door might be getting an ad for the Forester because they just finished shopping online for hiking gear.

Zubanoff claims Google's behavioural data is accurate enough that it could figure out the buying habits of a person with mental health issues; advertisers are then sold the potential that this person will be more likely to make impulse buying decisions during lower moods or manic episodes, and pinpoint exactly when those episodes will occur. Without our consent, Google is trading exclusively in these predictions about our most vulnerable emotional states. The search engine began collecting this "behavioural surplus" in 2001. But the company became tied irreversibly to the exploitation of this information as a business model after going public in 2004. Between those two dates, Google revenues increased by 3,590%.

"The new prediction systems are only incidentally about ads, in the same way that Ford's new system of mass production was only incidentally about automobiles," proposes Zuboff. "In both cases the systems can be applied to many other domains." Prediction is good. Control is better. The "internet of things" is so intelligent that basic sensors can now become actuators, intervening in real-time to put us on a different path. In an experiment with people who use Facebook, Adam D.I. Kramer, one of the company's data scientists, found that emotional contagion does not simply occur during human-to-human interactions.

"When positive expressions were reduced, people produced fewer positive posts and more negative posts; when negative expressions were reduced, the opposite pattern occurred. These results indicate that emotions expressed by others on Facebook influence our own emotions, constituting experimental evidence for massive-scale contagion via social networks."

These findings suggest that in-person interactions and nonverbal cues are not necessary for emotional manipulation. We can now be automated remotely. As one data scientist told Zuboff, "we can engineer the context around a particular behaviour and force change that way."

This process can and has had real impacts on democracy. Since the 2016 U.S. election, the public and government officials have become increasingly concerned about the role and influence that platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Google are having on the integrity of democratic processes. Cambridge Analytica had access to 87 million Facebook users during the 2016 campaign, information that was used for targeted ad campaigns. The additional problem lies in the fact that Facebook does not yet have to disclose who is buying ads and where. By and large the surveillance economy is grossly underregulated, though this is slowly changing.

A relatively higher number of Canadians, approximately 42%, report receiving their news and information from social media sites. The number of Canadians younger than 45 who rely on Facebook as a source of breaking news is even higher than those who rely on television. Luckily, the Elections Modernization Act, passed late last year in time for the upcoming Canadian elections, bans foreign spending on partisan ads during Canadian elections and requires online platforms to keep detailed accounts of who is buying political ads, and who they target. Not all countries have or will pass similar legislation, and in any case it leaves the underlying data-gathering business model of these platforms completely intact.

Outside of elections, political interest groups, notably far-right and white supremacist organizations, have benefited from the behavioural nudge features of online platforms. For example, YouTube's algorithms are designed in a way to keep viewers on the site as long as possible by

suggesting videos they might like to watch. Tuning occurs shortly after and involves, writes Zuboff, "subliminal cues designed to subtly shape the flow of behaviour at the precise time and place for maximal efficient influence." So if a person has just finished watching a speech on anti-immigration policies, the next video suggested will be slightly more provocative—a pattern that repeats until viewers potentially find themselves immersed in white supremacist hate. Users remain unaware of the choice architecture designed to shape their behaviour, disrupting the process of self-awareness and individual autonomy.

The internet is the new final frontier. Google, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Microsoft and other tech giants have colonized it and hijaked our information without consent. They have been permitted to suck in overwhelming amounts of information, keep algorithmic sorting and targeting systems away from public scrutiny (using ever-stronger intellectual property rights and business information secrecy laws), and cannibalize all potential competition for our online attention through mergers and takeovers. These companies know much more about how this system works than we do and their monopoly powers make it likely our calls for privacy will fall on deaf ears.

"Demanding privacy from surveillance capitalists," says Zuboff, "or lobbying for an end to commercial surveillance on the internet is like asking old Henry Ford to make each Model T by hand. It's like asking a giraffe to shorten its neck, or a cow to give up chewing. These demands are existential threats that violate the basic mechanisms of the entity's survival."

As the second Industrial Revolution was humming into the 20th century, Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius pointed out the impact that burning fossil fuels was having on the environment, but no one took notice. Over 100 years later there are still a handful of people debating the science of climate change and those who do believe are slow to act. Where did we go wrong? Why didn't we try to avert the catastrophe at the earliest warning signs?

No one wanted to listen. If Zuboff is right—and she is hardly alone in raising the alarm about the power of the tech giants—we face a similar moment. Surveillance capitalism has the potential to fundamentally change who we are. Left to their own devices, the data harvesters will continue to take in vast amounts of our personal information, with or without our consent. They are forced to follow the profit motive to its ultimate destination, however anti-democratic it is or who is harmed along the way. The time to start setting limits and finding solutions is now. M

DO YOU HAVE THE SMARTS?

An IoT shopping spree

Jenna Cocullo

EGG MINDER, BY QUIRKY

"Ever been out on a brisk walk trying to work out the stress from the day and then suddenly been hit with a wave of anxiety wondering just how many eggs are in the fridge and what condition they might possibly be in? Well, with the egg minder those panic attacks are forever behind us. This product works anywhere too, so we can check on our eggs from the john, or the back of a police car, or even from in the emergency room, because those warning signs to turn off all cell phones are just stupid. The Eggminder will set all of our hearts and minds at ease. Our dreams of a more peaceful world are at hand. Thank you Eggminder. Thank you." —*W. Giant, customer reviewer on Amazon*

SMART WATER BOTTLE

In case thirst wasn't a good enough clue that it's time to drink some water, you can buy the Foladion Sports Smart Water Bottle to remind you every two hours that it's drinking time.

ISOMMELIER SMART DECANTER

Help your $15 bottle of grocery store wine breathe in just seconds with the iSommelier Smart Decanter, retailing at $500.

BELTY

Belty, a belt, retailing at $224, has a secret USB charger under the buckle for those days you forget yours. Just don't forget to wear the belt.

PORKFOLIO THE PIGGYBANK

If you don't have time to teach your kids how to count, Porkfolio will keep track of the money they put in their piggy bank using an iPhone app.

THE SMART DUVET

Making the bed in the morning? Who has time for that? The smart duvet does it for you and doubles as a temperature-controlled blanket.

OFF THE MARKET

SMART TOASTER

It connected to your iPhone for the perfect brown, because your old toaster just wasn't precise enough.

IPOTTY

What do you get when you combine and iPad and a potty? Yeah, we aren't sure either. Named worst toy of the year in 2013, this idea quickly went down the toilet.

HAPILABS HAPIFORK

The world's first smart fork was designed to alarm people when they ate too fast, but nobody was buying. Guess customers thought it was a forking bad idea.

SMART HAIR BRUSH

L'Oreal's smart brush was designed to inform you about your hair quality and brushing habits, because the world wasn't beauty-shaming us enough.

ICON

Like a Fitbit for your man bits. 'Nuff said.

FENWICK MCKELVEY

To dismantle surveillance capitalism, we must reimagine the machine built in its service

SURVEILLANCE capitalism is a large undertaking. A technical one. Sensors in our homes and on our bodies connect to towers and cables running to massive computer centres doing the data processing. A built world meant to collect, command and control our habits, and vested in a few companies.

Being connected to this machine is a scenario ripped from the pages of cyberpunk science fiction, yet it is a mundane detail today. Every day we live close to bots, algorithms, AI and *internet daemons*—ubiquitous programs and code-based creatures that have colonized the web. Their updates greet us in the morning. They dim our screens to remind us to sleep.

The scale of this machine can be unsettling, especially when understood in the service of surveillance and control. Resistance demands constant suspicion and distrust. Paranoia is a best practice, but the state of alert is hard to maintain.

We don't think much of this world because we don't have to. An entire industry keeps this system running. Known as information security, or InfoSec, it protects the data of surveillance capitalists. The industry is already valued at an estimated $149 billion. It is the price some pay for others to worry about the machine.

InfoSec professionals are growing concerned about the morality of their work. These workers now question the ends of this machine and the exploitation of their labour, data and programs in servitude to surveillance. This consciousness threatens the operating of surveillance capitalism.

Workers at Google have refused to work on U.S. military contracts, including Project Maven (AI that interprets video images to improve drone bombing accuracy), and a censored search engine for China, called Dragonfly. Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning struggled with their involvement in the surveillance complex, becoming whistleblowers that revealed the extent of government surveillance of the internet.

Developers also work on privacy-enhancing technologies like Signal to encrypt text messages, or Firefox to browse the web more securely (perhaps combined with anti-tracking plugins such as Privacy Badger). Many of these projects are old, a reminder that programmers, academics and activists have long worked against popular computing being an instrument of command and control.

It will take more than the ideals of security to crystalize these critical consciousnesses into something more transformational. Too often, security is the flipside of surveillance—how personal information and data remains a secure private asset. Security as a virtue promises a certainty and a stability that ignores the fragility of the machines, and their ecological and economic impacts. A desire to remake the world in an ordered grid, however unachievable, will always require further investment in the machinery of surveillance capitalism.

> What would it mean to live with machines without feeling under their control? To live in peace with them rather than in constant paranoia of being watched?

No, we need to reconsider information security entirely. Not a change in practice so much as a change in perspective. Computing unbundled from the slavish drive of data collection and control. The field must be to continue to keep data safe, and protect privacy, but it can also create a better life for all. One where technology leads to fewer working hours, better equality and justice. Automation for human dignity.

My proposal, one of many like it, is that we reconsider our relations to all those machines watching us. Daemon, bots and algorithms can be allies, not enemies, as I have learned from Indigenous approaches to technology. What would it mean to live with machines without feeling under their control? To live in peace with them rather than in constant paranoia of being watched?

Such an alternative requires bringing in the environmental impact of this mega-machine. Data and information technology are already part of global ecology. Gigabytes is geology. Signals are sustainability. Today's logic of total information awareness requires tremendous energy and natural resources, so much so that unlimited data storage and constant surveillance might be too much for this world.

One way then to dismantle surveillance capital is to highlight its absurdity in placing unrealistic and out-of-touch demands on humans, machines and Earth. All suffer from the fantasy of total control and perfect information. In its place, we must imagine ways of being and knowing this mega-machine that appreciate its environmental and technical fragility, its uncertainty and ultimately its humanity among all its parts. M

TANNER MIRRLEES

Power, privilege and resistance in the digital age

Capitalism has usurped the revolutionary potential of internet-based technology. As usual, if we want a different, more democratic future, we will need to fight for it.

CONNECT. Search. View. Share. Like. They are the calls to action of the digital revolution, the latest stage, we are told, of a radical change in how society works, plays and interacts. Since the late 1960s, and in conjunction with Silicon Valley's development of "disruptive" tech, American CEOs and scholars have emphasized what's new and different in the present as compared to the past. Peter Drucker (*The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society*), Daniel Bell (*The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society*), Alvin Toffler (*The Third Wave*), Nicholas Negroponte (*Being Digital*), Esther Dyson (*Release 2.0: A Design for Living in the Digital Age*) and Google's Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen (*The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Businesses*) all proposed that digital technology was moving society toward a much different and better future.

Quantitatively, the current scale of digital activity suggests an important social transformation. In the first month of 2019, Facebook had 2.32 billion monthly users—a sum more than double the total combined populations of the 29 countries that make up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Every minute of the day in a month, four million videos are watched on YouTube and over 400,000 tweets are sent on Twitter. Forty thousand Google searches happen every second. All of this digital interaction adds to the 2.5 quintillion bytes of data that gets produced each day.

But numbers can be deceiving. In this case, more important than the measurable quantitative impact of the "digital age" is who benefits from this so-called technological revolution, who is left out, and how the technology alters (or not) social relations and power structures.

During the 1984 TV broadcast of the Super Bowl, Apple Inc. famously launched the ad "1984." A play on George Orwell's dystopian science fiction novel, "1984" associated Apple's business with freedom from government control and introduced the company's new Macintosh computer with a statement of revolution. Soon after, hundreds of thousands of Americans marched to the mall and spent $155 million on Apple products, a boon to Apple's total accumulation of $1 billion in revenue that year.

Four years after "1984" helped Apple brand its computers as a tool of countercultural revolt, the American president Ronald Reagan visited Moscow State University and lectured students about the digital revolution. Standing beneath a bust of Lenin, Reagan declared that a "technological revolution" was "quietly sweeping the globe, without bloodshed or conflict." In an attempt to persuade Soviet youth to reject their state's Marxist-Leninist icons and accept the U.S.'s neoliberal path to a post-socialist future, Reagan depicted the "vanguard" of this global revolution as "the entrepreneurs," the "men with the courage to take risks and faith enough to brave the unknown."

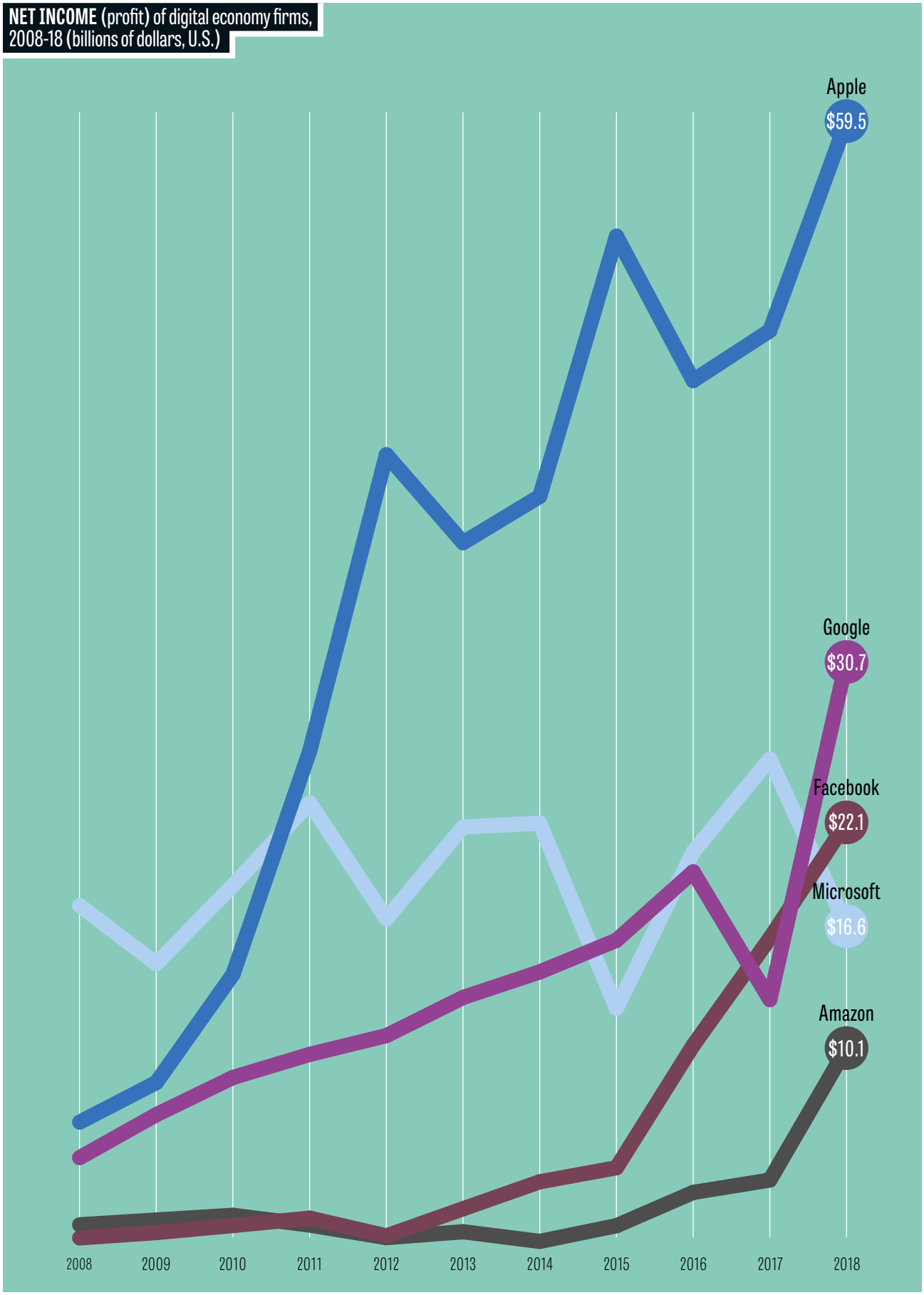
For Reagan, history's primary actors were not workers but the late Steve Jobs and his Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, who started "one of the largest personal computer firms" from "the garage behind their home." Today, brand strategists for corporations represent everything from Gillette razors to cordless Apple earbuds, virtual reality, the "internet of things" and artificial intelligence as radical technologies that will change everything. Politicians advance rosy ideas about how digital technology will disrupt the old and let us begin anew.

Such ideas are now firmly embedded in mainstream media discourse and shape the public mind. Do a Google search for "digital revolution" and in less than a quarter of a second you will be presented with millions of headlines declaring it "is here." Captivating and exuberant as that idea may be, it does not offer the public a clear view of what's actually going on, nor does it provide public policy-makers with useful knowledge of what's really driving change.

For starters, a significant prerequisite to being included in the digital age is access to digital technology. Yet access to the internet, computer hardware and software, and the digital literacy skills to effectively use them is nowhere close to being universally provisioned. At present, only about half of the world's population is online. Less than half of the world's households own a personal computer. Fewer own a smartphone. The divide between the digital haves and have-nots is vast between and within countries.

While the United Nations' Human Rights Council resolved in 2016 to support the "promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the internet," only a few countries treat internet access as a citizenship right; most relegate it to a consumer

NET INCOME (profit) of digital economy firms, 2008-18 (billions of dollars, U.S.)



choice. Each year, big telecommunication companies (e.g., AT&T, Verizon Communications, Rogers, Bell) make billions selling internet access as a commodity to those who can afford it while excluding those who cannot. The diffusion, use and impact of digital technology, far from encompassing humanity as a whole, is unevenly developed and unequally accessible. Not everyone lives in and benefits from the digital age.

More fundamentally, the notion that this new age is revolutionary is outright misleading. A revolution implies a sweeping transformation of society as a whole, something that breaks with what came before. Whether fast or slow, violent or peaceful, revolutions happen when a people finds the will to overturn the inequitable conditions of an older social order, thereby bringing about the possibility of building a different type of society. The popular will may be mobilized with help from new technologies (or revolt against them), but they are never the cause of revolution.

Those who say otherwise subscribe to a type of technological determinism, a reductionist theory of social change that takes technology to be the central agent in society and the cause effecting society's greatest transformations. During the Obama presidency, for example, the U.S. State Department, CNN and FOX News represented American social media platforms as drivers of popular revolts in states that U.S. hawks wanted to topple: Iran's 2009 "Twitter Revolution" and Syria's 2011 "YouTube Revolution," for example. It was a one-dimensional explanation of the more complex economic, social and political conditions that produced these mass uprisings.

Societies are always changing. Undoubtedly, some or many of these changes — in the world's conflict zones and here in relatively stable Canada — are related to digital technology. Yet there are important continuities with the past that tend to be overlooked by those who say we are in an altogether new age.

Around the world, corporations continue to accumulate profit amidst widespread poverty; national security, not welfare enhancement, continues to preoccupy state governments. These two most important institutions of modernity — capital and the state — will deploy today's digital tools, as they have past technological advances, to reinforce their power, reinvent their control and recompose their action.

It is in this sense, taking into account the many people who are not living digitally, that we should see the new technologies not as inherently revolutionary, but as part of a reformation of society's same old power structures.

Digital Technology Inc.

To really understand digital technology, we need to render it intelligible in human and social terms. This requires us to free ourselves of the jargon of technological determinism that obscures a clearer view of how digital technology is produced within a capitalist society. Only then will we be able to observe how society's pre-existing political and economic structures constrain and enable, influence and are influenced by, digital technology.

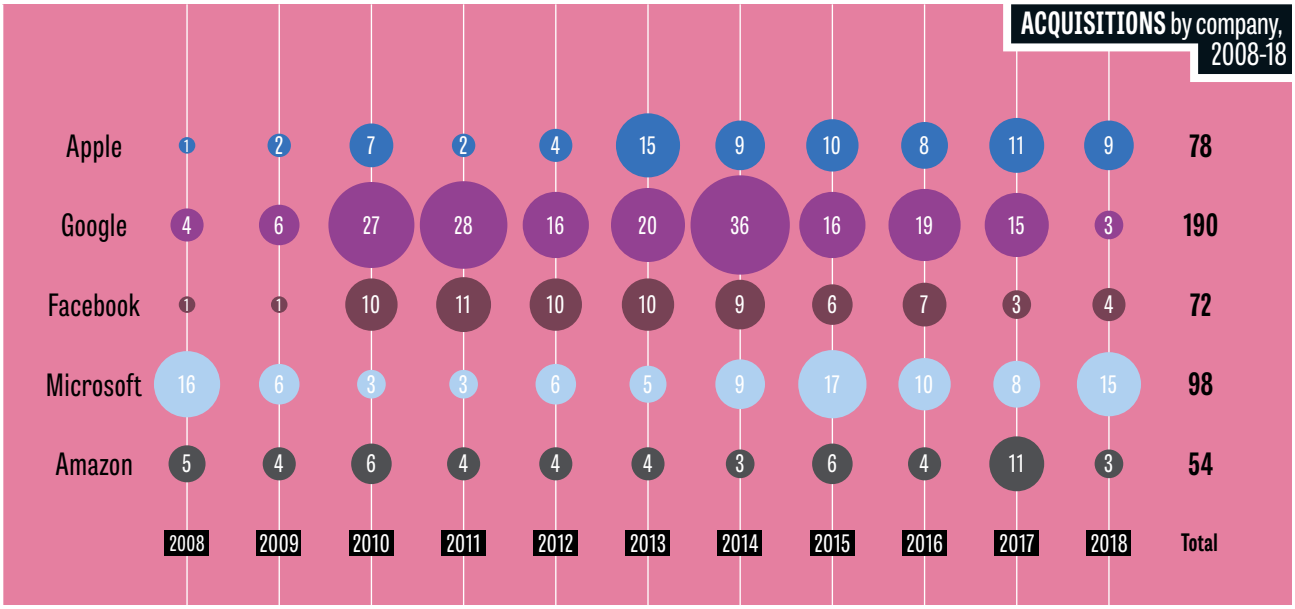
No technology invents itself. All digital developments — from smartphones to search algorithms — get made in society, and most of the time by some people at the behest of other people working in government (e.g., the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency), the corporate sector (venture capitalist–funded tech firms), and universities (tech incubators at MIT and Stanford University). We could hold these organizations uniquely responsible for the social consequences (good or bad) of their disruptive innovations, but that would assume that they, and the digital technology they create, exist in a social vacuum, which obviously they do not.

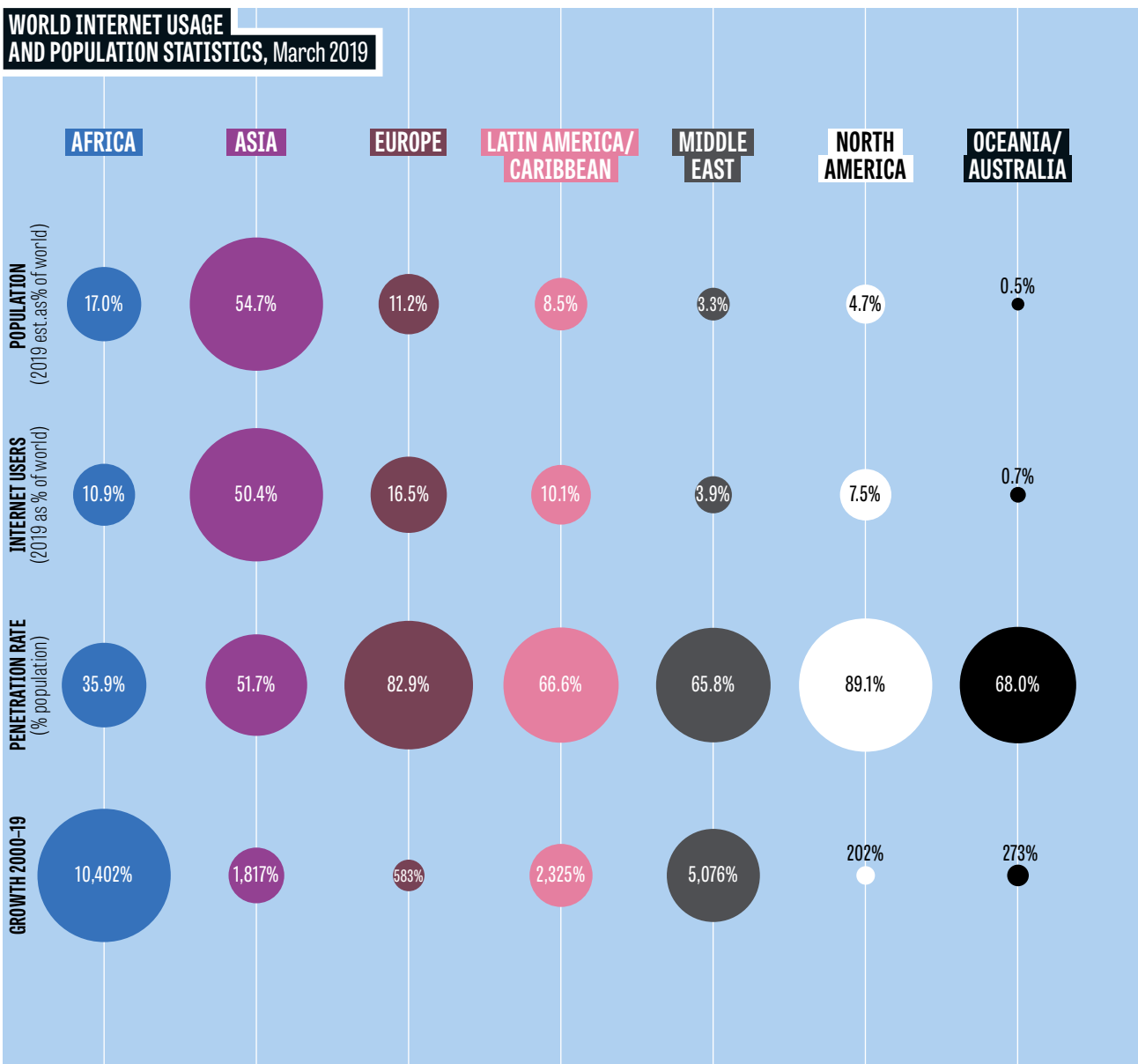
The organizations that make digital technology are themselves shaped by even larger societal structures — the most significant being capitalism, a dynamic system characterized by private ownership of the means of production, class division, waged labour, production oriented to profit (not human need), and inequality, class conflict and international, frequently imperialist expansion. Far from being disrupted by digital technology, capitalism has been given a firmware update; the system's underlying code continues to direct new technologies toward profit-maximizing ends.

In the digital age, the owners of the means to produce, circulate and reproduce digital technology are corporations (beholden to private shareholders), not governments (beholden to the public). Currently, the U.S. is headquarters to the majority of the world's largest computer hardware, software, service, storage device and semiconductor corporations, as well as the biggest internet and social media businesses. According to Forbes' *Global 2000 List of the World's Largest Public Companies*, the five most valuable corporations in the world by market capitalization are digital titans: Apple ($926.9 billion), Alphabet-Google ($766.4 billion), Amazon ($777.8 billion), Microsoft ($750.6 billion) and Facebook ($541.5 billion).

In 2018, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google — the "FAANG" in investorspeak — accounted for more than 11% of the S&P 500 index and an even bigger share of Wall Street's decade-long bull run. At the end of 2018, Apple and Amazon had become the first corporations in the world to be worth over a trillion dollars. Private corporations like these, not the public, own the labs where digital hardware and software is researched and developed (R&D), the networks of factories and offices where digital goods and services are assembled, the retail nodes where these goods are circulated, and the databases where digital information about users is stored. Capital, not the commons, controls the patents to digital innovations, as well as the copyrights to digital designs.

The divide between owners and workers also persists in the digital age. Again, the FAANG are institutionalized expressions of the broader social schism. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos is worth about $131 billion (slightly less after his divorce from author Mackenzie Bezos this spring), making him one of the world's richest people. Bill Gates continues to be a shareholder of Microsoft, his $96.5 billion net worth putting him up there too. Facebook


ACQUISITIONS by company, 2008-18
Apple 1 2 7 2 4 15 9 10 8 11 9 78
Google 4 6 27 28 16 20 36 16 19 15 3 190
Facebook 1 1 10 11 10 10 9 6 7 3 4 72
Microsoft 16 6 3 3 6 5 9 17 10 8 15 98
Amazon 5 4 6 4 4 4 3 6 4 11 3 54
2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 Total


WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS, March 2019
AFRICA
ASIA
EUROPE
LATIN AMERICA/ CARIBBEAN
MIDDLE EAST
NORTH AMERICA
OCEANIA/ AUSTRALIA
POPULATION (2019 est.as% of world)
17.0%
54.7%
11.2%
8.5%
3.3%
4.7%
0.5%
INTERNET USERS (2019 as % of world)
10.9%
50.4%
16.5%
10.1%
3.9%
7.5%
0.7%
PENETRATION RATE (% population)
35.9%
51.7%
82.9%
66.6%
65.8%
89.1%
68.0%
GROWTH 2000-19
10,402%
1,817%
583%
2,325%
5,076%
202%
273%

CEO Mark Zuckerberg is worth over $62.3 billion. Subordinate to these doyens of the digital are workers—the people who sell their labour power on the job market in exchange for the wages they depend on for their lives.

The stars of Silicon Valley are like any other corporation in that they buy the skill and time of workers to do tasks within a complex division of labour. They direct the hands and minds of these workers to befit their goals. From doing R&D for hardware and software at the Apple Park in California to living the brand at Apple retail stores around the world, 132,000 waged workers toil for Apple Inc. To make its search engine run each day, Google relies upon 99,000 AI researchers, Google Ads sales agents and big data and analytics cloud consultants.

Amazon exploits the labour of about 600,000 workers at massive fulfilment centres: "packers" sort commodities into boxes round the clock; logistics and shipping workers rush to deliver orders to customers, sometimes within hours of their online purchases. While Facebook and YouTube profit from the "free labour" of their users—who generate the content that keeps people coming back for more—they also pay wages to about 40,000 workers: software engineers, data site managers, and content moderators who delete the posts that violate their community guidelines.

Moreover, digital technology companies produce and sell goods and services as commodities for exchange in the market, not as a way to meet human needs. Though they package their operations with uplifting slogans, tech corporations are structured and restructured to maximize profits. Just like any other company they are obligated to ensure their shareholders get a return.

In 2018, Apple took in $53.53 billion in profit by motivating its billions of consumers to "Think Different" while all doing the same thing: buying lots of Mac computers, iPhones and ancillary products. In its 2017 "Building Global Community" manifesto, Facebook declared that it was developing a "social infrastructure for community." Yet Facebook's data-veillance platform exists to aggregate personal information about individuals, commodify it, and sell advertisers access to user attention.

> The diffusion, use and impact of digital technology, far from encompassing humanity as a whole, is unevenly developed and unequally accessible.

Each day, thousands of advertisers competitively "bid" to buy what Facebook sells: the opportunity to expose the social network's users to targeted and algorithmically placed ads for their commodities direct to personal feeds, Messenger, Audience Network and other mobile apps. In 2018, Facebook accumulated $17.8 billion and its average user profile was worth approximately $25.

In 2015, Google became a subsidiary of Alphabet, swapping its "Don't be evil" motto for "Do the Right Thing." In 2018, the right thing included seizing upon the data generated by one billion people conducting over 3.5 billion Google searches per day in order to generate $115 billion in ad revenue. Amazon exerts oligopolistic control over the global e-commerce market, but much of its US$10 billion in profit last year came from the sale of web services to clients and user attention to advertisers.

Whether producing and selling technological hardware and software, running commodity logistic chains, or abiding by a "freemium" business model conceptualized variously as "platform capitalism," "data capitalism" and, more recently, "surveillance capitalism," the day-to-day conduct of corporations in the digital age is motivated by profit, not social uplift. And far from heralding a more equal society, the digital age is typified by growing class inequality and oppression.

In 2018, as corporate productivity and profits soared, the gap between the rich and the poor widened. The globe's 26 richest people owned as much wealth as the poorest 50%, and the wealthiest 1% of the global population owned more than half of the world's total wealth. The average CEO-to-worker pay ratio was at least 339 to 1, and as CEO compensation increased, wages stagnated.

The Chinese workers assembling iPhones at Foxconn's industrial complex earn about $5,000 a year, roughly 4,200 times less than the average Apple CEO. It takes Jeff Bezos 11.5 seconds to earn the annual salary (about $30,000) of his workforce. While tech jobs are often glamourized as high-paying, nine in 10 Silicon Valley workers scrape by on subsistence wages, making less in 2018 than they did in 1997.

As social inequality increases in the digital age, so do expressions of class conflict in the sectors associated with technological progress. Historically, tech and other "digital age" workers have been difficult to organize. Recently, though, there are signs of change and rising class consciousness. Some workers are collectively resisting the degradation of increasingly part-time, poorly paid and precarious forms of employment, racial and sexual discrimination on the job, and the general dispossession of their knowledge. They are joining or forming unions, holding one-day strikes or even quitting, or simply slacking to protest managerial control.

Over the past few years, Amazon workers have launched unionization campaigns. Across digital newsrooms from *Jacobin* to *VICE*, journalists have formed unions to demand better pay, job security and benefits, as well as equity policies and editorial freedom. Google workers have come together to demand that the company cut its ties to the military-industrial-complex. Facebook users have built unions to demand more control over, and compensation for, the data they produce for the company.

Nonetheless, U.S. based digital corporations continue to expand around

the world. Though China-based giants Tencent, Alibaba, Baidu, Qq, Toaboa, Tmall and JD are also "going global," the reality is that U.S. firms own the lion's share of digital age hardware and software, intellectual property rights, platforms, sites and services, and user data. The U.S. state supports the global ambitions of Big Tech through foreign and trade policy, and by using its geopolitical and economic heft to knock down national regulations that prohibit or limit the ambitions of America's digital economy players.

To be fair, most countries don't need much convincing. Under the sway of neoliberal ideology, foreign governments see acquiescence to U.S. digital policy norms as synonymous with "development" or simply as a source of investment in the so-called jobs of the future. They offer the FAANG, "on demand" services firms such as Uber, and other tech giants subsidies, tax breaks and promises of minimal to zero regulatory oversight.

In more aggressive cases, states are adjusting government programs and agency priorities, building entire communities and moving populations to meet the human capital demands of U.S. digital titans. The costs of supporting digital accumulation are thereby socialized while the returns on digital development by and large flow back and are absorbed by U.S. capital.

Revolutionary potential

So far, the economic and political structures that sustain the unequal division of work and highly inequitable distribution of wealth under capitalism are rejigged but not radically altered in the "digital age." Significant increases in society's digital interactions and reliance on computers have not (yet) qualitatively changed how we organize ourselves and are governed by the state. These interactions, notably the proliferating intrusion on privacy by digital corporations, are no doubt highly disruptive of individual lives, yet the capitalist system that profits on this disruption is unchanged.

Does it have to be this way? In the 2015 book *Post-Capitalism: A Guide to Our Future*, the British journalist Paul Mason argues that digital technology possesses the imminent potential to break out of the reigning system. According to Mason, digital technology and networked individuals are, borrowing Marx's and Engels's term, capitalism's new "grave-diggers." He predicts capitalism will come to an end, not by revitalizing a democratic socialist movement and empowering the working class to change the system, but by emancipating digital technology from the chains of the states and corporations that keep them private and scarce.

But like the generations of techno-utopians that preceded him, Mason puts too much faith in the power of digital technology to automatically move society to a postcapitalist future. The long history of capitalism provides no evidence in support of this claim. Social reforms and revolutions do not happen because technology is left to its own devices.

Undoubtedly, some digital experiments can chart alternate routes to future sociality. The political left in Canada might begin to challenge the private interests of the FAANG by taking a multi-faceted approach to public policy-making that aligns with the principles and values of social justice. Antitrust laws could be used to diminish the growing monopoly powers of the digital giants, for example. Given that public subvention gave us the internet, which capital later seized, privatized and charged us to access, perhaps it should be returned to us as a public utility.

At home and internationally, we should fight to make internet access universally accessible—a basic social right. Moreover, we can loosen the FAANG's grip on our data by supporting augmented privacy rights and boycotting surveillance capitalists. Instead of messaging with Facebook's WhatsApp, use Telegram. Stop using Google and start using DuckDuckGo. Furthermore, we need to push FAANG to pay more taxes and be less of a drain on public wealth. Billions in public subsidies help the FAANG grow and prosper, yet these companies are chronic tax evaders and avoiders. In addition to ensuring they pay their share, the billions that Facebook and Google annually accumulate in online advertising revenue could be taxed, with a portion of those monies put toward a public fund for diverse, independent and public interest journalism.

Reforming digital capitalism cannot happen without an educated citizenry that is willing and motivated to participate in democracy. The FAANG know everything about us, but we know so little about them. We need to pry open their black box, shine a light on its circuitry, and make its workings transparent and knowable to all. The more we know about how the system has been made to work, the easier it will be for us to tinker with or radically redesign it.

At all levels of the public education system, digital literacy must be a priority, and one that does much more than equip workers with the technical skills that digital capital demands of them. Educators should strive to empower citizens to understand how society shapes and is reshaped by digital technology. We can inspire citizens to make reasoned judgements about digital technology and debate its costs and benefits with regard to the norms and values of social justice. Outside of academia, we should build inclusive and democratic community spaces where educators, organizers and workers collectively learn about digital capitalism and imagine strategies and tactics for pushing beyond it.

This is not the future favoured by most of the big organizations at the helm of the digital age. Nor is postcapitalism a strategic priority for the CEOs, neoliberal politicians and professional technocrats that make major decisions in the digital age. A postcapitalist future is not an investment priority for the finance capitalists putting their money into the future-leaning digital corporations that build market-facing digital technology to make working, shipping, shopping and speculating more lucrative for other corporations.

Digital technology does not itself change the world, but we can use and redesign it to fight for a sustainable and different future in which all are freed from the realm of necessity, and where all are empowered to participate in democracy. If we want techno-postcapitalism on the agenda, in other words, we will need to put it there ourselves. M

ELIZABETH WARREN

Here's how we can break up Big Tech

AMERICA'S BIG TECH companies provide valuable products, but also wield enormous power over our digital lives. Nearly half of all e-commerce goes through Amazon. More than 70% of all internet traffic goes through sites owned or operated by Google or Facebook.

As these companies have grown larger and more powerful, they have used their resources and control over the way we use the internet to squash small businesses and innovation, and substitute their own financial interests for the broader interests of the American people. To restore the balance of power in our democracy, to promote competition, and to ensure that the next generation of technology innovation is as vibrant as the last, it's time to break up our biggest tech companies.

America's big tech companies have achieved their level of dominance in part based on two strategies:

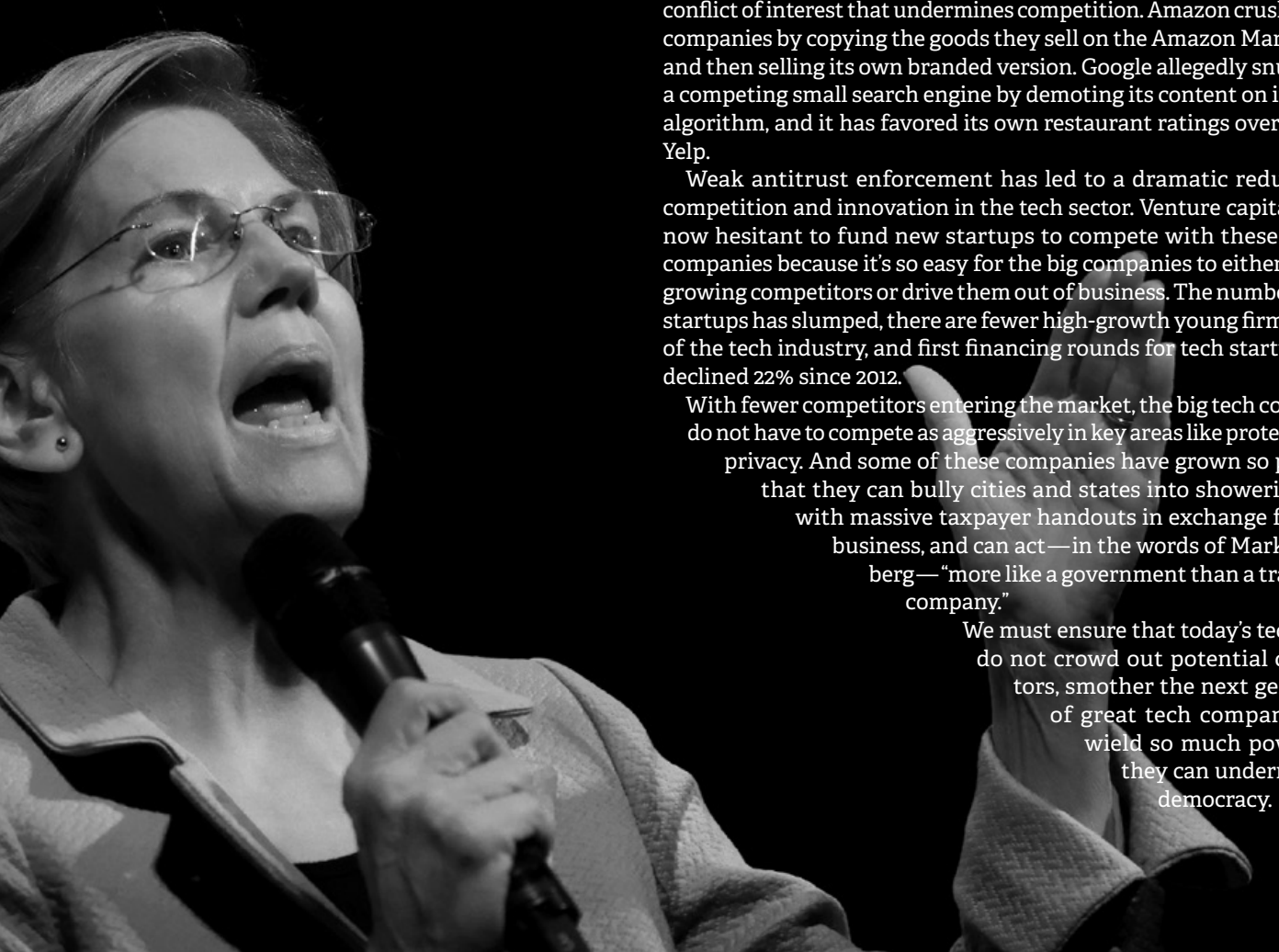
1. Using mergers to limit competition. Facebook has purchased potential competitors Instagram and WhatsApp. Amazon has used its immense market power to force smaller competitors like Diapers.com to sell at a discounted rate. Google has snapped up the mapping company Waze and the ad company DoubleClick. Rather than blocking these transactions for their negative long-term effects on competition and innovation, government regulators have waved them through.

2. Using proprietary marketplaces to limit competition. Many big tech companies own a marketplace—where buyers and sellers transact—while also participating on the marketplace. This can create a conflict of interest that undermines competition. Amazon crushes small companies by copying the goods they sell on the Amazon Marketplace and then selling its own branded version. Google allegedly snuffed out a competing small search engine by demoting its content on its search algorithm, and it has favored its own restaurant ratings over those of Yelp.

Weak antitrust enforcement has led to a dramatic reduction in competition and innovation in the tech sector. Venture capitalists are now hesitant to fund new startups to compete with these big tech companies because it's so easy for the big companies to either snap up growing competitors or drive them out of business. The number of tech startups has slumped, there are fewer high-growth young firms typical of the tech industry, and first financing rounds for tech startups have declined 22% since 2012.

With fewer competitors entering the market, the big tech companies do not have to compete as aggressively in key areas like protecting our privacy. And some of these companies have grown so powerful that they can bully cities and states into showering them with massive taxpayer handouts in exchange for doing business, and can act—in the words of Mark Zuckerberg—"more like a government than a traditional company."

We must ensure that today's tech giants do not crowd out potential competitors, smother the next generation of great tech companies, and wield so much power that they can undermine our democracy.



Restoring competition in the tech sector

America has a long tradition of breaking up companies when they have become too big and dominant — even if they are generally providing good service at a reasonable price.

A century ago, in the Gilded Age, waves of mergers led to the creation of some of the biggest companies in American history — from Standard Oil and JPMorgan to the railroads and AT&T. In response to the rise of these "trusts," Republican and Democratic reformers pushed for antitrust laws to break up these conglomerations of power to ensure competition.

But where the value of the company came from its network, reformers recognized that ownership of a network and participating on the network caused a conflict of interest. Instead of nationalizing these industries — as other countries did — Americans in the Progressive Era decided to ensure that these networks would not abuse their power by charging higher prices, offering worse quality, reducing innovation and favoring some over others. We required a structural separation between the network and other businesses, and also demanded that the network offer fair and non-discriminatory service.

In this tradition, my administration would restore competition to the tech sector by taking two major steps.

First, by passing legislation that requires large tech platforms to be designated as "Platform Utilities" and broken apart from any participant on that platform. Companies with an annual global revenue of $25 billion or more and that offer to the public an online marketplace, an exchange, or a platform for connecting third parties would be designated as "platform utilities."

These companies would be prohibited from owning both the platform utility and any participants on that platform. Platform utilities would be required to meet a standard of fair, reasonable and nondiscriminatory dealing with users. Platform utilities would not be allowed to transfer or share data with third parties.

For smaller companies (those with annual global revenue of between $90 million and $25 billion), their platform utilities would be required to meet the same standard of fair, reasonable and nondiscriminatory dealing with users, but would not be required to structurally separate from any participant on the platform.

To enforce these new requirements, federal regulators, state attorneys general or injured private parties would have the right to sue a platform utility to enjoin any conduct that violates these requirements, to disgorge any ill-gotten gains, and to be paid for losses and damages. A company found to violate these requirements would also have to pay a fine of 5% of annual revenue.

Amazon Marketplace, Google's ad exchange and Google Search would be platform utilities under this law. Therefore, Amazon Marketplace and Basics, and Google's ad exchange and businesses on the exchange would be split apart. Google Search would have to be spun off as well.

Second, my administration would appoint regulators committed to reversing illegal and anti-competitive tech mergers. Current antitrust laws empower federal regulators to break up mergers that reduce competition. I will appoint regulators who are committed to using existing tools to unwind anti-competitive mergers, including:

- Amazon: Whole Foods; Zappos
- Facebook: WhatsApp; Instagram
- Google: Waze; Nest; DoubleClick

Unwinding these mergers will promote healthy competition in the market — which will put pressure on big tech companies to be more responsive to user concerns, including about privacy.

Protecting the future of the internet

So what would the internet look like after all these reforms?

Here's what won't change: You'll still be able to go on Google and search like you do today. You'll still be able to go on Amazon and find 30 different coffee machines that you can get delivered to your house in two days. You'll still be able to go on Facebook and see how your old friend from school is doing.

Here's what will change: Small businesses would have a fair shot to sell their products on Amazon without the fear of Amazon pushing them out of business. Google couldn't smother competitors by demoting their products on Google Search. Facebook would face real pressure from Instagram and WhatsApp to improve the user experience and protect our privacy. Tech entrepreneurs would have a fighting chance to compete against the tech giants.

Of course, my proposals today won't solve every problem we have with our big tech companies. We must give people more control over how their personal information is collected, shared and sold — and do it in a way that doesn't lock in massive competitive advantages for the companies that already have a tonne of our data.

We must help America's content creators — from local newspapers and national magazines to comedians and musicians — keep more of the value their content generates, rather than seeing it scooped up by companies like Google and Facebook. And we must ensure that Russia — or any other foreign power — can't use Facebook or any other form of social media to influence our elections.

Those are each tough problems, but the benefit of taking these steps to promote competition is that it allows us to make some progress on each of these important issues too. More competition means more options for consumers and content creators, and more pressure on companies like Facebook to address the glaring problems with their businesses.

Healthy competition can solve a lot of problems. The steps I'm proposing today will allow existing big tech companies to keep offering customer-friendly services, while promoting competition, stimulating innovation in the tech sector and ensuring that America continues to lead the world in producing cutting-edge tech companies. It's how we protect the future of the Internet. M

THIS ARTICLE IS REPRINTED AND REDACTED FROM THE OFFICIAL MEDIUM PAGE OF ELIZABETH WARREN'S CAMPAIGN TO BE THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN NEXT YEAR'S U.S. ELECTIONS. AS WITH ALL *MONITOR* CONTENT, THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS ARTICLE DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE CCPA, BUT ARE PRESENTED HERE AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE POLITICAL DEBATE HAPPENING IN THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO REGULATING THE WORLD'S TECH MONOPOLIES.

ILLUSTRATION: KATHLEEN FU

MEAGAN BELL

Is the future human?

By transforming us into Smart Citizens, surveillance capitalism threatens our ability to think, act and resist.

IN THE AGE of surveillance capitalism there lives a new type of citizen. Surrounded by tracking chips, sensors, microphones and cameras, the Smart Citizen feels at ease. They are never late for work; the sensors in their beds are sure to wake them on time, with coffee brewing in anticipation. Their devices know everything about them and predict their wishes accordingly. But how much does the Smart Citizen know about their devices? How much can they know?

We are told, in preposterously long terms of service, that smart devices and their applications must record and store information about how and when we use them, in varying combinations or relationships with our other online activities. The companies who offer these products and services are even less clear about what is done with all this fragmentary information about our lives.

When disaggregated, all these bytes of personal data have a limited utility: they tell its possessor practically nothing. But when combined with other little pieces of information from other devices associated with a user or group of users, this behavioral data forms an extremely detailed portrait. This theory of intelligence gathering is aptly known as the "mosaic effect." In practice, whether at Google or the CIA, thousands of pieces of seemingly innocuous data about past behavior can be complied and fit together to create a shockingly clear portrait of a subject—a mosaic that can be useful for predicting and even modifying future behavior.

In *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Shoshana Zuboff casts a bright light on the power this seemingly benign data holds over our collective social and political future. Once extracted, analyzed and packaged by corporations, private human experiences become an information-rich commodity called behavioural data. Much like other commodities, our private experiences are then brought into the marketplace to be bought and sold. Zuboff calls this the "behavioural marketplace," which found its humble beginnings in the early 2000s with Google's online targeted advertising techniques.

No longer bound by the collection of user clicks and browser data, the behavioural marketplace has swallowed our exercise and eating routines, television show preferences, purchase records, psychological profiles (through insidious Facebook quizzes), political leanings, etc. Almost every economic sector is getting into the market for your data. Through "the internet of things" everyday objects have increasingly become interconnected devices with smart capabilities. Our cars, phones,

watches, thermostats, televisions and mattresses all leak deeply predictive information about our lives.

In order to have a meaningful public dialogue and make informed choices about privacy, citizens must have access to information grounded in fact and legal reality. Yet, as Zuboff and many others point out, it's impossible to know, understand or discuss something that has been crafted in secrecy and designed to be fundamentally illegible. In that way, the ideology demonstrated by surveillance capitalists is postdemocratic. The system is designed to keep us ignorant. Armed with data, companies like Google represent themselves as authorities on our collective future. They know what we cannot know, and they are incentivized to conceal their behaviours and practices.

How do surveillance capitalists get away with this? Why hasn't the Canadian government strengthened our privacy laws and found ways to regulate the behavioural marketplace to better protect citizens? *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* is a story that cannot be told without recognizing the complex relationship between corporate and government entities.

Zuboff offers multiple explanations for how we might have arrived in this dangerous place. In one account, she identifies the attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001 as a cataclysmic moment that marked a turning point in the way governments would interact with these developing corporations.

Following 9/11, governments and intelligence agencies were inclined to "nurture, mimic, shelter, and appropriate surveillance capitalism's emergent capabilities," she writes. Government rhetoric concerning privacy protections in both Canada and the United States dramatically shifted to enable and normalize exceptional surveillance practices that could lead to total awareness of alleged threats to the state.

This is not to say that without 9/11 governments and surveillance capitalists might not have found ways to work together. Rather, the attack and response to it marks an immediate and determinate shift in how the Canadian and U.S. governments publically discussed privacy legislation and safeguards for citizens.

Zuboff identifies the neoliberal framing of government regulation as state tyranny as another important factor in the growth of surveillance capitalism. The imperative to not stifle innovative industries enabled a hands-off regulatory regime covering internet and other digital economy companies.

The idea was that, by acting in their own best interests, self-regulating companies would simultaneously benefit their customers/users. It has now become apparent that users in a surveillance-capitalist economy are not like customers seated at the dinner table. They are the meal that's being served.

In Canada, like in the United States, instead of developing a robust system of privacy regulation with effective oversight bodies, the state has permitted communications corporations to self-regulate. One key method of corporate self-regulation has been the public dissemination of so-called transparency reports.

Pioneered by Google in 2010, the transparency report has become a commonly used tool for telecommunications and internet-based corporations to disclose how often they are compelled to hand over user data to government and law enforcement agencies, or when they have removed content entirely. The transparency report acts as a point of disclosure to reassure users that *something* is being done to protect their privacy rights. On the other hand, the reports also highlight how frequently that user data is retained by communications corporations and disclosed to governments and law enforcement agencies.

In their most recent transparency report, the Canadian telecommunications company TELUS stated that in 2017 it received approximately 63,932 requests for customer data from "government organizations." In 2018, Rogers reported receiving approximately 126,349 requests for user data the previous year, including 511 requests for tower dumps—a technique that provides information about all devices in a specific coverage area. Google's 2017 transparency report said the company received approximately 150 requests for user information from government agencies.

At best, these disclosures give users a sense of the size and scope of government surveillance through the use of warrants, but they are silent on the existence of other methods of interception. As reported by University of Ottawa law professor Michael Geist in 2015, Canadian telecom companies were advising the government that they could build "surveillance ready" networks using equipment from leading telecom equipment manufacturers, including Cisco, Juniper and Huawei.

In a 2013 memo to government quoted by Geist, Canadian providers argue that "the telecommunications market will soon shift to a point where interception capability will simply become a standard component of available equipment, and that technical changes in the way communications actually travel on networks will make it even easier to intercept communications."

At their worst, transparency reports obscure what we can know about government and corporate practices,

No longer bound by the collection of user clicks and browser data, the behavioural marketplace has swallowed our exercise and eating routines, television show preferences, purchase records, psychological profiles, political leanings, etc.

perpetuating and amplifying a top-down approach to surveillance and behaviour-shaping in which the object of surveillance has little agency to understand and meaningfully challenge these existing inequalities. These reports allow the surveillance capitalists to decline real participation in public discussion, debate or questioning regarding their collection and use of behavioural data.

The German cultural theorist Eva Horn has written, "Power is that which is neither subject to debate, nor forced to justify itself." By using transparency reports as a key method of self-regulation, surveillance corporations like TELUS, Rogers and Google are able to claim to be acting with transparency while simultaneously exercising their power to remain silent.

The story of the Smart Citizen in the age of surveillance capitalism at times feels nightmarishly complex. Like characters in a Kafka novel, we may wonder if we have entered into a surreal world in which control patterns and the ways we configure our behaviour seem to fall apart. As we struggle to understand and resist the new surveillance capitalism, it becomes apparent the methods we once employed to confront power are perhaps not up to the task, our tools too blunt.

In Canada, a number of activists and academics have begun looking for new modes of understanding and resisting elements of surveillance capitalism that reject cursory prescriptions such as encryption and toggling on/off privacy settings. For citizens/users, it is critical to understand that these issues are not contained within the realm of technology and digital privacy rights. These are political battles in which a great deal is at stake.

For Zuboff, our expectation of sovereignty over our lives, of authorship over our experiences, is deeply threatened by surveillance capitalism's unchecked exploitation of behavioural data. If that is true, we risk losing both our inward experiences and the public spaces in which to act. The battle, then, is not only over our democracy, but also our right to a human future. M

"WE MIGHT DESCRIBE JEFF BEZOS AS A BALD, MOUSTACHE-LESS STALIN OF ONLINE RETAIL,"
LEIGH PHILLIPS AND MICHAL ROZWORSKI

EAGLECLAW BUNNIE

Planned obsolescence

Amazon, Walmart… Today's behemoths of retail and data management are easily attacked by liberals for their abuse of monopoly power—price setting and other anti-competitive, anti-market practices—and from the left for their role in the degradation of work and wages. Both companies are notorious union-busters, and Amazon's high-speed, high-stress working conditions in semi-automated customer fulfilment centres are notorious.

Leigh Phillips and Michal Rozworski know all this very well. Nevertheless, the British journalist and Canadian labour economist are impressed. In their new book, *The People's Republic of Walmart: How the World's Biggest Corporations are Laying the Foundation for Socialism* (Verso), they admire the logistics finesse that allows these firms, massive internally planned economies (Walmart's "GDP" was bigger than Belgium's in 2017), to get people what they want, quickly and affordably.

The planning-versus-prices debate was never settled, they argue. The dogma established by Mises, Hayek, Friedman and their followers—that only prices in a "free" market can, absent complete knowledge of conditions throughout the economy, fairly and efficiently govern the distribution of the things we want and need—was based on an assumption that planning would require perfect (rather than just good enough) information. Those looking to win the debate without doing any math needed only point to the Soviet economy in the decade or two leading up to its collapse. Planning=tyranny.

Phillips and Rozworski claim this gets it all backward: "it is not that degradation of economic information as a result of planning leads to authoritarianism, but that authoritarianism drives degradation of information, which undermines planning." Extensive mid-book chapters on Soviet experiments in planning, from the revolution through Stalin's grotesque purges of experts to Khrushchev's "hardly automated space communism," though plodding at times, are convincing on this point. The first animal, man, and the first and second women in space were all from the USSR, after all.

But it's the more recent examples of planning-disguised-as-capitalism that win the day. Why, ask Phillips and Rozworski, should Amazon succeed—as an anti-competitive, dictatorial, "giant distribution network of consumer goods"—where Sears, whose CEO pitted departments against each other to recreate an internal market, failed so badly? Why do we constantly prefer non-market means of delivering our most essential services, such as health care and water, if markets are more efficient? Because, they conclude, planning works. But it could work much better—even in finance and consumer goods production/distribution—if done democratically.

This is lively, timely, often funny and just-the-right-amount-of-utopian stuff, clearly argued and delivered with sensitivity to the many differences of opinion about these things on the left.
—Stuart Trew

UNCTAD

Policy challenges for developing countries in the digital age

The following is excerpted from the overview to the UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2018, "Power, Platforms and the Free Trade Delusion," released late last year. The UN body doesn't mince its words on the challenges faced by developing countries from continued global adherence to a neoliberal agenda in which capital has been freed from most regulatory constraints on profit-making. "This agenda has co-opted a vision of an interconnected digital world, free from artificial boundaries to the flow of information, lending a sense of technological euphoria to a belief in its own inevitability and immutability," writes UNCTAD (Tanner Mirrlees has more to say about this on page 18). "Big business has responded by turning the mining and processing of data into a rent-seeking cornucopia." Full report at unctad.org.

SINCE Alexander Hamilton first set out his economic strategy for the fledgling United States, it has been understood that catching up requires active industrial policies to mobilize domestic resources and channel them in a productive direction. This is no less true when those resources are data in the form of binary digits. Indeed, given the economic power imbalances inherent in the data revolution, it will be even more crucial for countries to devise policies to ensure equitable distribution of gains arising from data which are generated within national boundaries.

To develop domestic digital capacities and digital infrastructure, some developing country governments (such as those of Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam) are using localization measures, just as many developed countries have done in both the earlier and current phases of digitalization. But most developing countries do not have such policies, implying that data are owned by those who gather and store it, mainly digital super platforms, which then have full exclusive and unlimited rights on it. National data policies should be designed to address four core issues: who can own data, how it can be collected, who can use it, and under what terms. It should also address the issue of data sovereignty, which relates to which data can leave the country and are thereby not governed under domestic law.

For developing countries, moving towards and benefiting from a digital future is obviously contingent upon the appropriate physical and digital infrastructure as well as digital capabilities. The challenges faced by these countries in ensuring such digital infrastructure are evident from the well-known and still-large gaps with developed countries: the active broadband subscription in the developed world (at 97%) is more than double that in the developing world (48%); in Africa, only 22% of individuals use the internet, as compared with 80% in Europe. Even an economy such as India, with a more sophisticated digital sector, is lagging well behind in terms of internet bandwidth, connection speed and network readiness.

To develop digital capabilities, efforts are needed at various levels: introducing digital education in schools and universities; upgrading the digital skills of the existing workforce; running special basic and advanced skill development programmes for the youth and older persons, including digital skills training programmes in existing professional development programmes; and providing financial support to develop digital entrepreneurship.

While skills development and infrastructure provision will be necessary, they are not sufficient to ensure developmental benefits; a more comprehensive strategy and a much fuller range of policy measures are needed. Industrial policies for digitalization should seek to exploit the strong synergies between supply-side and demand-side pressures in establishing a "digital virtuous circle" of emerging digital sectors and firms, rising investment and innovation, accelerating productivity growth and rising incomes and expanding markets. This may require moving toward a more mission-oriented industrial policy in a digital world to counter existing market asymmetries. For example, governments could invest directly in infant digital platforms or acquire large equity stakes in them through sovereign digital wealth funds, in order to spread the fruits of high productivity growth from technological change more widely.

Mission-oriented industrial policy is also required because of the changed structure of finance for investment in the digital economy. Unlike tangible assets, intangible assets—such as data, software, market analysis, organizational design, patents, copyrights and the like—tend to be unique or most valuable within narrowly defined specific contexts, making them difficult to value as collateral. As a result, supporting investment in intangibles may well require an increased role for development banks as sources of finance, or of specialized financing vehicles, as well as policy measures designed to strengthen the profit–investment nexus, such as changing financial reporting requirements or

imposing restrictions on share buybacks and dividend payments when investment is low, or preferential fiscal treatment of reinvested profits.

At the same time, the digital economy creates significant new regulatory policy challenges because the network effects and economies of scale associated with digitalization can cause rising inequality and generate barriers to market entry. The overwhelming control over digital platforms by a few firms points to the need for active consideration of policies to prevent anticompetitive behaviour by such firms, as well as potential misuse of data that are collected in the process.

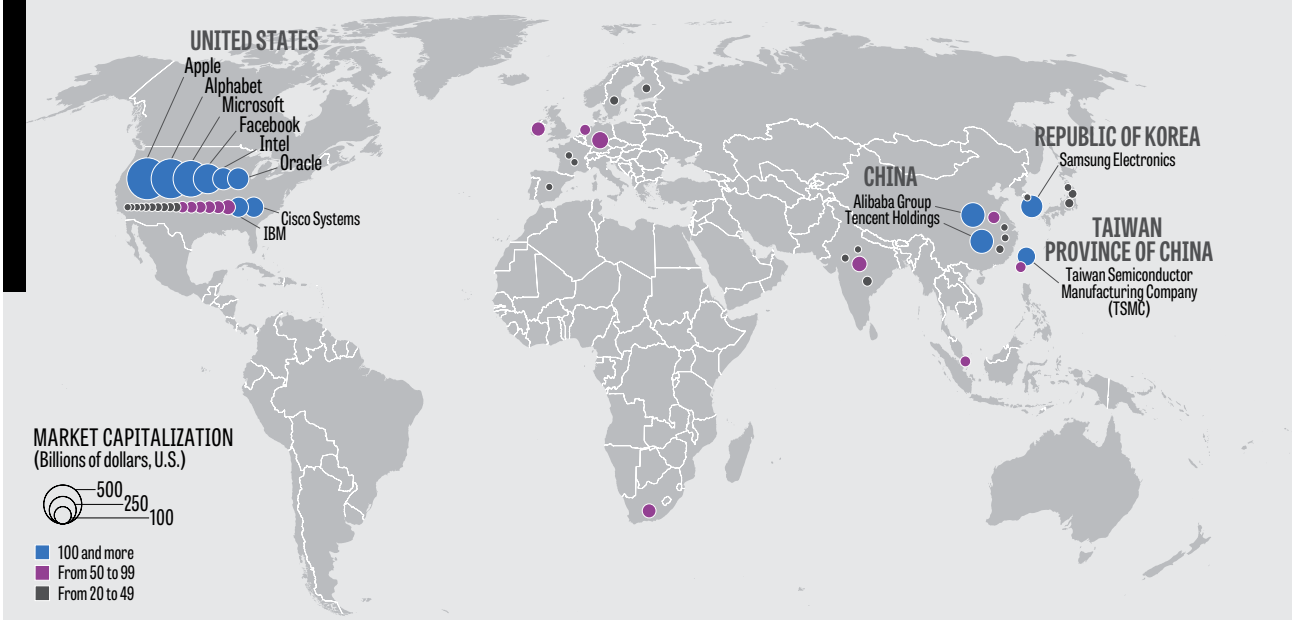
One way of addressing rent-seeking strategies in a digital world would be to break up the large firms responsible for market concentration (see Elizabeth Warren in this section – *Monitor ed.*). An alternative would be to accept the tendency towards market concentration but regulate that tendency with a view to limiting a firm's ability to exploit its dominance. Given that a country's data may have public utility features, one option could be to regulate large firms as public utilities with direct public provision of the digitized services. This means that the digital economy would be considered similarly to traditional essential network industries, such as water and energy.

To keep up in the ongoing technological revolution, developing countries are in urgent need of international technology transfers from the developed countries and other developing countries that have been able to develop advanced digital technologies. International technology transfers have become much more complicated in the digital economy because technology and data analytics are being equated with trade secrets, and because some binding rules apply to source-code sharing. South–South digital co-operation can play an important role in helping developing countries grasp the rising opportunities in the digital world by providing mutual support for their digital infrastructure and capabilities.

Still, developing countries will need to preserve, and possibly expand, their available policy space to implement an industrialization strategy that should now include digital policies around data localization, management of data flows, technology transfers and custom duties on electronic transmissions. Some of the rules in existing trade agreements, as well as those under negotiation, restrict the flexibilities of the signatory governments to adopt localization measures. Negotiations for the Trade in Services Agreement include a proposal that, for transferring data outside the national boundaries, the operator simply needs to establish a need to transfer data offshore "in connection with the conduct of its business." The Trans-Pacific Partnership document includes binding rules on governments' ability to restrict the use or location of computing facilities inside national boundaries and prohibits governments from designing policies requiring source-code sharing, except for national security reasons. Some of the proposals on e-commerce in the World Trade Organization (WTO) include binding rules on cross-border data transfers and localization restrictions.

The international community is just beginning a dialogue on the required rules and regulations to manage all this, and agreement still needs to be reached on which issues relating to the digital economy are in the realm of the WTO and which fall under other international organizations. A premature commitment to rules with long-term impacts in this fast-moving area, where influential actors are driven by narrow business interests, should be avoided. M

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF BIG TECH COMPANIES, SELECTED COMPANIES



SOURCE UNCTAD DATABASE OF CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, BASED ON THOMSON REUTERS WORLDSCOPE.

LINDSEY BERTRAND

Extractive capitalism and the security state

Police surveillance of pipeline protests is chilling democratic debate in Canada

SIX YEARS AGO, documents obtained under the Access to Information Act revealed that federal spy agencies had covertly monitored several groups that had expressed opposition to the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline project, including Leadnow, Dogwood, the Council of Canadians, ForestEthics (now Stand.earth), the Sierra Club Canada, and Idle No More. The documents show CSIS—Canada's national spy agency—and the RCMP working to protect the private interests of oil and gas companies while casting the aforementioned advocacy groups as appropriate targets of surveillance. This despite the RCMP's admission that the groups did not appear to pose a threat, nor did they demonstrate any intent to engage in criminal activity.

It was no isolated incident. In fact, Canadian state surveillance of peaceful dissidents dates back to the nation's days as an outpost of the British Empire, when anti-colonial activism (targeted at Britain) spurred the development of a police force intended to protect the Dominion and the Empire alike. Since that time, Canadian police authorities have been found keeping close tabs on student activists, unions, suspected communists, immigrants, and many others. Particularly notable, of course, has been the government's long-standing surveillance of Indigenous groups, including those who "oppose...the perceived oppressive effects of capitalism," in the words of CSIS, or, as Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan point out in their 2018 book *Policing Indigenous Movements*, "assert a politics of self-determination."

Why is this important? In addition to having a monopoly on "legitimate" violence and administrative power that can deeply affect residents' lives, the state also plays a strong role in shaping who is seen as legitimate—who is an insider worthy of protection by the national security apparatus—and who is cast as a deviant threat to the economic, political and/or social order. State surveillance, then, can be understood as a means not only to gather knowledge to inform administrative or police action, either of which may have serious consequences for the surveilled, but also to impose order and regulate social conduct by reinforcing hierarchical relations and insider/outsider statuses.

Through its surveillance activities and discourse, the Canadian security state has aligned itself with extractive industries and has cast those who oppose oil, gas and mining operations as potential criminal threats to be suppressed. This is not surprising given our resource-driven economy, not to mention our historical national identity centred on the conquest of wilderness. It is also a logical consequence of the increased securitization of critical infrastructure—systems and assets the government deems essential to the effective functioning or regulation of society and the economy—to protect against "enemies from within." This category typically includes infrastructure developed for extractive industries, such as oil and gas pipelines.

Critical infrastructure (CI) came into view as a national security priority during the Second World War, when air warfare began to focus on bombing such targets. Later, in the 1970s and '80s, an energy crisis and an increase in terrorist attacks on energy- and mining-related targets internationally refocused CI securitization on threats from within national borders. Following the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Canada ramped up CI securitization efforts significantly, entangling policing with national security to an unprecedented extent and pressuring policing authorities to identify and "disrupt" potential threats in advance of any criminal wrongdoing. Together, these developments produced a major shift in how national security is understood; the state has today tasked itself with protecting (largely privately owned) energy infrastructure against threats from resident people and groups, through the monitoring and potential control of those deemed "suspicious" for any of a number of reasons.

This relatively new form of national security policing is highly discretionary and easily results in practices that reinforce biases and existing power relations. Further, the domain of CI protection allows the interests and views of the fossil fuel industry and the state surveillance apparatus to become intertwined as police-corporate collaboration intensifies. The relationship between national security officers and energy sector representatives can deepen through frequent communications and meetings, including catered coffee or lunch receptions, at which friendly alliances develop. These interactions can lead to problematic policing biases: a number of studies of this phenomenon have demonstrated that police and corporate interests tend to converge when they supply information and resources to one another. In this way, the priorities of extractive industries have become deeply embedded in the state's surveillance priorities and discourses—and have contributed to rationalizing the demonization and surveillance of those critical of fossil capital.

FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY AND POLICE SURVEILLANCE

UNITED KINGDOM: "Automated facial recognition technology has been used at a number of crowd events in England and Wales over the past two years to identify suspects and prevent crime. The technology can recognize people by comparing their facial features in real time with an image already stored on a 'watch list,' which could be from a police database or social media account." (*The Conversation*, Feb. 2019)

CHINA: "China is the laboratory of the future of surveillance, and future test subjects should be frightened. If you try to hide from police in a big city in China, as a BBC journalist tried to do for a story, you can be found in just minutes. In areas where the Chinese government wants to stifle political or religious dissent, police monitor movement and control minority populations with a series of cameras, smartphone scanners, and facial recognition technologies." (Andrew Guthrie Ferguson, professor at UDC David A. Clarke School of Law, Apr. 2018)

BRAZIL: "Rio de Janeiro plans to test a facial-recognition system during its famed Carnival as part of the city's campaign to fight crime, the head of the regional police force said. Rogerio Figueiredo [announced] that cameras deployed with the technology will scan both faces and car licence plates. It will be operational in Rio's tourist hotspot of Copacabana in the beginning of March, when this year's Carnival takes place. 'If (the cameras) identify an individual under an arrest warrant, or if a stolen vehicle drives through the area, an alert will be sent to the closest police car,' Figueiredo explained." *(Agence France-Presse*, Feb. 2019)

UNITED STATES: "Officials at the Lockport, New York, school district have purchased face recognition technology as part of a purported effort to prevent school shootings. Starting in September [2018], all 10 of Lockport District's school buildings, just north of Buffalo, will be outfitted with a surveillance system that can identify faces and objects. The software, known as Aegis, was developed by SN Technologies Corp., a Canadian biometrics firm that specifically advertises to schools. It can be used to alert officials to whenever sex offenders, suspended students, fired employees, suspected gang members, or anyone else placed on a school's 'blacklist' enters the premises. Aegis also sends alerts any time one of the 'top 10' most popular guns used in school shootings appears in view of a camera." (*The Intercept*, May 2018)

State bias against fossil fuel critics can be clearly seen in the 2013 case mentioned above. The Northern Gateway pipeline project had generated a great degree of legitimate opposition from Indigenous and environmental groups—and for understandable reasons. Opponents worried about spills of diluted bitumen into pristine wilderness and waterways, the climate impacts of the increased oil sands production the pipeline would facilitate, and the potential disruption to communities along the pipeline's route, among other things. They made their voices heard through online and traditional media, peaceful protests, lectures and panel discussions, conversations with community members, and through attempts to participate in National Energy Board consultations and hearings.

None of these motives or activities are in any way criminal, nor did the organizations involved have any history of encouraging or participating in criminal activity. Nevertheless, Canada's surveillance agencies treated these pipeline opponents as criminal threats, with the RCMP committing to broadly monitor "all aspects of the anti–petroleum industry movement" for "suspicious activity, criminal extremism, or other activities which could pose a threat to Canada's national security."

Complaints filed by the BC Civil Liberties Association allege that in conducting such surveillance, the RCMP and CSIS impinged upon protected freedoms of expression, assembly and association. The BCCLA also argues that the intelligence sharing that took place between the spy agencies and industry representatives may have compromised the environmental groups' abilities to advance their positions before the National Energy Board—by giving companies information that could assist them in countering their opponents' arguments, and by exposing the NEB to "unproven yet highly prejudicial allegations" that could influence its perception of the groups' arguments.

Also troubling is the storage of vast amounts of information on pipeline opponents in policing databases, which raises questions about how that information could be used against those critical of fossil fuel infrastructure in the future, including if it were to be leaked or if any inaccuracies were to be introduced.

In my own research I have found that state surveillance conducted in secret created a sense of unease among those who publicly oppose fossil fuel infrastructure projects. Interviewees told me they believed it was likely they were being or had been surveilled but admitted to being worried about sounding "paranoid" if they were to discuss or take deliberate actions to address that surveillance. They also said they worried that talk of potential surveillance might deter potential supporters of their cause, not only because of the chilling effect that potential surveillance may have on those potential supporters—who may be concerned about the potential consequences of being surveilled, or who may not want to align themselves with a movement "radical" enough to justify state surveillance—but also because such talk might make pipeline and other "critical infrastructure" opponents sound irrational and therefore undeserving of support.

These concerns about appearing paranoid underscore the tension between the idea of Canada as a thriving liberal democracy, where political repression simply would not take place, and of the Canadian state as a powerful enforcer of a status quo that comprises an ever-expanding extractive capitalist sector. To begin to resolve this tension it is crucial that more information about Canada's domestic surveillance activities be made public. Demystifying the purposes, likelihood and potential results of state surveillance would go a long way toward destigmatizing discussions of surveillance and allowing the Canadian public to reflect critically on whom it targets and why, with a view to ensuring our policing system is accountable to the democracy it claims to protect. M

The good news page

Compiled by Elaine Hughes

Inspiring instructors

Kenyan math and science teacher Peter Tabichi is the 2019 winner of the US$1 million Global Teacher Prize, handed out each year since 2015 by the Varkey Foundation. "Peter started a talent nurturing club and expanded the school's Science Club, helping pupils design research projects of such quality that 60% now qualify for national competitions," says the prize website. Tabichi's school, which is situated in a remote part of Kenya's Rift Valley, has one computer with poor internet access, and high student drop-out rates. Tabichi donates 80% of his monthly income to helping these students, 95% of whom come from poor families. / Karen Uhlenbeck, 76, mathematician and professor at the University of Texas, has been awarded this year's $600,000 Abel Prize, becoming the first woman to take home "Norway's Nobel." Uhlenbeck was recognized for her decades-long contributions to physics, geometry and quantum theory. / In the U.K., world-leading astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell, who received £2.3 million ($4 million) in 2018 as part of an international science award for her 1967 discovery of radio pulsars, has donated the money to the Institute of Physics to launch a bursary aimed at increasing the number of female physics researchers from the current U.K. level of 22% to more than 30% in the next 10 years. The Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund will also support refugee students and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. / The longest-serving chief of a First Nation, Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier of Okanese First Nation, near Regina, was awarded the Order of Canada in March for projects she spearheaded relating to education, wellness and social assistance, as well as for her work to preserve the culture, language and traditions of her nation. / Inter Press Service / CNN / BBC / Saskatoon Star-Phoenix

Wins for wildlife

A cobalt, gold, bismuth and copper sulphate ore refinery given the green light by Saskatchewan's environment ministry several years ago has been canned by the municipality of Corman Park near Saskatoon due to the threat the 158,000 tonnes of waste it would have generated annually posed to a local aquifer. The company, Fortune Minerals, is looking for other sites to build the refinery. / Rain in southern California has brought a 2nd "super bloom" in as many years to the Anza-Borrego desert and state park, with hundreds of species of plants bursting into blazing colourful flowers, some from seeds that have been dormant for decades (see picture). / Increasingly, conservationists around the world use wildlife overpasses to preserve ecosystems, stop habitat fragmentation and prevent animal-vehicle collisions. There are 66 overpasses in the Netherlands, one of which, the half-mile Natuurbrug Zanderij Crailoo, is the longest in the world. Banff National Park in Alberta has a network of underpasses and bridges that animals have used for 25 years with increasing frequency. In the United States, where it is estimated that vehicle-animal collisions cost $8 billion a year, Washington State provides a special rope bridge, dubbed the "Nutty Narrows Bridge," to guide squirrels across a busy thoroughfare. A bridge on Australia's Christmas Island helps 50 million red crabs pass over a busy road to continue their migratory route. / CBC / Associated Press / My Modern Met

PHOTO FROM THE ANZA BORREGO DESERT BOTANY SOCIETY

Shiny happy people

The Tate Group of British art galleries will no longer accept donations or gifts from members of the Sackler family, owners of Purdue Pharma, the U.S. maker of OxyContin. Certain members of the Sackler family are currently being sued in the U.S. by more than 2,000 city and county authorities for their alleged role in aggressively marketing the massively addictive and deadly drug after its launch in 1995. / The UN's World Happiness Report has, for a second year in a row, granted Finland the title of world's happiest country, with Denmark, Norway and Iceland taking the other leading spots, followed by the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, New Zealand, Canada and Austria. The report ranked 156 countries according to things such as GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, social freedom, generosity and absence of corruption. The United States dropped one place to 19th while Benin rose 50 places in the rankings. / Speaking of freedom, Canada has granted asylum to two "Snowden refugees," Vanessa Rodel and her seven-year-old daughter Keana Nihinsa, who sheltered the NSA analyst turned whistleblower Edward Snowden when he was on the run in Hong Kong in 2013. / Neighbours of Samantha Savitz, a two-year-old girl from Newton, Massachusetts who is deaf, are now fully immersed in American sign language. The community banded together to hire a language instructor so they could keep up with the sociable child who loves to talk. / Guardian (U.K.) / Reuters / Globe and Mail / CBS

ASAD ISMI

Nigeria's humanitarian crisis

ON FEBRUARY 27, Nigerian voters re-elected President Muhammadu Buhari, leader of the All Progressives Congress party (APC), in a poll marred by large-scale violence, accusations of vote-rigging, last-minute delays and military intervention. When Buhari was first elected in 2015, turnout among registered voters was 44%. In this election it hit an all-time low of 35%. More than 260 people were killed in election-related violence between October, when campaigning started, and election day. Buhari's main opponent was Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who got 41% of the vote (11 million) compared to the victor's share of 56% (15 million). Abubakar rejected the result of what he called a "sham election" and pledged to file fraud charges with the election tribunal.

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, biggest oil producer, and most populous country with 190 million people. In spite of its resource wealth, the country suffers from massive poverty, unemployment, inequality, chronic economic weakness, and is struggling to get out of a 2016 recession partly caused by the collapse of oil prices. Nigeria has the world's highest number of people living in extreme poverty (87 million), while 75% of the population lives below the poverty-line income of US$3.20 a day, and 50% are denied access to basic health care and education. Forty per cent of the country's workforce is unemployed or underemployed and inequality has increased in recent years, with the top 10% of the population having more than 40% of the national income, and the bottom 20% surviving on less than 5%.

Ejike Bob Udeogu, senior lecturer in economics at the University of East London (U.K.) and author of the book *Financialization, Capital Accumulation and Economic Development in Nigeria* (Cambridge Scholars, 2018), claims that the Buhari administration's handling of the economy has fallen "somewhere between poor and dreadful." Since 2017, for instance, Nigeria has occupied the bottom of Oxfam's Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRI), which Udeogu blames on the government's inadequate spending on health, education and social protections. The country fares equally badly on the UN Human Development Index (HDI).

Udeogu, who once worked as a statistical analyst within Nigeria's public sector, points out that Buhari has not made much progress on fighting corruption either, which was the main platform he was elected on in 2015. An estimated US$20 trillion was stolen from state coffers by officials between 1960 and 2005, according to Oxfam. In fact, corruption has worsened under the current president's watch, with Nigeria falling from 136th place to 148th (out of 180 countries) on Transparency International's corruption index between 2016 and 2017. Buhari's fight against graft is viewed in many quarters as primarily targeting the government's political opponents and has not been effective "in controlling the pervasive corruption still bedeviling the public sector," says Udeogu.

The combination of extreme levels of corruption, poverty, unemployment and inequality has spawned several insurgencies across Nigeria, including the deadly campaigns of Islamist group Boko Haram in the country's northeast, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in the south, and a renewed secessionist movement in Biafra, which borders Cameroon. Omolade Adunbi, associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies of the University of Michigan, wrote in 2017 that the rise of ethnic and religious nationalism in Nigeria "has led to such high levels of tension that it's prompted people to ask if it will survive as a country." Udeogu calls it Nigeria's humanitarian crisis.

"The poor performance of the economy could be argued to have played a significant role in the rise of extremism, insurgency and the secessionist movement in some parts of the country in recent years," he tells me. "Nigeria is not only poorly developed, when compared globally, but it also has one of the worst forms of horizontal inequality. There is a high level of poverty in the north and in the Niger Delta region, where oil—Nigeria's main export and the government's chief source of revenue—is extracted. Here there is a severe shortage of basic infrastructural amenities and development. The secessionist movement in the southeast [Biafra] is largely a result of perceived underrepresentation of the region at the federal level."

The Boko Haram insurgency has killed 27,000 people and displaced two million over the past 10 years, including 30,000 during the last elections. The group attacks army bases and drives the military out of towns, while millions of dollars earmarked for arms to fight the insurgency have been stolen by officials. The conflict has spread to the neighbouring countries of Chad (to the east), Cameroon and Niger (to the north), causing an international humanitarian crisis.

The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) is a militant group active in the oil-rich south of Nigeria since 2016 whose attacks on Shell, Exxon and Chevron installations reduced oil output to a

near three-decade low of 1.1 million barrels per day, worsening the Nigerian recession. As in the northeast, the Nigerian army has been unable to defeat insurgent groups active in the Niger Delta. The NDA backed Abubakr in the election and warned it would attack oil facilities if Buhari got back in. This could not only prolong Nigeria's recession but compound global oil shortages resulting from U.S. sanctions on Venezuela and OPEC's production cuts.

Further east, a new separatist movement in the country's Biafra region is being led by the officially banned Indigenous People of Biafra (Ipob) alongside the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (Massob). According to the BBC, Biafran separatists "crippled Nigerian cities in the southeast" with a stay-at-home protest in May 2018. Many Igbo, who comprise the largest share of the population in southeast Nigeria, feel marginalized by a Nigerian state they claim only serves the interests of the country's Hausa and Yoruba ethnic groups. Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of Ipob, fled Biafra in 2017 and disappeared after Nigerian troops invaded his home. He gave a statement from Israel in October in which he repeated Ipob's demand for a referendum on separation.

Nigeria's social divisions have long historic as well as contemporary sources. The country itself was a British imperial creation based on a logic of divide and rule, with largely Muslim territories in the north fused together with a mainly Christian south in an unwieldy combination for colonial convenience that made nation-building extremely difficult. British colonization lasted from 1900 to 1960 when Nigeria became independent only to become a U.S. client state ruled mainly by military dictatorships until 1999, at which point formal democracy was established. Military rulers have looted the country and enforced strict neoliberal austerity under the direction of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"The policies of deregulation, liberalization and privatization...have largely contributed to the subordination and continued underdevelopment of Nigeria's peripheral economy in many ways," says Udeogu. "First, the policy of trade liberalization results in the uneven competition between the backward processes prevalent in Nigeria and the advanced processes abroad. The cheap imports reinforce the growing ineffective demand for the relatively expensive local produce. Secondly, the liberalization of the financial sector along with the deregulation of the capital account has resulted in both the outright and subordinate financialization of the Nigerian economy and has further narrowed the chances of development in the real economy."

Corruption is also not simply an internal Nigerian problem but one that was facilitated by British and Western neocolonialism. Transparency International has been accused of ignoring Western governments' corruption and focusing solely on that of states in the Global South. But its former managing director, Cobus de Swardt, said in May 2016, "This affects the U.K. as much as other countries. We should not forget that by providing a safe haven for corrupt assets, the U.K. and its overseas territories and crown dependencies are a big part of the world's corruption problem." The previous month, 95 civil society organizations in Nigeria had written to then British Prime Minister David Cameron urging the U.K. to "do more to prevent corrupt officials from laundering stolen money through the U.K.'s property market." Cameron and his successor Theresa May have done nothing.

The combination of extreme levels of corruption, poverty, unemployment and inequality has spawned several insurgencies across Nigeria, including the deadly campaigns of Islamist group Boko Haram in the country's northeast.

"When you look at the supply side of corrupt practices you find armies of private sector company directors, lawyers, bankers, accountants, company formation agencies, and tax haven officials who facilitate dirty money flows, concoct complex schemes for tax cheating, lobby politicians on behalf of their clients for tax reliefs and special treatments," John Christensen, director of the Tax Justice Network based in the U.K., tells me. "At the very core of this institutionalized corruption, which spans the globe, lies the British spider's web of tax havens which facilitate corrupt practices at the grandest level."

According to Christensen, the fact that the British government is unwilling to take action against offshore tax secrecy "tells us that the colonial mentality which gripped the British political and economic elites for centuries has never really gone away."

For its second term, the Buhari administration has proposed the biggest budget in Nigerian history, to finance significant growth and infrastructure development, as reported in the *Financial Times*. Part of the money needed will be raised by reducing the government's stake in joint ventures with oil companies from 60% to 40%. The move is as desperate as it looks, and there is some doubt the government can see it through. As of March 28, the country's presidential election petition tribunal has allowed Abubakar to challenge Buhari's victory. In the petition, Abubakar is asking the tribunal to announce that he won the election, based on claims he received more votes than Buhari. M

JOHN FOSTER

Oil and global rivalry

When we talk about today's geopolitical hotspots, we need to talk about petroleum.

AT THE UN General Assembly in 2018, Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl broke an unwritten taboo by talking about oil and war. "The recent wars imposed on the Middle East were...fought in the name of oil. Now Syria is a victim of the instability created by all these wars." For decades, petroleum issues (related to both oil and natural gas) have remained a largely ignored aspect of disputes. In fact, global rivalry over petroleum goes back to the beginning of Middle Eastern exploration.

Petroleum is the lifeblood of modern economies, the most important commodity in world trade, and a source of enormous wealth. Since the terrorist attacks on the U.S. of September 11, 2001, petroleum has been part of numerous interventions and clashes. Iraq, Libya, Iran and Venezuela have vast petroleum resources. Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine have a strategic location for pipelines. Somalia and Yemen border strategic sea routes for petroleum.

All these countries are caught up in rivalries among the U.S., China and Russia. The U.S. sees itself as an exceptional country, entitled to control the seas and take action anywhere in the world. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said recently, "when America leads, peace and prosperity almost certainly follow." Americans see their global reach as benevolent, but some countries around the world see it otherwise.

Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves. Iran has the world's fourth largest reserves of oil and the second largest of gas. The two countries have been in Washington's crosshairs for decades. Oil is an economic weapon: Washington wants to shut down Venezuelan and Iranian petroleum exports completely. It wants regime change.

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton was explicit on this point in an interview with Fox Business earlier this year. "It will make a great difference to the United States economically," he said, "if we could have American oil companies really invest in and produce the oil capabilities in Venezuela." The neoconservative hawk later warned other countries and companies not to buy oil from Venezuela.

Oil and regime change were unmentioned reasons for the Iraq and Libyan wars. Though former U.S. president George W. Bush insisted at the time that his illegal 2003 invasion of Iraq

was not about oil, now the evidence that it was is overwhelming.

Already in 2001, the State Department had created a working group to formulate a new oil policy for a liberated Iraq that would open the sector to international oil companies. Speaking in 2007, the retired U.S. general John Abizaid, former head of U.S. Central Command, said, "Of course it's about oil. Oil fuels a lot of geopolitical moves." In the U.K. it fuelled the pre-war deliberations of the Blair government, according to journalist Greg Muttitt, who learned the Foreign Office was "determined to get a fair slice of the action for British companies in a post-Saddam Iraq."

The NATO war on Libya was packaged and sold under a Responsibility to Protect label. Libya happens to have the world's ninth largest oil reserves, and its oil is top quality. Libya's late president Moammar Gadhafi had used the oil wealth to Libyan advantage, providing health care and education for all. Under the leadership of a Canadian general, NATO flew 9,700 strike sorties, devastating Libya's infrastructure. After the intervention, Libya was fragmented, bankrupt, in crisis. Eight years later, its oil exports are sporadic and still a source of fighting among rival factions. Libya is a failed state.

The U.S., China and Russia dominate the world's geopolitics. Each of these powerful countries has its own reasons to be concerned about oil and gas.

The United States is the world's largest user of petroleum and regards the resource as a vital interest. It forges strategic relationships with producing countries, notably Saudi Arabia, and pays extraordinary attention to petroleum in its foreign policy. Washington has literally hundreds of officials monitoring world energy—at the departments of state, energy, commerce, and at the National Security Council, Pentagon and CIA. No other government matches this scale of coverage. For many decades the U.S. has benefited economically from the use of the U.S. dollar in world petroleum trade. It wants U.S. dollar dominance to continue.

With its fracking boom of the last decade, the U.S. has become the world's largest oil producer, dramatically reducing its dependence on foreign sources—from 60% of consumption in 2005 to 19% in 2017. Today, the U.S. is the world's second largest oil importer, with Canada providing almost half of those imports.

China is the world's largest oil importer. Its major concern is potential blockades of sea routes bringing oil from the Middle East. With its NATO allies, the U.S. patrols several narrow waterways including the South China Sea. To reduce its vulnerability, China has invested in alternative routes—huge oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia, others from Siberia, and yet others across Myanmar.

Russia is a petro-state and the world's largest exporter of both oil and gas. Pipelines and sea routes to market are vital to its economy. Russia is building pipelines from Siberia to China and trying to build more to Europe. Some of Russia's plans have been thwarted by the U.S. government and European Commission. Russia and China have joined in strategic co-operation, concerned about U.S. policies of containment. U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said in September that the U.S. Navy can blockade Russia if needed, "to make sure that their energy does not go to market."

The U.S. used to import liquefied natural gas (LNG). Now, with a dramatic expansion in production of fracked gas, it wants to export its LNG to Europe, which would displace Russian exports. Europe is a vital energy market for Russia. The U.S. sees this as a wedge issue to be exploited.

In the Soviet era, pipelines to export gas were built via Ukraine. Today, facing a hostile government in Ukraine, Russia plans new gas pipelines bypassing it to the north and south. The U.S. claims the new pipelines threaten European energy security. Secretary of State Pompeo says the U.S. will do everything in its power to stop the Nord Stream 2 project from bringing gas from Russia to Germany. Included are threats to place sanctions on participating European corporations.

Natural gas is prized for its clean burning and low sulphur content. It is environmentally less air-polluting than liquid fuels and much less so than oil sands bitumen. To reduce horrendous air pollution, China is abandoning coal and switching to natural gas. As the world's third largest producer of gas, Canada is looking to export gas from British Columbia to China. It is also hoping to export oil sands bitumen there via the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Canada's arrest of Huawei's Meng Wanzhou chilled relations with China, with implications for future trade.

Petroleum rivalry among countries is like a game, as I describe in my new book, *Oil and World Politics*. In this game, governments take actions to improve their own geopolitical advantage vis-à-vis others. Actions may be overt or covert, diplomatic, economic or military, promoted by a country itself or through proxies.

Petroleum features in America First policies. In 2017, sounding a bit like Canada's last prime minister, President Donald Trump said the U.S. "will seek not only American energy independence ... but American energy dominance." In oil trade, four countries—China, Russia, Iran and Venezuela—are moving away from petrodollars, the crucial driver of U.S. world financial dominance. When Iraq and Libya threatened to abandon the petrodollar, they were attacked.

Canada supports U.S. sanctions against various petroleum countries, most recently Venezuela. Whether sanctions enhance democracy or human rights is highly questionable. For sure, sanctions have reduced Venezuela's ability to export oil to U.S. refineries, enabling Canadian bitumen producers to fill the gap. Canada benefits when oil elsewhere is taken off the market and prices rise. Canadian officials overlook this reality in public comments. Media seldom mention it.

Under the UN charter, wars for resources are illegal. Perhaps that's why petroleum has been largely ignored. Petroleum features in big power politics, intelligence gathering, regime change efforts, diplomatic discussions, even sanctions. Petroleum, power and politics all go together. Petroleum is the rarely-mentioned aspect of conflict stories. Its role in ongoing disputes deserves exposure. M

KATHERINE SCOTT

The Best & Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada in 2019

CLOSING THE GENDER gap is high on the federal agenda. The government has introduced proactive pay equity legislation, elevated Status of Women Canada to a full department and launched Canada's first feminist international assistance policy.

And yet, as the fifth edition of the CCPA's *Best & Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada* report makes clear, while we have been making progress, women are still waiting for meaningful change in communities across the country. Years of effort to remove entrenched economic, cultural and social barriers to women's progress are not landing the results we all expected by now.

Women are more likely to vote in local elections, but in large cities they make up only one-third of city councillors and only one-in-five mayors. One-third of managers are women, and most of these jobs are concentrated in middle management. This wide gender gap has not changed in the past five years.

Women earn less than men even when they have the same education and experience, and work in the same field. Reports of sexual assault have been trending upward—the result, in part, of increased attention generated in the wake of the #MeToo movement. These national challenges play out at the local level in different ways.

This year's *Best & Worst Place to be a Women in Canada* measures these and other gender disparities in 26 Canadian cities. But a city's overall ranking does not tell us the whole story.

In what follows, I take a closer look at the local trends in women's economic security, health, educational attainment, leadership and personal security that contribute to each city's place on our Gender Gap Index.

Sources for all charts are available online at: behindthenumbers.ca/shorthand/bestworst2019/.

1 Kingston, ON
2 St. John's, NL
3 Victoria, BC
4 Hamilton, ON
5 Vancouver, BC
6 Sherbrooke, QC
7 Ottawa, ON
8 Toronto, ON
9 Greater Sudbury, ON
10 Gatineau, QC
11 St. Catharines-Niagara, ON
12 Saskatoon, SK
13 Abbotsford-Mission, BC
14 Oshawa, ON
15 Winnipeg, MB
16 Kelowna, BC
17 Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, ON
18 London, ON
19 Quebec, QC
20 Windsor, ON
21 Calgary, AB
22 Halifax, NS
23 Regina, SK
24 Montreal, QC
25 Edmonton, AB
26 Barrie, ON

Economic Participation and Security

Women's financial vulnerability is evident in lower rates of employment, lower rates of pay, lack of access to financial resources, and their disproportionate share of housework, child care and eldercare.

These challenges are more acute for women who face additional barriers because of race, disability, Indigenous status, age, sexuality and gender identity and expression.

Employment

- Among large cities, those in Ontario and Western Canada, led by Abbotsford-Mission, Barrie, Toronto and Edmonton, had some of the largest gender employment gaps, while the gaps in Eastern Canada and Quebec were much smaller.

- In Gatineau, St. John's, Sudbury and Sherbrooke, the proportion of women aged 15–64 engaged in paid employment is now greater than the proportion of men.

- Overall there was a modest increase in women's employment across large cities over the 2013–2017 period (+0.9%). Sherbrooke (+7.1%), Kelowna (+4.9%) and Vancouver (+4.1%) all experienced significant gains, while women in Saskatoon (-3.1%), Barrie (-3.0%), Edmonton and Regina (-2.4%) lost ground.

Employment Income

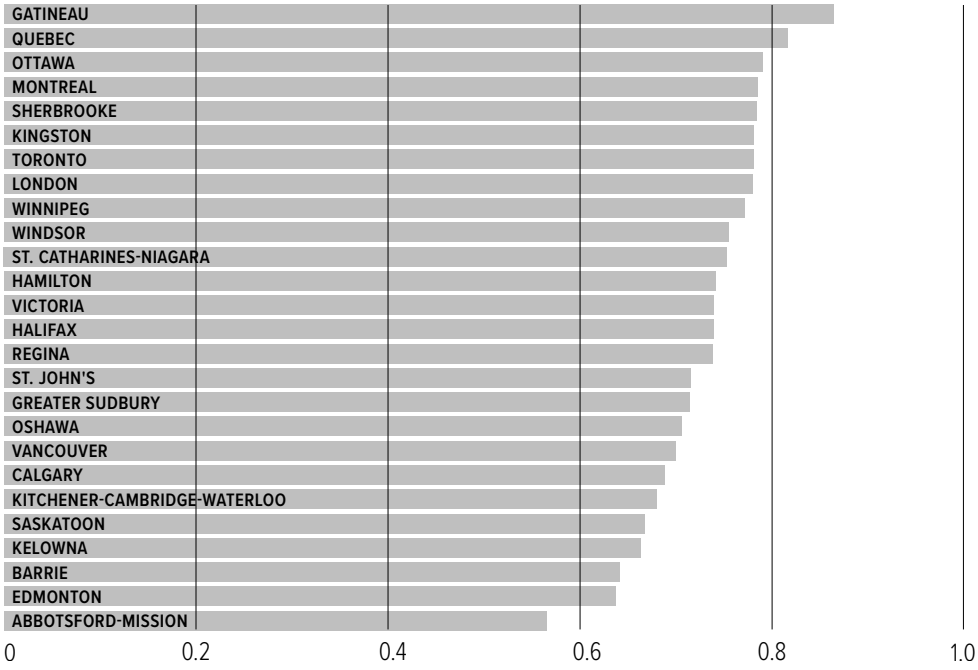
- The largest wage gaps are in Western Canada (Abbotsford-Mission, Edmonton, Kelowna and Saskatoon) and the Ontario municipalities of Barrie (24th) and Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge (21st). There is a 30-point spread between Abbotsford-Mission and top-ranked Gatineau.

- Quebec cities boast some of the smallest wage gaps. They do well, in part, because of progressive family policies that help women balance work and family life, including low-fee child care.

Poverty

- Large cities have historically reported some of the highest levels of poverty in Canada. This was true in 2016. Women's poverty rates were highest in Vancouver (21.4%) and Toronto (20.8%)—nearly twice rate of poverty in Quebec City (11.8%).

MEDIAN EMPLOYMENT INCOME
BY CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2016
RATIO OF WOMEN TO MEN WHERE 1 IS PARITY



Political Empowerment and Leadership

A balanced distribution of men and women at all levels of decision-making is essential to a fair and democratic society. It also leads to better decision-making and better management in the public and private sectors.

There are more women in decision-making positions today, but women continue to face barriers to advancement in leadership roles in the public and private sectors. Diversity is also lacking in top positions, where Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, racialized individuals and LGBTQ2 individuals are vastly underrepresented.

Senior Managers

- Today, women represent just under one-third of senior managers, with most of the progress over the last 30 years in the public sector. Greater Sudbury, Ottawa, Kingston and Abbotsford-Mission reported the smallest gender gaps in management in 2017, while Barrie, Montreal and Saskatoon reported the largest. There is more than a 20-point spread between the top-ranked city and the bottom-ranked city.

Self-employed with Paid Help

- In Canada, roughly one-third of the self-employed (37.0%) are women. Women, however, make up a smaller share of the self-employed who engage paid help (27.5%). Sherbrooke, Saskatoon and St. Catharines-Niagara reported the smallest gender gap in 2017, while London, Montreal and Halifax reported the largest.

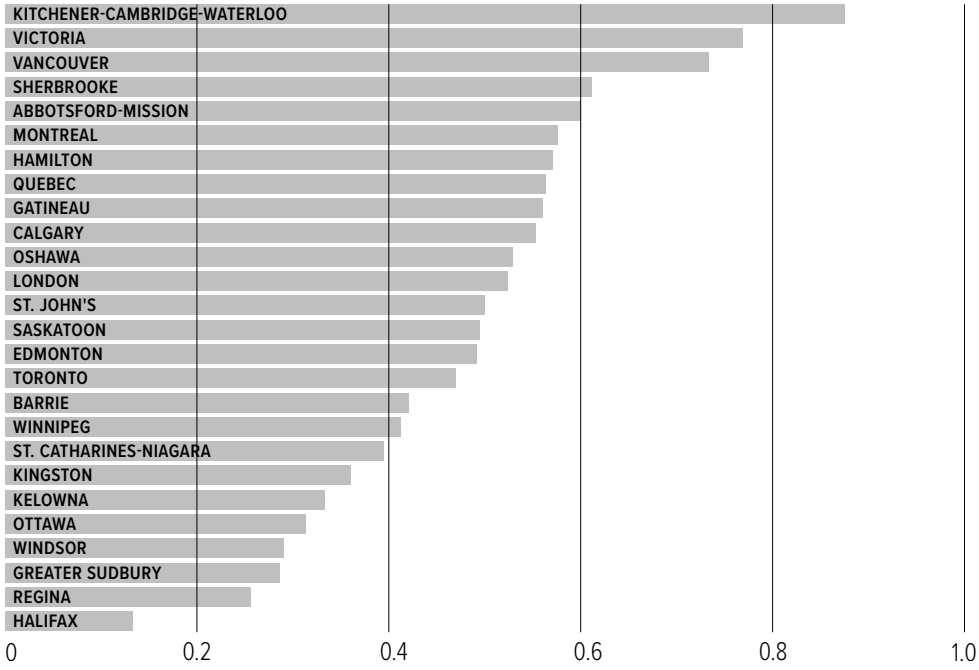
Municipal Representation

- In political life, women make up one-third of elected officials in Canada's largest cities, and only four of the core cities measured in this study—Montreal, Cambridge, Mission and Victoria—currently have a female mayor.

- The municipalities of Vancouver and Waterloo stand out as having exceeded gender parity on their municipal councils. Women also represent more than 50% of councillors and mayors in Montreal, Saskatoon and Victoria.

- Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge and the greater metropolitan areas of Victoria and Vancouver have the highest levels of female representation on municipal councils, while Halifax, Regina and Greater Sudbury have the lowest.

GENDER RATIO IN MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP
BY CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA, MOST RECENT ELECTION
RATIO OF WOMEN TO MEN WHERE 1 IS PARITY



Personal Security

Women and girls are overwhelmingly represented among victims of sexual assault, intimate partner violence and criminal harassment—the indicators that we monitor in *The Best & Worst Place to be a Woman in Canada*. We can present only a partial picture of the violence women experience. Statistics Canada estimates that 90% of the incidents of sexual assault and harassment and 70% of the incidents of intimate partner violence are never reported to the police.

Levels of violence directed at women and girls vary significantly by community, a reality that is not always evident in the global crime picture for each city.

- Toronto, Hamilton and St. Catharines-Niagara report relatively low levels of violence against women and have relatively low levels of crime compared to other large cities. In Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon, high levels of crime targeting women are reflected in high levels of overall crime.
- Cities in Quebec have comparatively low levels of crime. However, in 2017, Gatineau ranked 24th out of 26 large cities with respect to the reported level of violence against women, while Montreal ranked 20th and Quebec City ranked 19th. This was true in Barrie as well, which has the lowest crime severity score among big cities but ranked 11th on personal security in the CCPA's Gender Gap Index.
- Kelowna and Vancouver, on the other hand, have lower levels of reported violence against women (ranking 1st and 5th respectively), but higher crime rates (22nd and 20th, respectively), which points to the seriousness of other types of crimes in these communities.

Health

There are gender-based differences in life expectancy, health behaviours, mortality and risk of illness. Generally speaking, women tend to live longer lives but spend fewer years in good health. Some of the root causes of ill health among women are linked to gender inequality. They include gender role conflicts, heavy workloads at home and in the workplace, higher levels of poverty, and barriers to community resources.

The CCPA's *Best & Worst* report reveals that the gender gap in health status between men and women is quite small and that there is little variation between Canadian cities in this regard.

- Women outlive men in all cities, in some instances by as much as five years (Greater Sudbury, Toronto and Hamilton). Average life expectancy for women in Canada is 84 years; for men it is 79.9 years.

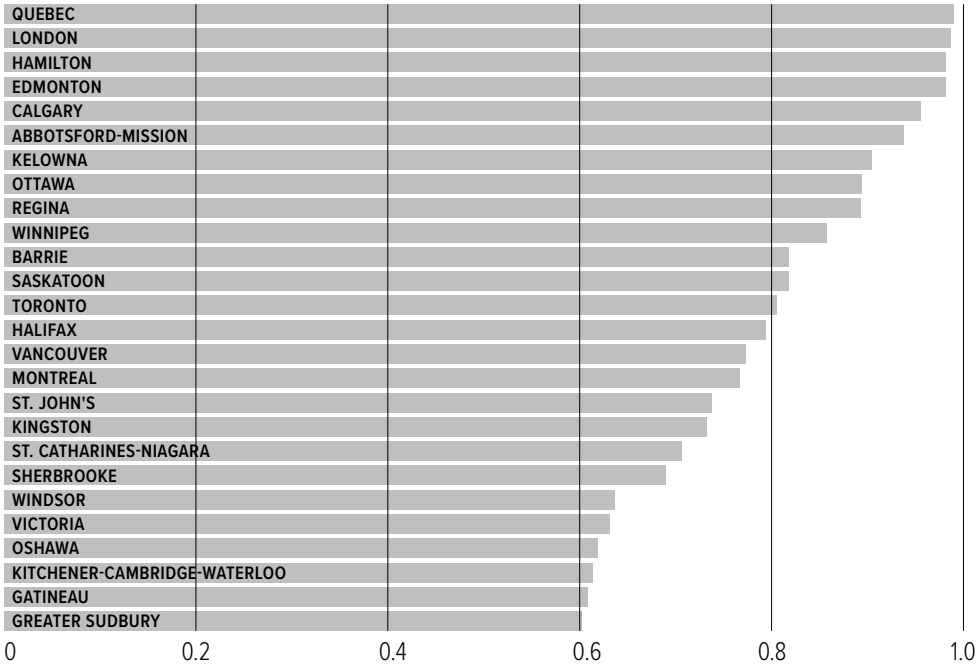
- The gender gap in self-reported health is small. A slightly larger proportion of men compared to women reported "very good" or "excellent" health in 14 out of 26 cities. The largest gaps in men's favour are in Montreal, Saskatoon and Edmonton. The largest gender gaps in women's favour are in Kingston, Greater Sudbury and Victoria.

- Women are more likely to report high levels of stress in their daily lives. Overall, the proportion of men reporting high stress declined between 2012 and 2016 while women experienced little change, resulting in a wider gender gap, notably in Gatineau, Sherbrooke and Montreal. The gender gap in stress levels narrowed in London, Kelowna and Abbotsford-Mission.

- Overall, roughly the same number of men and women reported high levels of daily stress in the Quebec City region, and in the Middlesex-London and Hamilton health units. The largest gender gaps were reported in the health units of Sudbury and District, the Region of Gatineau, and Waterloo.

- Screening for cervical cancer was highest in Winnipeg, followed by Halifax and Oshawa. All of the cities in Quebec had comparatively low levels of coverage.

POPULATION (12+ YEARS) WHO REPORT THAT MOST DAYS ARE "QUITE A BIT" OR "EXTREMELY" STRESSFUL
BY HEALTH REGIONS, 2016, RATIO OF WOMEN TO MEN WHERE 1 IS PARITY

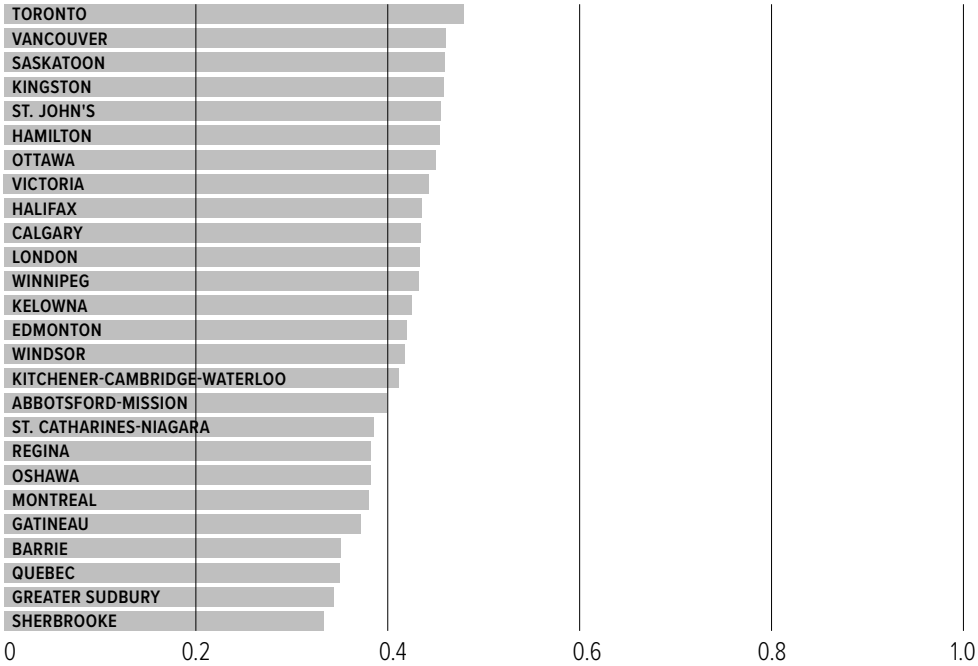


Educational Attainment

Today, working-age women are more likely to hold postsecondary degrees compared to men in the same age group (66.7% vs. 62.7%), but important gaps remain, notably in areas such as technology, engineering and skilled trades. There are important differences as well at the local level with regard to the type of postsecondary education women pursue and fields of study.

- Women make up the majority of university graduates in all large cities. The highest levels of university education among women aged 25–64 are in Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, while the largest gender gaps in favour of women are in Kingston, Kelowna and Greater Sudbury.
- Women and men are as likely to be graduates from colleges and CEGEPs; just over one-third of women and men aged 25–64 were college grads. In 2017, Sherbrooke, Greater Sudbury and St. John's reported the highest levels of college education among women.
- In 14 of the 26 cities reviewed in this study the gender gap in college attainment favoured women, their share of grads exceeding 50%. In 12 cities the gap favoured men. The largest gap in favour of women was in Hamilton, while the largest gap in favour of men was in Edmonton.
- In 2016, women made up 57.7% of all non-STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degree holders (aged 25–64), but only 29.8% of STEM degree holders. Women's presence in STEM fields is relatively low in all large cities, ranging from 25% of all STEM graduates in Sherbrooke to 32.4% in Toronto. The gender gap is largest in Sherbrooke, Greater Sudbury and Quebec.

STEM GRADUATES AGED 25-64 YEARS
BY CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2016
RATIO OF WOMEN TO MEN WHERE 1 IS PARITY



ERIKA SHAKER

Neoliberalism's broken record on education

DIVISIVE RHETORIC DELIVERED through a toothy grin. Folksy praise for workers alongside derision for the elected bodies that speak on their behalf. A whipped-up climate of general distrust in schools and educators, complete with a teacher "snitch line."

I may be betraying my age, but the past eight months in Ontario have felt an awful lot like déjà vu. Ford Nation is singing exactly the same tune as the disgraced Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris 20 years ago. The same simplistic "common sense" branding; same attacks on unions; same cuts to social spending, poor-bashing, forced amalgamation of school boards, and general downloading of responsibilities minus the resources to cover them.

The mid-1990s was a cold, cruel time to be in Ontario. Some paid with their health; others, like Kimberly Rogers, who was forced into penury by Harris's ideological anti-welfare policies, paid with their lives.

Unfortunately, despite its sorry track record, the neoliberal tango continues—in education especially.

Across the country, governments of all stripes have embraced standardized testing (Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia) as a proxy for ensuring kids' and schools' educational needs are met, in spite of profound critiques of this kind of assessment. The use of test scores to "rank" schools, or to separate the "good" schools from the "bad," only formalizes a model that sees schools competing for students and the funding they represent.

This becomes even more significant when the loss of a handful of students can mean one less teacher, or a part-time versus full-time school librarian, or, on a larger scale, a school closure—all of which impact the entire community. School ranking also reinforces the flawed and tired narrative that not all kids can be well-served by public schools, and it helps set up the argument in favour of making other options available to capture market share and let parents "shop around."

B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec, and to a limited degree Nova Scotia, provide public funding for private schools. But there are other methods of internalizing elements of privatization within the public education system. In Manitoba and Nova Scotia, charter schools are periodically floated as an option to increase parental "choice" rather than focusing on, say, adequate funding and meeting the needs of all kids within a public education system predicated on universal access.

Alberta is currently the only province in Canada with charter schools, which date back to 1994 in the province, the same year they were introduced in the U.S. These schools replicate the private education system—complete with exclusivity and a long application process concluding with acceptance for lucky students—but with public money. While the number of charter schools in Alberta (though not the number of campuses they can open) has been limited, the United Conservative Party campaigned on a promise to remove the cap.

Magnet schools, or boutique programs said to provide "choice" and "specialization" to students and their families, are another U.S.-pioneered method of internalizing a private model within the public system. Parents in Quebec have been vocal about how this practice contributes to socioeconomic segregation within and between schools, even if schools are prohibited legally from refusing students.

More pervasive are voucher-like funding programs meant to help low-income students afford a private education. Vouchers were originally designed so that white parents in the U.S. could circumvent school integration in the late-1950s. They were particularly popular in states like Virginia and North Carolina, where the government gave white parents tuition grants (vouchers) to send their children to private schools ("segregation academies") while withholding funding or even closing public schools that integrated Black and white students. Given their history, it's deeply ironic to see "choice" advocates in Canada promote vouchers as a method of boosting equity and educational opportunities to students from traditionally marginalized groups.

But it's an argument with an audience. There is no question that public schools, like society, have replicated and reinforced inequities that exist all around us—as part of our colonialist history through residential schools, and on an ongoing basis with students from marginalized communities—particularly as funding grows increasingly inadequate. Governments intent on introducing an element of privatization into the system, while reducing public expenditures, could easily claim that parents—the real experts—should be offered per-pupil money as a sort of grant or "scholarship" to be spent based on their views of what is best for *their* children.

Ontario experimented with vouchers between 2003 and 2012 using funding from the W. Garfield Weston Foundation. The Children First School Choice Trust was administered by the right-libertarian Fraser Institute, and offered "tuition grants" to a maximum of $4,000 for low-income students from junior kindergarten to Grade 8. To qualify for the money, household income could "not exceed amounts equal to twice the poverty line as

defined by the [Fraser Institute's] Basic Needs Index."

Given that the voucher was worth significantly less than the cost of private school tuition, former program director Michael Thomas (now a senior policy advisor in Ontario's Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility) suggested in 2008 that parents might need to think up "really creative solutions" to pay the difference — like working as a volunteer in the school. Ain't ingenuity grand?

Recently, the Ford government in Ontario has used a version of school vouchers to change the way in which autism services are funded and provided. But their model betrayed a lack of understanding, if not a lack of caring. The flat-rate, income-contingent voucher ignored recipient families' severity of need or intensity of therapy, demonstrating an utterly thoughtless approach to care for some of the most vulnerable kids in the system, who are already dealing with inadequate funding thanks to an out-of-date and poorly designed education funding formula. Caregivers have responded with panic, disbelief and precisely articulated rage.

It's a message all parents can understand, including those not directly impacted by this funding decision. Who wouldn't respond with equal rage, desperation and dedication faced with threats to their child's well-being? Educators, education workers, therapists and caregivers understand it too. If nothing else, this decision has underscored how support for public education must include a commitment to meet the social and educational needs of every child. It's also thrown into stark relief why private sector responses to public needs and universal rights are no solution.

Given the (rhetorical) focus on giving parents a voice, it's interesting to see how many provincial governments have deliberately limited one of the most obvious institutions that can formally facilitate parental and public consultation and advocacy: the public school system.

Quebec and Manitoba—not to mention Ontario—are eyeing with interest and intent Nova Scotia's decision to vastly reduce the number of school boards (Quebec plans to replace school boards with "service centres"). New Brunswick was the first province to do this, in 1996, then partially backtracked in 2001 by establishing district education councils staffed with volunteers. In 2009, three of these volunteers resigned, referring to the councils as "part of a farce that is sold to the public as local governance."

We already have evidence of the consequences (intended or unintended) of this move: Prince Edward Island's Home and Schools Federation has said the replacement of locally elected school boards with an appointed Public Schools Branch has limited democratic involvement and parental input. Similar concerns have been raised about a lack of local input into decision-making in Newfoundland and Labrador.

If there's a point to these substandard provincial reforms to education governance it is clearly not improving the system. Institutions of local democracy can be inconvenient to those in charge of provincial purse strings — particularly when those institutions provide a formal (and funded) public mechanism to speak out about the casualties of a centralized vision based on control and cost-cutting, and a space to push back against it.

Political parties of all stripes run on "fixing" or committing anew to education. However, the various solutions they propose betray the degree to which private sector standards and approaches have been internalized in building and funding a system that is supposed to work for everyone.

More conservative-minded governments (ideologically if not necessarily nominally — as in Nova Scotia or pre-Horgan B.C.) tend to implement wholesale "back to basics" cuts, often thinly disguised as restructuring, as part of austerity budgets. When those cuts become too much for families to bear, a new government is eventually elected on promises to increase education funding (the McGuinty Liberals in Ontario, for example, and the Notley NDP in Alberta).

But then in come the "innovative" band-aid reforms that acknowledge need without actually meeting it on a comprehensive basis. Sure, pockets of funding are often made available after the political transition, and it's certainly welcome, particularly when considering the degree of underfunding that exists in our schools. The point is that this cycle never solves baked-in structural deficits in education systems, or in other public services for that matter.

High-quality, properly funded, flexible and properly- staffed and supported public education isn't one-size-fits-all, regardless of what reform-minded politicians say. In fact, it's the opposite. If we don't know what fully-funded education looks like, it's because we've never actually had it. Instead, a series of "funding formulas" in various provinces have largely resulted in boards or their proxies allocating inadequate sums of money to fund schools, address infrastructure, pay salaries, and (not) fully meet kids' needs.

Until we change the starting point to what it would take to meet the needs of kids in the public system, and build a funding model accordingly, any fixes, regardless of how well-meaning they are, will be temporary and piecemeal. As Doug Ford is showing us in Ontario, the fixes are easily criticized as insufficient, promptly undone and replaced with something even less adequate. Change is rhetorically gift-wrapped as providing "support for parents" and "finding system efficiencies" and "improving public accountability."

In reality, as we're seeing with autism funding, the conservative agenda remains to strip more money from the system and further smooth the path for privatization — by providing public money (in insufficient amounts) to encourage parents to explore private care options.

Neoliberal education reform is an old and tired tune played over a broken record. Private, personalized options are never as innovative or comprehensive as they pretend to be; they are always more socially divisive. Kids are suffering under starved public education systems, but they and their families will suffer more under vouchers, boutique and other non-needs-based funding formulas that increase inequality. M

CCPA DONOR PROFILE

Meet Heather Murray

Every now and then, the *Monitor* gets to know one of the CCPA's amazing supporters. In this issue we speak to Heather Murray of Toronto, Ontario, who has been a long-time joint donor with David Galbraith.

So Heather, read any good books lately?

A lot of my reading these days focusses on gardening, permaculture and the environment. Among the recent books I have read are two by Canadian women: *The Right to Be Cold* by Sheila Watt-Cloutier (this is at the top of my "books every Canadian should read" list), and *The Global Forest* by Diana Beresford-Kroeger (a classic). Both are wonderful for helping to challenge the "normative" relationship most of us have to the natural world.

When did you become interested in progressive economics?

As a teenager, I was fortunate to become close friends with the family of Norman and Patricia Alcock, the founders of the Canadian Peace Research Institute. A nuclear physicist, Norman had become convinced that the same scientific perspective could be applied to analyzing the causes of war and the social and economic benefits of world peace. A sort of forerunner to CCPA, in a way, doing research and policy from alternative perspectives.

Is this why you chose to start supporting the CCPA?

I think we first began supporting CCPA because our friend Marjorie Griffin Cohen is one of the founders!

But we have continued because alternative policy perspectives have become even more necessary over time, with the drift of political discourse to the right.

I have especially appreciated the CCPA's attention to precarious/contract work in the higher education sector, a topic where good data has been lacking. I was also impressed by the 2019 edition of Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada and was pleased to see it getting good media coverage.

Name one policy you think the government could adopt today to make people's lives better?

I imagine the change with the most impact would be a (truly) livable minimum wage coupled with a guaranteed annual income policy.

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The CCPA is incredibly grateful to those supporters who have switched to monthly giving or are considering it in the future. We would appreciate the chance to provide information about the benefits of monthly giving—please contact Katie Loftus, Monthly and Legacy Giving, at 1-613-563-1341 ext. 318 (toll free: 1-844-563-1341 ext. 318) or katie@policyalternatives.ca.

REVIEWED BY HADRIAN MERTKINS-KIRKWOOD

It still takes a village to raise a child

HAPPY PARENTS, HAPPY KIDS
ANN DOUGLAS
HarperCollins Canada, paperback, February 2019, $22.99

"PARENTING ISN'T JUST hard; it's almost impossibly hard—and for reasons that have little to do with parenting," writes the prolific Canadian parenting author and commentator Ann Douglas in her latest book, *Happy Parents, Happy Kids*. From inadequate child care to unreasonable workplace expectations to the unrelenting pressures of social media, external forces have conspired to produce a "perfect storm...of parental anxiety, guilt, and feeling overwhelmed."

Douglas wants to help parents navigate that storm with this book, which advances the thesis that "happier parents tend to be better parents." Over the course of 11 accessible and well-researched chapters, she argues that the path to successfully raising children starts with getting parental anxiety, guilt and burnout under control. Douglas offers a variety of strategies for managing work-life balance, maintaining spousal relationships, eliminating distractions and staying calm under pressure, among other challenges to a healthy, happy life. "Once you have those fundamentals in place," she says, "parenting is relatively easy."

That may sound formulaic, and the book does veer sometimes into well-trodden self-help territory. Where Douglas stands out from the cacophony of parenting books on the market, however, is in her recognition of the external social, cultural and economic forces that shape the lives and experiences of Canadian parents today. Most parenting authors focus on individual responses to isolated challenges; Douglas courageously addresses and confronts issues of collective responsibility and collective action.

Economic insecurity is an important and recurring theme in the book. The continued erosion of the social safety net, compounded by a demanding work culture and prevalence of precarious jobs, places enormous pressure on parents. Not only is it more challenging today for parents to provide for their families—more parents are working full time than ever before and single-parent families are on the rise—but they must also prepare their children for an increasingly competitive educational system and job market.

Mothers in particular face the challenge of working more even as they shoulder a disproportionate burden of child care and other domestic work. Citing research from the CCPA, Douglas notes that women still spend twice as many hours on unpaid household work as men do, which is a major contributor to maternal anxiety and spousal conflict. Gendered expectations and norms, reinforced by gender-insensitive public policies and regressive corporate cultures, continue to affect Canadian parents.

Elsewhere, Douglas discusses the unique challenges associated with new technologies— especially smartphones—that undermine our mental health and parenting abilities as much as they help us to connect with people and resources outside the home. We hear all the time that we should be turning off our screens more often, but it's not so simple when our employers, friends and family require us to be constantly connected.

Throughout the book, Douglas calls for collective action and policy change to better support parents and, by extension, improve social well-being. Suggestions to fight back against overreaching employers, demand publicly funded child care programs, and pressure technology companies to act with greater social responsibility are welcome and necessary additions to the parenting discourse.

Douglas's observation that "systemic problems require systemic solutions" may be a familiar refrain for Monitor readers. But for parents who don't otherwise engage with progressive politics, *Happy Parents, Happy Kids* offers a useful introduction to such topics as economic inequality, neoliberalism and social solidarity. As a new parent myself (and an avid consumer of parenting books), I found this book both refreshing and valuable—for its frank discussion of modern parenthood and its practical strategies for navigating those challenges. M

JENNA COCULLO

Forever relevant

Journalist's 2008 memoir of the War on Terror resonates a decade later

IT IS JUST over 20 years since war correspondent Dexter Filkins stepped foot in Afghanistan, and a decade since *The Forever War,* his account of America's post-9/11 military interventions to that point, came out. With U.S. troops still in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and expansive operations across Somalia, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad, the book could sit in the current affairs section as easily, or uncomfortably, as the history shelves.

Filkins begins *The Forever War* as an invited guest to an event taking place at a soccer pitch in Kabul. Standing on the midfield line, a man's voice comes over the loudspeaker: "Nothing that is being done here is against God's law." Women and people with disabilities sit in one designated section while men sit in another. "In revenge there is life."

Moments earlier, a Toyota Hi-Lux, synonymous with the presence of the Taliban, had rolled onto the field. Four men emerge from the vehicle carrying a fifth, blindfolded. His name is Atiqullah. He had killed a man over an irrigation dispute and has been sentenced to die. Atiquallah's family is present in the stadium along with the family of the victim. The purpose of the gathering is to bargain for justice and a fair punishment. After some deliberation, the victim's brother raises a rifle and shoots Atiqullah in the head.

"In America, you have television and movies—the cinema," one Afghan tells Filkins. "Here there is only this."

Afghanistan's "forever war" dates back to 1978 when the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan staged a coup d'état against former President Mohammed Daoud Khan with support from the Soviet Union. One year later, in response to inter-party rivalry and a popular insurgency against the government, the Soviets invaded and occupied the country. The Americans subsequently supplied local *mujahideen* with weapons to help liberate the country from Soviet control—an intervention that would backfire years later as Afghanistan, under the Taliban, became a base for the international jihadi movement.

Filkins recounts meeting young boys who had jumped from one insurgent faction to the Taliban out of survival instinct more than ideology. War is all they knew, he writes, "there is only this." Readers are not presented with a history of the shifting conflict, or analysis of who is right or wrong, who has won and lost. Filkins is there to answer one question: "what is it like living in a world ravished by years of war?"

From Afghanistan, our correspondent travels to Iraq, where the U.S. had invaded for a second time in 2003, illegally and based on falsified evidence, following a decade of sanctions and bombing campaigns under Democratic and Republican administrations. Most of the telling is through vignettes. It is disjointed, lacking a cohesive narrative, and moves back and forth through time—mimicking, perhaps, the mindset of a person caught up in the violence of war: fragmented, muddled, directionless.

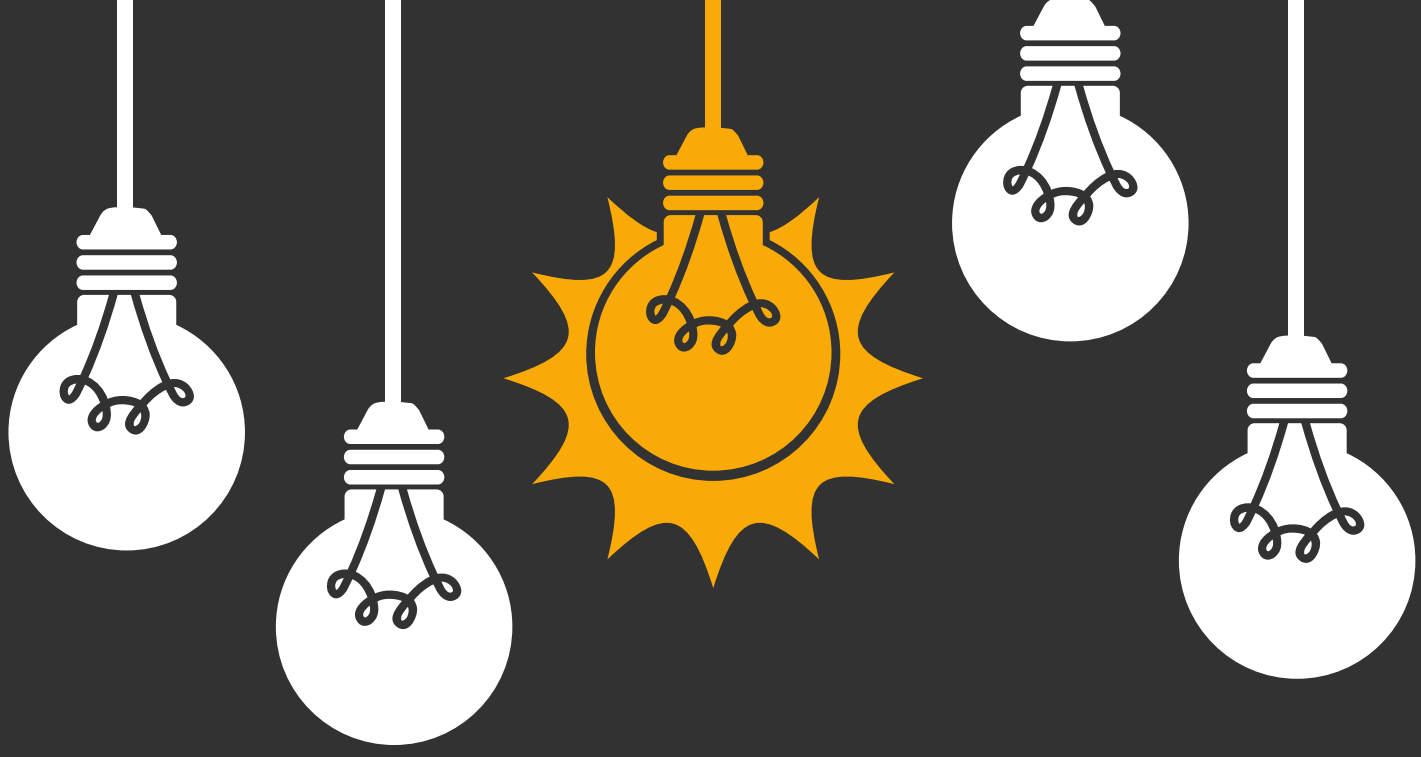
Filkins recollects conversations happening among the people of Iraq, the conversations the Americans turned a deaf ear to. The war left a power vacuum the Bush administration wasn't prepared, or didn't care enough, to fill. "We Iraqis are not used to this democracy," a man named Naqid tells a crowd of people as they are debating who to vote for in post–regime change elections. "We do not understand what this election is."

On voting day Filkins meets a woman named Saadi, who tells him she had only voted in the elections to "prevent my country from being destroyed by its enemies." While the American soldiers he meets are told by their superiors that they are saving the country from a dictator, Filkins learns early on who the real enemy is for the Iraqi people. "They (the troops) believed them because it was convenient—and because not to believe them was too horrifying to think about."

Filkins doesn't hide from his conflicting views of the war. At one point he wants to show a group of American soldiers, complaining how "ungrateful" the Iraqis are, leaked videos proving U.S. torture of Iraqi inmates. Later he fights back the urge to scream at insurgents who have killed his fellow Americans. Like both camps, he often finds himself fleeing death, and opens his book with a scene from the siege of Fallujah. As bullets fly in every direction, Filkins remains paralyzed with fear in the middle of the street—a testament to the bravery of those journalists who risk it all to bring the everyday realities of war to the public's eye.

Filkins jogged in the short moments of normalcy he could find. These and other snippets of his routine interrupt the mayhem of his book. One day he meets an orphaned girl named Fatima, who runs alongside him for miles. She tells him she will come back the next day as well. He never saw her again.

In March, eight members of U.S. Congress signed a pledge to bring home overseas military troops as expediently and responsibly as possible in an effort to end America's "forever wars." Make what you will of the reasons behind this ceaseless campaign, Filkins's 2008 book is a humanizing examination of the faces that fade in and out of a violence that is lost in the news, and which most people never ask for. M



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"I think as technologists we should have some safe places where we can try out some new things and figure out what is the effect on society, what's the effect on people, without having to deploy kind of into the normal world."

LARRY PAGE, May 15, 2013

"The rules governing the internet allowed a generation of entrepreneurs to build services that changed the world and created a lot of value in people's lives. It's time to update these rules to define clear responsibilities for people, companies and governments going forward."

MARK ZUCKERBERG, March 30, 2019