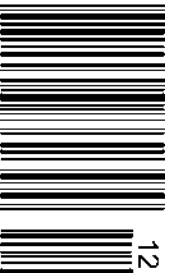


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MONITOR

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Please send feedback to monitor@policyalternatives.ca.

Editor: Stuart Trew
Senior Designer: Tim Scarth
Layout: Susan Purtell
Editorial Board: Peter Bleyer,
Alyssa O'Dell, Seth Klein, Kate
McInturff, Erika Shaker, Emily Turk

CCPA National Office:
500-251 Bank St., Ottawa,
ON K2P 1X3
tel: 613-563-1341
fax: 613-233-1458
ccpa@policyalternatives.ca
www.policyalternatives.ca

CCPA BC Office:
520-700 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 1G8
tel: 604-801-5121
fax: 604-801-5122
ccpabc@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Manitoba Office:
Unit 205-765 Main St., Winnipeg,
MB R2W 3N5
tel: 204-927-3200
fax: 204-927-3201
ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Nova Scotia Office:
P.O. Box 8355, Halifax, NS B3K 5M1
tel: 902-240-0926
ccpans@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Ontario Office:
10 Dundas Street East,
P.O. Box 47129, Toronto,
ON, M5B 0A1
tel: 416-598-5985
ccpaon@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Saskatchewan Office:
2nd Floor, 2138 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK S4P 2R7
tel: 306-924-3372
fax: 306-586-5177
ccpasask@sasktel.net



The *Monitor* is a proud member of Magazines Canada.

Contributors

Angele Alook is a proud member of Bigstone Cree Nation and a speaker of the Cree language. She recently successfully defended her PhD in sociology from York University, specializing in Indigenous feminism, life course approach, Indigenous research methodologies, cultural identity, and sociology of family and work.

John Butovsky is an associate professor in the department of sociology at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Margot R. Challborn is a PhD student in the department of political science at the University of Alberta. Her work examines the governance of intimate life in Canada, focusing on public policy, the family and sexuality.

Veldon Coburn is a PhD candidate at Queen's University's political science department where he is studying Indigenous identity. He is Anishinaabe from Pikwakanagan.

Alisha Davidson is a freelance illustrator living in Toronto, Ontario.

Trish Hennessy is Director of the CCPA-Ontario.

Nicole Hill is a PhD student in the sociology department at the University of Alberta and a research assistant at the Parkland Institute. She is a master's graduate of Athabasca University where she focused on equity studies. Nicole's current research is on maternity care experiences.

Ian Hussey is a research manager at Parkland Institute, where he designs, conducts and manages political economy, labour and climate research. He is also a steering committee member and the Alberta regional research manager for the SSHRC-funded Corporate Mapping Project.

Kyle Liao is a PhD student and Certified Marketing Research Professional (CMRP) working in the financial services industry.

Paula Mallea practised criminal law for 15 years in Ontario and Manitoba. She sits on the Members' Council of the CCPA.

Kate McInturff is a senior researcher at the CCPA and director of the centre's Making Women Count project.

Tim McSorley is National Co-ordinator of the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group and formerly the co-ordinator of Voices-Voix Coalition.

Saadia Muzaffar is a tech entrepreneur and founder of TechGirls Canada. She is an author, speaker and advocate on modern leadership who has been featured in *CNNMoney*, *Fortune*, *The Globe & Mail*, *VICE*, *CBC*, *TVO*, and *Chatelaine*.

Alyssa O'Dell is Media and Public Relations Officer with the CCPA. She was formerly a journalist in Ottawa with the parliamentary press gallery.

Francesca Rhodes works as a women's rights policy and advocacy specialist at Oxfam Canada, focusing on feminist foreign policy and women's economic rights.

Lynn Spink is retired. She's had a variety of jobs, including as the executive assistant to a Toronto mayor, an Ontario premier and a president of CUPE National. She often visited her late mother in a nursing home in the United States.



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



Jessica Fortner is an award-winning illustrator from Toronto, Ontario, focusing on textile, advertising and editorial illustration.

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In late October, the CCPA released its fourth annual ranking of the best and worst cities to be a woman in Canada. The report, by CCPA senior researcher **Kate McInturff**, provides a snapshot of the gaps in men's and women's access to economic security, personal security, education, health and positions of leadership in communities across the country. Find out how your city stacks up.



best

Also in this section, **Alyssa O'Dell** checks the feminist cred of Canada's new foreign aid policy, **Francesca Rhodes** finds reasons to welcome a gender lens on the NAFTA renegotiations, **Saadia Muzaffar** asks why we are not doing enough to integrate immigrant women into STEM industries, and the **Corporate Mapping Project** uncovers widespread discrimination against women and minorities in the oil and gas sector.

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PETER BLEYER

Midterm report card for a new government

TWO YEARS AGO today, Justin Trudeau's Liberals swept to power on a promise of hope, positivity and real change for Canada. A lot of Stephen Harper's backward policies—cuts to social programs, deference to wealthy corporations, inaction on the environment—went out the door. In came initiatives to fight poverty, reduce pollution and raise incomes for the middle class.

But it's not 2015 anymore (that catchphrase was always going to have short shelf life). And at the midpoint of this government's mandate, we thought it was a good time to check the Liberal rhetoric against the party's record in power. Believe me when I say this is something we do quite well.

For almost 40 years, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has been calling out regressive government priorities—from Mulroney's corporate trade agenda and Campbell's downsizing, to Chrétien's austerity and Harper's assault on civil liberties—and otherwise testing Canadian policy against the truly progressive values we espouse.

There's an added reason to test the Liberal government's record now, after 200 sitting days in Parliament, which is that the prime minister and his cabinet continue to claim ownership of the "progressive" mantle, advertising their priorities as such at every opportunity. We're willing to give credit where it's due, but we also can't let such claims go unchallenged where they're clearly unfounded.

CCPA researchers looked at more than a dozen key government policies introduced since November 2015. In some areas, the government's progressive rhetoric (its talk) has matched its record (its walk). However, in many areas there were wide gaps between the two.

On Indigenous reconciliation, the Liberals speak to the importance of treaties and the right to self-determination. On taxation, they frequently talk about the inequalities built into our current system. On infrastructure, the government has promised massive public investment. On social programs, they say they are working to improve the pension system and make child care affordable.

But in each case we must ask if they're living up to these promises. Most of the 94 "calls to action" of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) remain unheeded. There has been progress in recouping lost revenues from tax evasion, but plans to close tax loopholes for the wealthiest Canadians appear to have been abandoned. New infrastructure will be privatized, new fossil fuel pipelines supported.

Perhaps in no area is the gap between the government's talk and its walk more evident than on climate policy. Here the Liberals are rhetorical leaders. They have pushed for ambitious global emissions targets and championed the need for international co-operation. The government has also established the first federal climate policy framework in partnership with the provinces.

But look closer and we see that Canada's plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions come up woefully short. We are still on track to miss our already wholly inadequate 2020 and 2030 GHG reduction targets—the same targets the Harper government set—by a country mile.

As Canada's Environment Commissioner recently put it, despite being "clear in its desire for action on climate change," the government has so far failed to move "from a seemingly endless planning mode into an

action mode." The same could be said in a number of priority areas, from poverty reduction to peacekeeping to badly needed public spending on infrastructure.

Sooner or later, Canadians will get sick of waiting for progress on income inequality, the rise of precarious work and ballooning pharmaceutical costs. Indigenous peoples will lose faith in the reconciliation process (if they haven't already). The prime minister's feminist shine will wear off (a focus of this issue of the *Monitor*) without more action on gender equity. And Canada's youth will notice how little attention the government is paying to rising tuition fees.

After 200 sitting days in Parliament, the Liberal government continues to talk a good progressive game, but from our reckoning it hasn't earned the label. A progressive government needs to do more than show sympathy and aspiration. It has to advance social justice, economic equality, environmental sustainability and Indigenous rights and reconciliation in the real world.

You can read the CCPA's midterm report card on our website (www.policyalternatives.ca). Not only do we test the government against its own promises, but also the standards of progressive policy we set each year, collaboratively with our allies, in the Alternative Federal Budget. In more than a dozen areas we highlight where the government's rhetoric is loftier than its actions, and propose recommendations for how the gap between the two could be closed.

Canadians voted for a progressive government. Fortunately, the Liberals have another two years to prove we got one. **M**

PETER BLEYER IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES. FEEDBACK: MONITOR@POLICYALTERNATIVES.CA.



More on the military

I couldn't agree more with Carol Latter's assertion that the *Monitor* has been remiss in not providing sufficient commentary on alternatives to "military prowess" (Letters, September/October 2017). As Carol has suggested and listed, there are great sources from which to draw this commentary.

Is it not time that we harness our very considerable skills as Canadians in resolving conflicts by addressing the real causes of war? We also need to honour much more those who practise and promote non-military solutions to conflict.

Elbert Toews, Steinbach, Man.

Review or revue of Ilan Pappé?

The reviewer's task is to identify the standing of the book's author. In Michelle Weinroth's review essay on Ilan Pappé's *Ten Myths About Israel* ("A handbook for a just peace in the Middle East," September/October 2017), readers learn nothing at all about the author, an expatriate Israeli historian whose reputation in Israel is that of a falsifier of facts, not

unlike the Holocaust denier David Irving.

Another task of the reviewer is to discuss the author's argument. Instead, the reader is treated to a *parti pris* presentation of Pappé's views and the reviewer's hearty endorsement of all of them, as if they were gospel truth. In the last paragraph Weinroth writes, "If read seriously, the book will disabuse liberal Zionists," etc. She has yet to read the book seriously except as a "call to arms" to "all those who strive for social justice" (her words). If justice is the purpose of the review, commission another review that gives critical consideration to the so-called ten myths.

What Weinroth has written, and what *Monitor* has published, is not a book review, it is a book *revue*, a travesty of the situation, a skit prepared by Ilan Pappé and applauded by Michelle Weinroth that skirts around the truth of the situation in the Middle East today.

Ruth and John Robert Colombo, Toronto, Ont.

I want to thank the CCPA for the *Monitor*, which always has many illuminating articles. With this in mind, I particularly want to say thanks for Michelle Weinroth's review of Ilan Pappé's *Ten Myths About Israel*. The time is long past when progressive publications like the *Monitor* can ignore the long-standing and ever increasing violence of the Israeli state against Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and in Israel itself.

As a United Church minister, I know that anti-Semitism is deeply

rooted in western civilization, and that many of these roots are entwined with historic Christianity and find expression in the Gospels. It has taken churches and other parts of our society a long time to recognize our complicity in centuries of persecution which culminated in the Holocaust.

With the deep sense of guilt that this has laid upon us, we have not wanted to criticize Israel. As we work to purge ourselves of anti-Semitism, we cringe when others call us anti-Semites even though we know this will happen when we point to Israeli persecution of Palestinians. However, as many Jews have told us, criticism of the Israeli government and its actions is not anti-Semitic any more than criticism of the Trudeau government and its actions (or inactions) is anti-Canadian.

Weinroth draws attention to Pappé's assertion that Israel is a "settler-colonial project," using "transfer, occupation and incarceration of Palestinians" to achieve its goals. Canadians are only beginning to recognize that Canada is also a "settler-colonial project" and that we have used similar methods in our dispossession of Indigenous peoples. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in exposing this injustice did not end with the filing of its final report. Reconciliation is a long uphill road and our journey has only begun.

Books like Ilan Pappé's, reviews like Weinroth's and worldwide involvement in movements like BDS

can help to bring Israel to the same belated recognition of its injustice that many Canadians now recognize in our treatment of Indigenous peoples. Perhaps Canada and Israel could even walk this long uphill road together.

Jim Manly, Nanaimo, B.C.

Alberta doing better for people with intellectual disabilities

I read with great interest the article "Freeing Our People" by Natalie Spagnuolo and Kory Earle (July/August 2016). We have a sordid history of institutionalizing people with disabilities in this country and the article clearly states many of the issues these people continue to face today.

Having worked for the province of Alberta helping people with intellectual disabilities remain in the community, or return to the community from time at institutions, I was surprised to see Alberta lumped in with the other Prairie provinces. I am proud to say that I was part of the concentrated effort to help people who had been in institutions move into community settings during the 1980s, '90s and into the current century.

We haven't used community group homes in Alberta for decades and have no sheltered workshops. It was our belief that people with disabilities belonged in the community with the rest of us, and that they should have a choice in where and with whom they lived. Funding from the provincial government was important in this respect. Some folks

live on their own, or with a roommate or two with support; some live with a skilled, paid roommate or family; others live with round-the-clock staff if that is what they need to stay safe in the community and out of institutions.

The system isn't perfect. We have made serious mistakes and are learning from them. Workers within the community system are underpaid and mostly non-unionized. Yes, there are still folks in hospitals and care facilities because their needs are so high that it is difficult to build the customized living situation or obtain the level of funding that even a progressive government such as we have in Alberta can provide. But it is not because of a lack of desire to have everyone live within the community.

I have great respect for People First, so I was disappointed that their research didn't acknowledge the good work that has been done in Alberta and give some examples of how it is possible for everyone with a disability, regardless of their needs and challenges, to live successfully in the community.

For example, since we initiated direct funding (called individualized funding in Alberta) in Calgary in 1982, thousands of adults with intellectual disabilities have been able to live and participate in the community in the arrangement that is best suited to them. I am sorry that this approach has not been universally adopted. Everyone deserves to have a good life in the community and we have learned

that if there is a will, there is a way.

Yvonne Schmitz MSW/RSW, former public servant and AUPE Life Member, Calgary, Alta.

Authors' response

Dear Ms. Schmitz, thank you for your interest in our article "Freeing Our People." We agree that everyone deserves to have a good life in the community. We also support direct funding for people with intellectual disabilities so they can have control over their lives.

The focus of the article was not about the accomplishments we have made toward community living; rather it was about the challenges and issues that remain in achieving deinstitutionalization here in Canada. Alberta was included in our article because the Michener Centre is still open and operates as an institution for people with intellectual disabilities. And, as far as our research shows, Alberta still funds both group homes (referred to as "mini-institutions" in the article) and sheltered workshops ("places where people with disabilities are 'employed' for below minimum wage").

Perhaps we will do a follow-up piece that looks at specific policy issues across the country, using Alberta as an example. For instance, what some people might characterize as a direct-funding program is not necessarily celebrated as such. The difference revolves around whether people with disabilities are allowed—and

supported—to receive direct payments or whether money is funnelled through their guardian or other substitute decision-maker.

The practice of issuing money to such decision-makers can further disempower the very people it intends to benefit by placing them under the financial control of others. Not only does it assume that people with disabilities have positive relationships with their parent or guardian, but it also relies on the unpaid labour of these individuals—very often women—to manage funds and co-ordinate support services. The presumption is that co-ordinators do not require disability accommodations to undertake their duties, such as managing payroll and keeping records.

As a result, people with intellectual disabilities who wish to practise supported decision-making are often excluded from the program or forced to give up their right to make decisions by engaging a substitute decision-maker in order to access funds. In our view, this does not constitute direct funding. A longer discussion of these distinctions and the merits and pitfalls of existing provincial programs would make for an elucidating follow-up on this issue.

Natalie Spagnuolo and Kory Earle,
People First of Canada

Corrections

The illustration of Justin Trudeau on page 26 of the September/October 2017 issue is by Remie Geoffroi. The article "Netflix Tax? Bloated cablecos say the darndest things," on page 6 of that issue, incorrectly stated that the Public Policy Forum was paid by a parliamentary heritage committee chaired by Hedy Fry when it should have said the PPF was paid by the Heritage Ministry. The *Monitor* apologizes for the omission and mistake.

Send all feedback, corrections, poems, praise or complaints to monitor@policyalternatives.ca.

New from the CCPA

CCPA enters tax reform fray

This summer, the federal government proposed a series of tax reforms for Canadian-controlled private corporations that were meant to close certain tax loopholes and address tax avoidance by professionals and other incorporated individuals. The CCPA played a major role in the media debate over the move, which the centre largely supports as a step toward tax fairness. But a strong campaign by lobby groups, which frame the reforms as an attack on the middle class and small-business owners, have put the government on the back foot.

An unfair tax system increases inequality and limits our ability to invest in programs that really matter for all Canadians. A new report by CCPA Senior Economist **David Macdonald**, called *Splitting the Difference: Who Really Benefits from Small Business Income Splitting?*, shows how few Canadians will be negatively affected by closing this tax loophole, and how the benefits of the status quo go largely to Canada's wealthiest families. Macdonald appeared as a

witness before the House of Commons finance committee (FINA) in September on the proposed reforms, and was featured regularly in media coverage of the issue.

CCPA Senior Researcher **Kate McInturff**, author of this issue's cover feature on Canada's gender gap, also appeared before the FINA committee this fall for pre-budget consultations. McInturff called for Budget 2018 to invest equally in male- and female-dominated occupational sectors, invest in occupations where women earn a living wage, support part-time workers, shift the balance of unpaid work between men and women, and invest in direct funding for women's organizations.

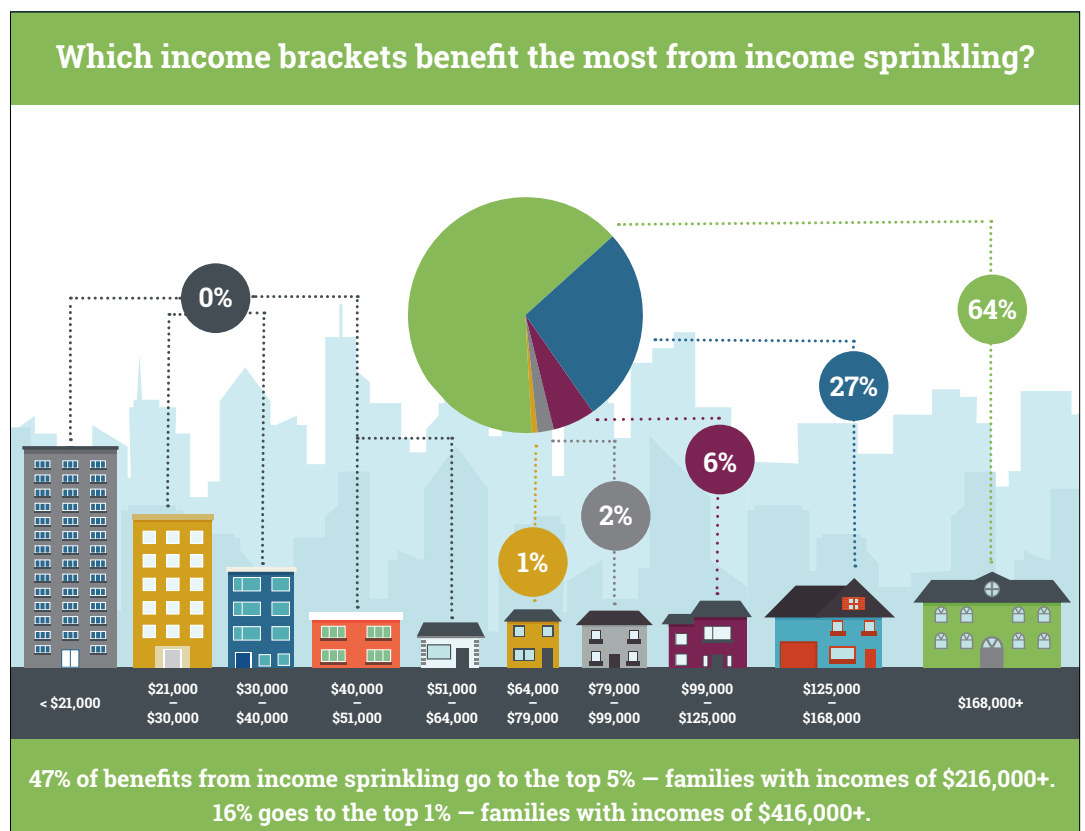
NAFTA negotiations and CETA ratification

You can't open a newspaper these days without seeing stories covering the fairly rapid renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), though observers are not sure if the Trump administration wants a deal by January or if the U.S. president would prefer it if the talks collapsed completely.

The CCPA has participated in this process so far by submitting recommendations to Global Affairs Canada and the House of Commons trade committee for what Canada's priorities should be in a reimagined North American trade regime. The CCPA submissions, written by **Scott Sinclair**, **Stuart Trew** and **Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood**,

emphasize the need for governments to develop a new trade model that would address climate change, the changing nature of work, stagnant welfare gains and unacceptable levels of inequality in all NAFTA nations.

In late September, during the third round of NAFTA negotiations in Ottawa, **Sinclair**, who directs of the CCPA's Trade and Investment Research Project, participated in civil society briefings from Canadian trade officials in the areas of investment, intellectual property rights and regulatory co-operation. He also took part in a trilateral labour conference in Chicago in October that was dedicated to developing an internationalist, solidaristic, pro-worker agenda for North America.



Monitor editor (and part-time CCPA trade researcher) **Stuart Trew** was in Europe from October 15 to November 1 for a speaking tour to multiple countries debating whether or not to ratify the Canada–EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). While Canada celebrated the coming into force of CETA in late September (see page 8), many European decision-makers are uncomfortable with its investment protections and regulatory chapters, which they rightly fear will undermine climate measures and other public interest policies.

Mega cost savings from pharmacare

A universal pharmacare system in Canada would save the country's public and private insurers \$30 billion, according to new research co-published by the CCPA and Canadian Doctors for Medicare. That breaks down to approximately \$18.1 to \$19.7 billion in public savings and around \$13.7 billion in savings for the private sector. The study, **Cost Savings Resulting from a National Pharmacare Program**, which was cited in the House of Commons during debate on an opposition motion on pharmacare, outlines the savings and efficiencies under pharmacare and underscores the high costs and poor coverage of Canada's current patchwork of prescription drug plans.

Discussing democratic barriers in Manitoba

Lack of government-issued identification (ID) is still a critical barrier preventing low-income Manitobans from accessing a wide range of government and commercial services. For those on fixed incomes, and in particular members of Indigenous communities, the costs of obtaining ID can be just too high.

A new study by CCPA-Manitoba researcher **Ellen Smirl, Access to Identification for Low-Income Manitobans**, recommends a fee waiver that enables low-income Manitobans to obtain or replace a birth certificate for free. Smirl also proposes the creation of an ID storage facility in Winnipeg, better access to government ID for individuals leaving corrections facilities, and making it easier for low-income and/or marginalized populations to obtain ID from professionals they are more likely to have contact with.

The CCPA-Manitoba also co-hosted a talk this fall by award-winning journalist **Amy Goodman** of *Democracy Now!* Goodman spoke to a full crowd at Winnipeg's Knox

United Church about everything from the role of independent media and the politics of war, to climate change and racial injustice in the U.S.

Oil politics in Saskatchewan's oil patch

In the wake of "The Price of Oil" investigation into oil industry impacts in Saskatchewan—a project of the *Toronto Star*, *National Observer* and *Global News*—the realities of living with the health and environmental effects of oil are beginning to receive public attention. Despite these impacts, oil-producing regions in Saskatchewan are still characterized by strong resistance to the science of climate change and high degrees of trust and acceptance in the oil industry.

University of Regina geography professor **Emily Eaton** investigates this phenomena in a new report for the Corporate Mapping Project called **Climate Politics in the Patch: Engaging Saskatchewan's Oil-Producing Communities on Climate Change Issues**. Highlights of the report include:

- Public opinion polls show that people in Saskatchewan (especially in the southeast) are among the least likely in Canada to think the earth is warming.
 - Participants perceived climate change policies being driven by "eastern politicians" and urban environmentalists as threats to both the oil industry and their communities.
 - Interviewees perceived the oil industry as a leader in environmental protection, already subject to intense regulatory scrutiny by government.
 - While interviewees shared stories of oil's negative impacts, they reported not wanting to speak about these impacts in their communities for fear of, or experience with, being censored.
 - Interviewees spoke of how the oil industry uses money and non-disclosure agreements to suppress public knowledge of negative oil impacts.
- Climate Politics in the Patch* argues in favour of a different way of engaging rural communities on the contentious politics of oil, one that focuses on the significant local impacts of extraction. Eaton says it's time to seriously address the grievances of those living with oil, while articulating an alternative economic/energy vision for rural Saskatchewan.

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



Behind the numbers

ERIKA SHAKER | ONTARIO

Back to school means back to the piggy bank



Whether it's "Pizza Fridays," "Popcorn Tuesdays" (all proceeds going to buy library books!) or selling wrapping paper to co-workers, parents will do what they can to enhance their kids' education. Teachers also dig into their own pockets to make up for funding shortfalls; it's not uncommon for them to spend over \$1,000 a year on school supplies. The issue has become high profile enough that the federal Liberals introduced a maximum \$150 tax credit against such extracurricular purchases.

This isn't just a Canadian phenomenon. Recently, a Utah teacher made the news by refusing wedding gifts, asking instead that guests purchase books and backpacks for homeless children at her school. It's also not a new thing. In 2006, the CCPA looked at private money in public schools in a report called *Who's Calling the Shots? We found huge gaps between schools, with some in more marginalized neighbourhoods bringing in a few hundred dollars a year through private fundraising and others, in wealthier parts of town, hundreds of millions. Guess whose educational experiences will be better?*

This disparity is precisely why something as important as education, a human right, should be funded out of the public purse, not by private donations. But that's merely the starting

point. A whole host of learning challenges require additional and specialized support, which should also be provided on the basis of need and not be at the whim of parents' fundraising capacity.

Ironically, the public money that is available for more marginalized schools through Ontario's Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) is outweighed by the money that predominantly wealthier schools (that do not qualify for the LOG) are able to raise privately. In fact, fundraising brings in \$200 million more than what the province provides to help compensate for the gap between

The "extras" parents are being asked to pay for are just a privatized band-aid solution that inherently privilege the educational opportunities of the already privileged.

schools. Growing inequality has made this reality even more stark.

Former Ontario premier Mike Harris was elected in 1995 on a distinctly anti-education platform, targeting teacher unions and implementing a funding formula in 1997 to slash public funding for schools. A review by Mordechai Rozanski in 2002 recommended an immediate \$1.7-billion injection every year to address the damage that had been done, and more money to be put toward the \$5.6-billion maintenance backlog.

Dalton McGuinty, "the Education Premier" to succeed Harris in 2003, promised a change in tone and delivered it to some extent, including by capping class sizes and introducing full-day kindergarten, which played a role in increasing per-student funding. But many of the worst elements of the Harris funding formula remained intact. As a result, Ontario's public schools have been significantly underfunded for 20 years, and parents, teachers, education workers and students continue to feel the pinch.

The needs of special education students are not being adequately met, in spite of parent advocacy and teachers and education workers pleading for resources and training to do their jobs more effectively. Schools are being closed in neighbourhoods that need them to stay open, with spinoff effects on transportation schedules that already badly underserve northern communities. There is insufficient funding for English as a Second Language (ESL) programming at precisely the moment Canada is committing to open its borders to refugees and skilled immigrants.

Considering this systemic underfunding, the "extras" parents are being asked to pay for, like library books, school trips and other extracurricular activities, are just a privatized band-aid solution that inherently privilege the educational opportunities of the already privileged. For education to serve all kids well and meet them where they're at, regardless of circumstances, the mechanism by which we fund it must be thoroughly reviewed, and the ongoing flaws corrected. **M**

ERIKA SHAKER IS DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH WITH THE CCPA. FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER @ERIKASHAKER.

As Canada ratifies CETA, European doubts grow



Earlier this year, the Liberal government passed legislation in the House of Commons that paved the way for the full ratification of the Canada–EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). On September 21, it celebrated the provisional coming into force of that agreement, stealing some thunder from the Conservatives who negotiated the bulk of the deal over seven years starting in 2008.

In Europe, however, more than 20 member states have yet to ratify CETA, which makes the Canadian announcement a bit premature. Many European countries are still debating whether CETA's investment chapter gives private tribunals too much power to decide the legitimacy of government decisions; they're not sure what is so "progressive" about an agreement that prioritizes corporate interests over the public good in the development of laws and regulations.

Actually, the verdict is still out on whether this part of CETA (its investment rules) is legal in the EU—a question put to the European Court of Justice by Belgium this spring. If the court says no, or if any one of those 20+ countries chooses not to ratify the deal, it's possible the whole thing could

unravel. (The CCPA was part of a multi-EU-country tour in October to argue CETA should be radically rewritten or rejected by member states.)

As we have pointed out before, with provisional implementation Canada has changed its patent protection system in ways that are expected to add \$850 million a year to the cost of medications. Canadians already pay the second highest drug costs per capita in the developed world. CETA's stricter intellectual property rules will more than cancel out the potential benefits to Canadian consumers of tariff elimination on all EU imports into Canada.

The Canada–EU deal also contains no binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, CETA hardly mentions climate change at all. Its protections for labour, the environment and sustainable development are essentially toothless (yet strangely form the basis of the Trudeau government's "progressive" renegotiation of NAFTA).

In these and other ways, CETA fails to live up to its "gold standard" hype for what is missing from the agreement. Despite a hastily cobbled together "understanding" on how the deal's investment protections and other chapters should be interpreted, the text contains no effective general carve-out for public services, which are only shielded from CETA's powerful investment and services obligations in a piecemeal manner.

A new series of reports out this September from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP Europe) and Greenpeace, and co-published by the CCPA, raise a number of public health issues in CETA that should give European decision-makers (and Canadians for that matter) even more reason to question whether their countries should ratify the deal.

The reports focus on how CETA's deregulatory provisions—related to standards, testing and certification, and

a regulatory co-operation chapter—will be used by Canadian and European agribusiness to undermine European food safety standards, Europeans' desire to know where their food comes from, and their aversion for cloning. They are a reminder of how the rules in agreements like CETA are as important, and we feel much more so, than the impact on trade.

As the summary of the papers states, the specific EU rules under threat in CETA include:

Restrictions on the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), growth hormones and antimicrobial chemical rinses in producing meat. CETA creates new channels, beyond what were already available at the WTO, for producers and exporters to challenge precautionary regulations that put consumers before profits.

Country of origin labelling (COOL) rules for meat and other food products. A WTO panel initiated by Canada recently ruled that a U.S. COOL policy violated the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (consumers have no right, in other words, to know where their food comes from). As above, CETA is more pro-exporter than the WTO in several respects.

Future restrictions on cloning animals and their offspring, and their labelling and traceability in the European food system. This is an area where Canadian regulations are vague, but where there is government support for novel products such as GM salmon. Canada supports voluntary labelling in other areas, like GMOs, and could push that approach here and in Europe as well.

Now that CETA has come into force provisionally, Canadian and EU trade officials have a year to establish bilateral committees to govern several of the agreement's chapters, including regulatory co-operation, sustainable development, financial services, investment, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures (i.e., food-related standards). We'll be watching that process closely and reporting back in future issues of the *Monitor*. **M**

SCOTT SINCLAIR IS DIRECTOR OF THE CCPA'S TRADE AND INVESTMENT RESEARCH PROJECT. STUART TREW IS SENIOR EDITOR OF THE *MONITOR* AND PART-TIME TRADE RESEARCHER WITH TIRP.



B.C.'s last climate plan was written in a big oil boardroom (literally)



Documents obtained this summer through freedom of information requests show that the cozy relationship between the fossil fuel industry and the last B.C. government went even further than we suspected—all the way to inviting industry to directly craft the province's climate "leadership" plan.

To recap, former premier Christy Clark announced the government's plans for the plan in the spring of 2015. A 17-member climate leadership team was appointed and tasked with developing recommendations to meet B.C.'s greenhouse gas reduction targets. The government released the team's recommendations in the fall of 2015, allowing Clark to head off to Paris for that December's international climate talks, cloaked in the mantle of "leadership" after four years of near total inaction by her government.

That's where things got interesting.

The newly acquired documents indicate that while the Paris talks were underway, the government launched a closed-door three-month-long process to work jointly with the oil and gas industry to revise and rewrite the climate leadership team recommendations. Notably, most of these government-organized meetings took place not in B.C. but in Calgary—specifically in the boardroom of the most powerful fossil fuel lobby group in the country, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP).

The process entailed five rounds of meetings with all the key corporate players, from oil and gas producers to distributors. Working groups were set up on the carbon tax, methane and fugitive emissions (from natural gas production, a significant source of B.C.'s greenhouse emissions), and electrification (i.e., the provision of cheap electricity to natural gas extraction

sites and LNG plants to make gas production less GHG-intensive).

The documents include a January 2016 PowerPoint from the Ministry of Natural Gas Development that outlines the process for the "Climate Leadership Team Recommendations – Consultation with Oil and Gas Industry." (It was the Climate Action Secretariat that co-ordinated the original Climate Leadership Team, and as far as the public knew the secretariat was the lead government agency working on the plan).

Also included are agendas from one round of working group meetings on January 13, 2016, along with the attendee lists for those meetings, which included senior officials from Natural Gas Development, the Climate Action Secretariat and BC Hydro. We do not yet have access to the daily calendars for several other senior officials who we believe may also have been present.

Also in attendance were over two dozen representatives from at least 16

oil and gas corporations and industry groups, including the BC LNG Alliance (which also had a seat on the official Climate Leadership Team), Canadian Natural Resources Limited/CNRL, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Encana, Imperial Oil, Nexen/CNOOC, Progress Energy (a wholly owned subsidiary of Malaysian state-owned Petronas), Shell Canada, Suncor, Teck, Woodfibre Energy, CAPP and others.

Recall that when the climate leadership plan was released in the summer of 2016 it largely ignored the leadership team's 32 recommendations, in what was dubbed by some as a "climate non-plan."

Meet the real climate "leadership" team

Most troubling of all is that this was much more than a "consultation" process. The documents prove it was an invitation to the country's most powerful oil and gas companies to shape both the substance and language of B.C.'s next climate plan.

For example, the working groups on methane emissions and electrification were each asked to "refine language in CLT recommendation" and to "add detail and process direction" regarding timing and whether policy measures would be voluntary or regulatory. The working group on the carbon tax was asked to "ensure consistency with other

Most of these government-organized meetings took place not in B.C. but in Calgary—specifically in the boardroom of the most powerful fossil fuel lobby group in the country.

jurisdictions” and to “determine ‘the art of the possible’ (how much and how fast).” The working groups were asked to come together to “work on offsets,” and a timeline includes the action item “finalize language” for the “CLP Framework” (i.e., the Climate Leadership Plan Framework).

Our FOI request asked for minutes and/or summaries of the meetings and industry consultation process, but none were released to us. Pages 19 to 38 of the relevant records were withheld on the grounds that they constitute advice or recommendations to a public body or minister and/or that they would be harmful to the business interests of a third party.

Perhaps these missing pages include meeting minutes and summaries. Or perhaps they are something else. We have asked the province’s information and privacy commissioner to review the government’s decision to withhold these records.

It should be noted that it took two FOI attempts to even receive this much information. In July 2016, we submitted identical requests to the Ministry of Environment/Climate Action Secretariat and the Ministry of Natural Gas Development for documents relating to any meetings or other communication between the fossil fuel industry and senior officials in relation to a wide range of energy and climate policy matters starting in January 2016.

The Ministry of Natural Gas Development withheld all documents having

to do with the industry engagement process and Calgary meetings. The Ministry of Environment released the agendas for the January 13 working group meetings (just the agendas, no other contextual information). It was only through a follow-up request to the Ministry of Natural Gas Development (now part of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources) that we obtained the full set of documents reviewed here. These should all have been released in response to our initial request, along with material from the other rounds of working group meetings (and who knows what else).

A stunning example of institutional corruption

In sum, the B.C. government carried out secret meetings in another province, with an industry that is a top contributor to the B.C. Liberal Party, to shape policy that ought to constrain that very industry, as any meaningful climate policy must do in relation to the fossil fuel sector.

Ironically, none of these meetings count as lobbying under B.C.’s current Lobbyist Registration Act, which doesn’t require meetings or communication invited by public officials to be reported by lobbyists. Meanwhile, no other sector—environmental organizations, First Nations, etc.—could even dream of this kind of access.

This is more than a case of ideological alignment between a corporate-friendly

party and its corporate donors. It is a profound blurring of the lines between government and industry, who set out to make policy together behind closed doors, while what can only now be characterized as a pretend consultation process was acted out publicly. It’s an example of what ethicist Lawrence Lessig refers to as “institutional corruption,” a “systemic and strategic influence that undermines the institution’s effectiveness by diverting it from its purpose or weakening its ability to achieve its purpose, including...weakening either the public’s trust in that institution or the institution’s inherent trustworthiness.”

The whole charade also represents an abuse of the climate leadership team’s time—not to mention a tremendous waste of public resources—and makes a mockery of B.C.’s claims to leadership during the Paris climate talks.

How much did the province spend convening the 17-member team for meetings, carrying out extensive climate modelling to support their deliberations—services that were contracted from the private firm Navius, no doubt at significant expense—and public consultation activities? How many thousands of hours of staff time were spent by ministry personnel to support it all?

B.C.’s new government has committed to more ambitious climate policies than what the previous Liberal government outlined in its non-plan last year. But with the fossil fuel industry accustomed to guarding the hen house, putting pen to paper on climate policy and regulation, a great deal of political will is required to move forward.

That ban on corporate donations to political parties, another promise of the new government? It can’t come soon enough. **M**

With the fossil fuel industry accustomed to guarding the hen house, a great deal of political will is required to move forward on ambitious climate commitments.

SHANNON DAUB IS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE CCPA-BC AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT (CMP). ZOË YUNKER IS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA AND A RESEARCH ASSISTANT WITH THE CMP. THIS REPORT IS PUBLISHED AS PART OF THE CMP’S RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE INVESTIGATING THE POWER OF THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY. THE CMP IS JOINTLY LED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES’ B.C. AND SASKATCHEWAN OFFICES, AND THE PARKLAND INSTITUTE. IN MARCH, THE PROJECT REPORTED ON THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS DONATED BY THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY IN RECENT YEARS TO B.C. POLITICAL PARTIES. THIS RESEARCH IS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC).

Cutting taxes is not the answer



Last week, I was chatting with my uncle, a retiree on a fixed income, about the health service cuts at the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. He said “if the deficit is \$83 million, why doesn’t everyone just pay a bit more in taxes and then cuts would not be required?” With consideration for one’s ability to pay, why not indeed?

Ideology is the answer. In *Tax is Not a Four Letter Word*, Alex and Jordan Himelfarb explain that the mantra “taxes are too high” is simply ideology when it is divorced from a discussion of what taxes buy. And what do they buy? A 2009 study found that Canadians enjoy an average of \$41,000 worth of public services annually. Pooling our resources allows us to enjoy health care, education, infrastructure and safe food. This is far more than most of us could afford individually given that the average wage for a single person in Canada is \$32,100.

Separating taxes from the services they pay for is impossible. And taxes have already been cut substantially. Revenues as a percentage of GDP in the province are the lowest in decades and below the OECD average. We are paying with our social deficit of 164,000 Manitobans struggling with poverty and a looming climate crisis.

The rhetoric of tax cuts implies that they will pay for themselves. But as the provincial Conservative government rolls out its agenda, all we are seeing to date is cuts to crucial services like health care, leading to closures of three Winnipeg ERs and rural EMS, plus the elimination of specialized services from physiotherapists to lactation consultants.

Another assumption is that tax cuts stimulate the economy. But a corporate or business tax cut does not automatically result in economic growth. Since 2000, corporate taxes have been reduced from 28% to 15%, yet the same Canadian corporations amassed over \$500 billion in excess

cash amidst a stagnant economy. The Great Recession was turned around by public stimulus spending, not private capital.

The tax cut ideology assumes that government is the problem, and from that it follows that the public sector needs to be cut. Despite their electoral promises, the provincial Conservatives are cutting frontline workers and doing so in a manner that is not transparent. The “Value for Money” audit has not been released, yet new cuts are announced weekly. They appear to be shooting from the hip.

Most Manitobans understand the good deal that taxes produce: 64% of us would pay higher taxes to protect our social programs; 60% support higher taxes on the rich to pay for needed programs.

Where can this revenue come from? The carbon tax is an opportunity to

Because the Conservative tax cut agenda has no plan to bring in replacement revenue, the strategy is a recipe for still deeper service cuts to come.

reduce carbon pollution and recycle revenue into green jobs. Manitoba needs an upper income tax bracket. The federal corporate business tax could be reinstated to where it was in 2000 and shared with the provinces. These steps alone would mean that scheduled service cuts need not be made while new progressive taxation options are explored.

The Manitoba NDP cut \$1 billion in cumulative annual tax revenue during their time in office: \$595 million in income tax reductions and \$339 million in property tax reductions. This is the size of the current provincial deficit. If these tax cuts had not been made, Manitoba would have been in a much better position to deal with the 2011 flood.

But the NDP fell into the neoliberal tax cut rhetoric in an effort to appeal to right-of-centre voters. The reduction in revenue impeded the province’s ability to return to a balanced budget. With limited revenue, the NDP were framed by the Conservatives as “spendthrifts.” Yet the problem was less that they were spending too much and more that they were steadily cutting taxes.

So it is ironic that the provincial government sees tax cuts as a solution. Instead, actions to date will have detrimental impacts on everyday Manitobans. Our access to health care will be reduced and poverty-fighting investments—in basic needs, social housing, child care, mental health and post-secondary education—neglected.

And because the Conservative tax cut agenda has no plan to bring in replacement revenue, the strategy is a recipe for still deeper service cuts to come. These cuts could very well lead to privatization as the Conservatives look to sell off assets to balance the budget, just as they did with Manitoba Telecom System in 1997.

We may grumble a bit when paying bills. But it’s important to remember that for all but the very richest among us, a decent quality of life requires the provision of public services. Taxes are the price we must pay for this. **M**

MOLLY MCCrackEN IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES MANITOBA OFFICE. THIS COLUMN WAS PUBLISHED IN THE WINNIPEG FREE PRESS ON AUGUST 9.

ALTERNATE FUTURES

ROBIN SHABAN

Dismal visions hinder finance reform

RECENTLY FINISHED READING the book *Fictitious Capital: How Finance is Appropriating Our Future* by Cédric Durand, an economics professor at the University of Paris 13. In short, fictitious capital is typified by the act of drawing returns from assets that have yet to be produced. Durand shows that our financial system is dominated by this type of capital, and presents a vast number of reasons why it is bad for society.

As an economist trained in “orthodox” views of economics, Durand’s “heterodox” perspective was interesting and informative to me. However, I have a major criticism of the book. I find the way Durand presents his material to be deeply problematic. Durand motivates this book by evoking a nihilistic, doomsday frame, essentially arguing that the problems of fictitious capital cannot be overcome.

Consider his opinion that “it [dispossession caused by fictitious capital] can only be defeated by social struggle and by the popular masses’ capacity to take the initiative. Unfortunately, they have thus far proven insufficient.” He admits that there may be scope for solutions addressing other problems of fictitious capital. However, he emphasizes, “Alas, we cannot see any sign of the tomorrows bearing the song of emancipation.” Indeed, “Capital stole people’s hopes.”

I find Durand’s attitude frustrating, and borderline infuriating. People can argue endlessly about whether any political action will be sufficient to evoke the change necessary to correct our financial systems. But an attitude of resignation will always ensure failure.

My first issue is that Durand’s pessimism provides a weak and unconvincing motivation for his work. If Durand believes that the political climate is so hopeless that nothing can realistically be done to remedy fictitious capital, then what’s the point of the book? Durand does not provide the context necessary for the reader to appreciate and understand his work. In this way, his nihilistic message adds unnecessary confusion to an already complex topic.

Beyond stylistic considerations, I strongly believe that Durand’s pessimism hinders efforts toward a more just future.

The political turmoil in the U.S. has shown the need for a progressive economic vision that voters find convincing. While Canada’s political climate may be less volatile and cynical, the same problems of fictitious capital pervade here, and across the globe. Taking these problems seriously will mean trying to address them through political processes, as Durand points out.

To drive positive change, advocates will have to devise a compelling plan of action. What systems will replace the rise of fictitious capital, and how will we transition? To this end, citizens need the insights and guidance of academics who understand the complexity of these systems.

Importantly, advocates, politicians and citizens are likely not going to consider the opinions of experts who lack solutions, or worse, believe that there are no solutions. When researchers with valuable insight argue that there are no solutions, they are directly contradicting their own relevance, which only serves to entrench the problems that they so painstakingly try to understand. They are denying assistance to the public that needs insight to drive change.

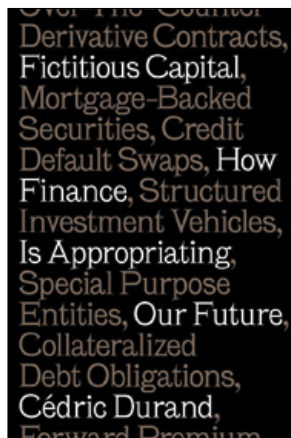
Consider *Fictitious Capital* in contrast to Thomas Piketty’s popular book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. A key strength of the latter is that it provided solutions, albeit imperfect ones, to a problem everyone could see: rising wealth and income inequality. Piketty, through his book, served as an ally in the efforts toward greater equity and justice, rather than dismissing these ideals as a practical impossibility.

Durand’s doomsday rhetoric, on the other hand, is tiresome and counterproductive. It may captivate audiences for a moment, but this power to hold interest is not sustainable. Providing solutions, even if they seem incomplete, unreal-

istic or imperfect, is a way to make economic analysis relevant to the public discourse. Solutions are a necessary condition to political action. Captivating solutions may even motivate the critical mass of citizens necessary to tackle the problems that Durand writes off as essentially hopeless.

I think the book would have been a much better contribution to debates about finance reform if Durand had presented his work based on its best quality: it is a unique contribution to theory. Much of the work presented in *Fictitious Capital* was intriguing and has the potential to be a useful resource to academic economists. I will likely use this book as a reference in my own analysis, but I won’t be lending my copy to influencers that are looking for solutions for a better world. **M**

ROBIN SHABAN IS AN INDEPENDENT ECONOMIST AND PUBLIC POLICY CONSULTANT BASED IN OTTAWA. YOU CAN REACH HER AT CONTACT@ROBIN-SHABAN.COM.





VELDON COBURN

An end to colonization (and other works of great Canadian fiction)

In a recurring segment of Tom King's celebrated CBC radio series, *The Dead Dog Café Comedy Hour*, the affable but somewhat naïve character Jasper Friendly Bear invited listeners to join him by the hearth where, with the sounds of a crackling fire in the background, he proposed to read an excerpt from a work of "great Canadian literature." Without fail, however, Jasper would read instead a random passage from the 4,000-page report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP).

The gag, an example of King's intellectual prowess and talent for sardonic humour, wryly jabbed at Canadian

politicians' indifference to the RCAP report after its release, an apathy that would drag on for another 20 years.

But things changed at the end of August, or so it seemed. Prime Minister

Governor General David Johnston (right) congratulates Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett (seated, left), Minister of Indigenous Services Jane Philpott (to Bennett's right) and other new ministers sworn-in during a cabinet shuffle at Rideau Hall on August 28.

REUTERS/CHRIS WATTIE

Justin Trudeau used the occasion of a late-summer cabinet shuffle to draw on one of the RCAP recommendations. The government, he announced, would be splitting Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) into two new ministries: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, with Carolyn Bennett as the minister, and Indigenous Services, to be run by Jane Philpott.

"We're doing what the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples asked for 20 years ago," said Bennett of the surprise move, "to actually have two departments, one that was a services department and one that was the

relationship and building that Crown Indigenous relationship.”

While it is true the RCAP called for such a split, it is only superficially so, based on a narrow and isolated view of the recommendation in question, which rested on three recurring complaints heard by the commission: that INAC is colonial, paternalistic and resistant to change; that the department’s performance on Indigenous policy is inadequate; and that it has failed to meet treaty and claims obligations.

The RCAP reasoned that having two departments responsible for Indigenous–Crown relations would address the last two criticisms by “[e]stablishing an Indian Affairs department devoted to policy concerns and reforming the expenditure process.” The commission envisioned that a new culture would emerge in the two new ministries as they focused on the functions of Indigenous policy and programming separately.

Trudeau’s explanation of the INAC split reflected much of this lofty vision. “If we truly want to move forward in true partnership in reconciliation,” he said, “we need to allow the good folks in the public service, the government itself, and Canadians to look differently at the relationship with Indigenous peoples, at the way we deliver services on the one hand, but also the way we build true Crown-Indigenous relationships in a nation-to-nation relationship.”

It is admirable that the government is giving thought to the work of the RCAP. However, a number of considerations and misgivings arise from the adoption today of a recommendation made two decades ago.

When proposing the structural reorganization of INAC, the RCAP was guided by the following question: “How can these wide-ranging proposals for structural and program reform be explained and defended in the real world of government in the 1990s?” The report went on to assure that the commission’s “proposals for institutional reform... make sense *in the existing climate*” [emphasis added].

To say it another way, the RCAP advised the dismantling and particular

restructuring of INAC in the conditions that prevailed during its tenure. What’s more, the commission signalled the time sensitivity of this recommendation, insisting that the “government of Canada implement these changes within a year of the publication of this report,” which would have been November 1997 (the year King’s radio show premiered).

The “real world of government” in 2017 is very different from what it was back then. In fact, the period between August 1991, when Brian Mulroney’s government established the RCAP, and the commission’s 1996 final report, during Jean Chrétien’s first term as prime minister, was one of significant political upheaval.

As the RCAP observed, the machinery of government was restructured in the early 1990s through the “simplification” of departments and appointment of a lean cabinet. Smaller government entailed smaller departments, the merging of functions from various departments and the consolidation of operations.

In a single day in June 1993, the number of government ministries dropped from 32 to 23, and mega-departments were borne out of the union of smaller departments and agencies. These large changes were followed by the Chrétien government’s “program review process,” initiated in the 1994 budget

The two new ministries will continue to be enmeshed in the dense colonial machinery of government, changing little, if anything at all.

and culminating in the following year’s deep cuts to program expenditures and the public service. This trend did not go unnoticed by the RCAP, which observed an “overwhelming preoccupation with reducing the apparent overall size of the federal government.”

Between 1991 and 1997, the size of the federal government underwent a rapid contraction, with spending as a proportion of GDP dropping from 24.5% to under 20%, where it stabilized until 2008. The federal government has grown since then, most notably through the fiscal stimulus undertaken in response to the 2008 financial crisis. But in recent years spending has remained above 21% of GDP and is trending slightly upward.

In summary, the structural and fiscal conditions that prompted the recommendation to split INAC are not present in government today.

There is another aspect of the “real world of government,” however, that argues against the relevance of adopting the RCAP recommendation today.

In his seminal work, *Governing from the Centre*, Donald Savoie traces a slower-moving, longer-term trend at work in federal public administration, namely, the consolidation of policy-making powers in the centre of government. Savoie’s work demonstrates that, since the time of Pierre Trudeau in the late 1960s, executive power in the federal government has continually been removed from the ranks of line departments such as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, and concentrated in the central agencies, particularly the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

More and more, successive prime ministers have cultivated the authorities that were traditionally exercised by cabinet ministers. As a result, policy decisions and policy direction originate not with ministers and their deputies, but are crafted by and emerge from the centre: the prime minister, senior advisers within the PMO, and top bureaucrats like the Clerk of the Privy Council.

Contemplating this transformation of the machinery of government, the RCAP recommended splitting INAC as a way to increase departmental influence

in federal policy, observing (in Volume 2 of the report) that:

[INAC's] performance in the federal policy arena is inadequate. Departments with more focused functional responsibilities and budgets are seen as being able to 'walk over' [INAC], at least in its policy role.... In addition, over the years [INAC] has been seen as having insufficient capacity to bring its own policy initiatives to fruition through the cabinet decision process.

Dividing INAC, it was thought, would enrich the executive clout of the minister that directed the policy function for Indigenous Affairs. Now, with the benefit of Savoie's analysis, it is clear that whatever improvement in Indigenous policy influence the new minister was supposed to obtain would have been considerably diminished in the 20 years afterward. This would be true whether the RCAP recommendation had been implemented at the earliest opportunity, in 1997, or in 2017.

Although the countervailing forces of the past 20 years have decreased the initial urgency for splitting INAC, Trudeau and his ministers have offered a new justification more representative of these times.

"The work that the prime minister has announced today is in fact undoing structures that were designed to dominate Indigenous cultures, to force assimilation of Indigenous peoples into a culture that was not their own," said Philpott in her new position as minister of Indigenous services. "By announcing today that these colonial structures will in fact be dismantled is an historic day."

Bennett had a folksier take: "It's a story that is about decolonizing. It's a story about getting back to the original relationship that was the spirit and intent of the treaties."

So, will decolonization ensue from a restructured INAC? A look at the department's history suggests it's not a likely outcome.

INAC has had a rather erratic past, with numerous mergers and dissolutions into various ministries, including a split with Parks Canada in 1978. More recently, INAC assumed responsibility for the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, which co-ordinated Indigenous policy

The structural and fiscal conditions that prompted the recommendation to split INAC are not present in government today.

across the federal government and housed the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians when it was transferred from the Privy Council Office in 2006. Since then, the department has undergone substantial restructuring, realignment and reorganization. Sectors of INAC, some of which are larger than other departments and agencies in both budget and staff, have been created, split and folded into other sectors on several occasions.

Setting aside the imperative of decolonization that Indigenous peoples have maintained for centuries—namely, recognition of their sovereignty over their own nations—this newest rearrangement of INAC will not extricate either side of the colonial divide from the trap of colonialism. While INAC is commonly believed to be the locus of federal Indigenous policy and programming, the reality is that the machinery of government concerned with Indigenous affairs is dispersed across more than 30 departments.

For instance, Health Canada retains power under the Indian Health Policy (1979) pursuant to the Department of Health Act (1996); Fisheries and Oceans Canada maintains authorities over Aboriginal fisheries; Public Safety Canada

(with the provinces and territories) oversees First Nations policing policy and programming; and the PCO provides the "necessary corporate support" for the commissions of inquiry, including the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, to name a few.

The truth is, INAC is just one of many structures that comprise the immense and wide-reaching colonial apparatus for the administration of Indigenous affairs. Unless this is acknowledged and addressed, perhaps during the six-month consultation the government announced it was holding with Indigenous stakeholders, the two new ministries will continue to be enmeshed in the dense colonial machinery of government, changing little, if anything at all.

Immediately following the announcement by Trudeau that INAC would be dismantled, a recognizable routine began to unfold. Indigenous people sat back, skeptical, while many in the chattering class and political commentariat patted the government on the back for the supposed monumental step forward in Indigenous relations.

The familiar ritual is captured by King in an episode of *The Dead Dog Café*, in which Jasper Friendly Bear announces that he won't be doing "Fireside Friendly Bear" any longer. It was 1998, and then Indian Affairs minister Jane Stewart had made an apology to Indigenous people for the residential school system. Jasper, with his characteristic naiveté, tells his two co-hosts, Tom (played by King himself) and Gracie Heavy Hand, "It's all been settled!" Of course, neither Tom nor Gracie buy it.

"That apology didn't settle anything," Tom interjects. "The real problems, like treaty rights and land claims and sovereignty, haven't been addressed." Gracie, with her calm demeanor, repeats what Indigenous people have said every time the government makes some grand announcement: "I've heard those promises before. I'll believe it when I see some real action." **M**

VELDON COBURN IS A PHD CANDIDATE AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY WHERE HE IS STUDYING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY. HE HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA. COBURN IS ANISHINAABE FROM PIKWAKANAGAN. THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *POLICY OPTIONS*, A DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON PUBLIC POLICY.



WORDS BY KATE MCINTURFF / ILLUSTRATION BY JESSICA FORTNER

For women, there is power in numbers

TO CLOSE CANADA'S GENDER GAPS, WE FIRST NEED TO SEE WHERE THEY ARE. ENTER THE **BEST AND WORST PLACES TO BE A WOMAN IN CANADA**, 2017 EDITION.



On January 21, 2017, more than three million women poured out into the streets, squares and fields of their communities to take part in the Women's March. They came from every conceivable background and for a wide array of reasons. Their messages were diverse.

In the United States, the march drew attention to the rise of white supremacy—its vile rhetoric inextricable from the misogyny, at the highest levels, that had spurred march organizers to act. From a remote camp at the South Pole, scientists linked respect for the Earth and action on climate change to a better world for women.

In Europe, solidarity with those forced from their homes by war and deprivation underwrote the feminist future. In the tiny Nova Scotia village of Sandy Cove (pop. 65), 15 women showed the world that no community is too small to be a part of history.

Contrary to the naysayers at the time (most of them men), had the Women's March focused on a single-minded call to action it would not have resonated with so many millions. Likewise, a focus on electoral politics, another request of the critics, would risk further eliding the diversity of women's lives and their experiences—a diversity that has long been one of the women's movements greatest strengths.

Poverty, discrimination and inequality take many forms in today's world, and affect different groups of women in distinct ways. But linking these injustices is a common gap,

sometimes called the gender gap—the difference between how women are treated in the workforce, and in society more generally, and how men are treated in exactly the same situations.

It is possible to express that gap statistically, but it's not easy. There are still so many missing pieces of information, so many stories that get left out of the picture.

That's where *The Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada* came from. The CCPA's annual survey is not meant to be perfect—it probably can't be—but it is a start to filling those gaps in our understanding, so that we can close the gaps in women's lives.

Why put together an index of gender equality in Canada? Why rush in where my better colleagues

The status of women in cities across Canada has become a matter of civic pride. This, to me, is the most powerful impact of the index.

have warned me not to tread? As these things so often do, it started with my frustration with the existing state of things. None of the major international indices of gender equality include a measure for gender-based violence, for example. That allows a country to hold the number 1 position in, say, the United Nations' index of gender equality, yet still have rampant levels of domestic and sexual violence.

People involved in the two most prominent international indices, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap and the UN Gender Inequality Index, have told me how difficult it is to collect such statistics. Sexual assault and intimate partner violence are among the most underreported violent crimes. In Canada, less than 10% of sexual assaults and less than 30% of incidents of domestic violence are reported to the police. That means that police statistics are a poor measure of the actual rate of gender-based violence.

However, as my frustration with the omission of these statistics grew, it occurred to me that the United Nations actually produces indices of all kinds of things that are equally difficult to measure. Things like "satisfaction with freedom of choice," and "perception of safety." Why shouldn't this well-staffed and well-resourced body be able to measure gender-based violence? At this point, I have to believe that the resistance to an index that would map such violence is political.

Many of the things that international organizations measure tilt clearly along income lines. That is to say, low-income countries score near the bottom of the measure and high-income countries score near the top. Gender-based violence is not one of those things. Everyone comes out looking bad.

The World Health Organization estimates that one in three women in low- and middle-income countries, and one in four women in high-income countries, will experience gender-based violence in their lifetime. That's not exactly bragging territory for the high-income countries who, incidentally, tend to put up the money to fund these kinds of indices.

So, I decided to make my own index of gender equality. I thought, if I only measured cities in Canada, surely there would be no problem including these kinds of statistics. Silly me.

Like most countries, the only gender-based violence statistics Canada collects on an annual basis are police-reported incidents of crime. Direct surveys—the best way to measure gender-based violence—are done once every five years. Even then, the survey asks only a few questions and does not sample a large enough portion of the population to provide rates of crime at the provincial or municipal level.

And so, once again, I must do something that goes against all my instincts for researchly self-preservation: point out the deficiency of my own data. You will find repeated 25 times in every annual *Best and Worst* report a warning about the total inadequacy of the statistics that I use to measure security.

Having confessed this, the first of my methodological sins, allow me to continue.

Not all women are the same. Not all inequality is gender-based (or exclusively gender-based). Yet there are no annually available intersectional statistics for the indicators that I use in the report. Even if I only issued the report once every five years, allowing for the use of census data, there would still be significant gaps.

I might be able to measure differences in economic well-being for racialized, disabled, Indigenous and immigrant women. But I wouldn't be able to provide estimates of differences in health or rates of violence. In this way, the index will always be inadequate. It cannot capture the intersectional lines of discrimination faced by diverse communities of women.

Cities in Quebec tend to outperform the rest of Canada, particularly in the economic sphere.

For example, our model ranks Vancouver in fifth place. Relatively speaking, it is slightly better to be a statistically average woman in the Vancouver area than in cities lower down the ranking. But it might be much more difficult to be woman whose third language is English, and who is regularly confronted with direct racism on top of the systemic variety that ensures she is less likely to earn the same income as a non-racialized woman, let alone a man.

Finally, for the last of my sins, the project of an index is itself a hazard. My colleague Debra Liebowitz, angel on my shoulder, has pointed out at length the dangers inherent in such projects.

Indices risk reducing all discrimination to a few data points. They incentivize policy-makers to focus on increasing their performance on the points being measured—a kind of teaching to the test at the political level—rather than looking holistically at what would make lives better for women (e.g., cheaper housing in Victoria and the Greater Toronto Area).

If that's the case, you are wondering, why persist in producing this report? The first answer is that it is the best way I know of to pressure our government into collecting better data.

Signs suggest a new survey on violence against women is in the works, though it's unclear at this point if it will be annual. It is also unlikely it will survey a large enough population to measure levels of violence at the municipal level, which will leave us ignorant of whether programs being implemented by cities are working or not. But it is a first step, and a step in the right direction.

The second answer lies in a totally unexpected outcome of the project.

When I produced the first *Best and Worst* report four years ago, I expected that the focus would be on how Canada's largest cities ranked (i.e., Toronto, Centre of the Universe). I was totally wrong.

Regina wanted to know how Saskatoon fared. Calgary was only interested in Edmonton. Victoria said "Take that, Vancouver!" The status of women in cities across Canada had become a matter of civic pride. This, to me, is the most powerful impact of the index.

Gatineau's mayor tweeted that he is proud his city has the smallest wage gap. Edmonton city council approved funding for women's shelters because, in the words of one councillor, they didn't want to be the "worst city in Canada to be a woman."

There are women's leadership programs in the works in St. Catharines and Edmonton. Hamilton continues to campaign to elect more women to municipal office. Windsor responded to being at the bottom of the ranking last year with a documentary film featuring a diverse array of women, their accomplishments and their affection for their city. I hear they are planning a sequel.

Our report does not have the profile of Hockey Night in Canada. Not yet. But if it means we start to truly see women in all their diversity, and to recognize that their well-being is fundamental to our community's well-being, well, how does the Best Place to be a Woman Cup sound? **M**

THE BEST AND WORST PLACES TO BE A WOMAN IN CANADA IN 2017

No two cities look alike. Statistics will never be a substitute for the full experience of lives lived. But as signposts they mark the spot where more attention is needed from our leaders, our policy-makers and our communities. They point the way toward progress—down paths as unique as the cities in this report.

So what are the results? And how do they compare to past years?

Windsor, Ontario finds itself again at the bottom of our list. Employment rates in the city are well below the national average for both men and women, but so is the gap in those rates, which is wider than last year. If there is good news in there, it's that the wider gap is likely the result of a jump in manufacturing jobs, which are 70% occupied by men.

The wage gap between men and women in Windsor is also smaller than average, though wages in general are lower in the city. But the poverty rate for women in the city is 24% (much higher than the national average of 15%), only one woman sits on city council, and women are among the least likely to rate their health as being good (52%), all of which contributes to Windsor's low ranking.

At the same time, the women of that city have much to be hopeful about. As depicted in the short film *Her Windsor*, the city's residents find strength in their relatively smaller numbers. It's a place where women coming together are improving health care and integrating the field of nursing in the face of racist and sexist prejudice.

Edmonton, Alberta continues to struggle with one of the largest wage gaps in the country, despite higher than average employment and pay rates. However, the city has started an initiative to support women's leadership, adding more voices to the public sphere and highlighting the concerns of women in the city. The city of St. Catharines, in southern Ontario, is considering a similar initiative.

Not too far from St. Catharines, Hamilton has only a few women on its

city council, which is fairly typical of the cities studied in the report. The group Elect More Women Hamilton wants to change that, so it is bringing women into the council chambers every year, offering them the opportunity to see a future for themselves in city politics. Ottawa has a similar initiative.

Recent census data show that the gap between poverty rates among men and women is widest in St. John's, Newfoundland. While low rates of full-time employment continue to hinder women's economic security in the city, efforts are underway to support working women—particularly self-employed women—with the creation of a feminist working hub.

Cities in Quebec tend to outperform the rest of Canada, particularly in the economic sphere. A strong public employment sector results in narrower gaps in wages and employment, as we see in Gatineau and Quebec City. However, when it comes to promoting women in the private sector, Quebec City and Montreal fall near the bottom of the ranks. Civil society organizations like *Group Femmes, Politique et Démocratie* are working hard to change that picture.

Statistics Canada does not collect data on non-binary individuals (people who do not identify exclusively as male or female), although efforts are underway to see categories other than male and female in the next census. The Prairie cities of Saskatoon and Regina offer trans folk support and a venue to express themselves through organizations like TransSask and Nasty Women's Press.

Every city struggles with stubbornly high rates of sexual and domestic violence. Sexual assault rates are nearly unchanged over the past decade, making it the one violent crime in Canada that is not decreasing in prevalence. Journalist Robyn Doolittle's groundbreaking report, "Unfounded," on how the police count crimes of sexual assault, has already resulted in the reinvestigation of individual cases, and system-wide changes to police responses to the most underreported crime in Canada. **M**

THE RANKINGS

- 1 VICTORIA
- 2 GATINEAU
- 3 HAMILTON
- 4 KINGSTON
- 5 VANCOUVER
- 6 QUEBEC CITY
- 7 ST. JOHN'S
- 8 SHERBROOKE
- 9 HALIFAX
- 10 TORONTO
- 11 OTTAWA
- 12 LONDON
- 13 KELOWNA
- 14 ABBOTSFORD-MISSION
- 15 MONTREAL
- 16 ST. CATHARINES-NIAGARA
- 17 WINNIPEG
- 18 EDMONTON
- 19 SASKATOON
- 20 KITCHENER-CAMBRIDGE-WATERLOO
- 21 REGINA
- 22 CALGARY
- 23 BARRIE
- 24 OSHAWA
- 25 WINDSOR



ALYSSA O'DELL

Dear feminist PM: Bold words require bolder action

Why Canada's international assistance gap threatens to undermine a new policy on feminist foreign aid

In 2014, Justin Trudeau watched a video that would forever change his outlook on feminism. It was a five-minute-long YouTube clip of Hollywood actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt explaining his own embrace of the word “feminist.”

“It was like, ‘Oh, OK, it’s OK for men to say that they are feminists in a public sense. Great, I’m finally going to do that,’” our prime minister told a crowd at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation–organized Goalkeepers conference in September. Before that, Trudeau explained, he had lived by the advice of an old McGill buddy who once told him only women called themselves feminists.

The revelation was popular with the media, who predictably (if with some eye rolling) fawned over Trudeau’s speech. “We All Think Justin Trudeau Is A Super Hunk Because of Joseph Gordon-Levitt,” *Elle* magazine declared. “Trudeau Needed Joseph Gordon-Levitt to Help Him Come Out as ‘Feminist’ and That’s Cool,” heralded *Vice.com*.

Yes, embracing women and men alike as drivers of gender equity change is a good thing. The same goes for encouraging allies to step up and be active within the women’s movement. It’s also good to have high-profile leaders like Trudeau amplifying and strengthening the voices of women and girls with lived experiences of gender discrimination and inequality.

But, to risk stating the obvious, you can only get so far with celebrity name-dropping, which does little to reassure those already skeptical—or becoming so—of the depth of Trudeau’s brand of popular feminism. Gender and international development experts in particular are preparing to hold the federal government to

a promise, announced in June, that Canada would take a new feminist approach to its international aid programs.

Under the Liberal government’s new feminist international assistance policy (FIAP), Canada would apply a human rights lens to six development focus areas: gender equality, human dignity, growth that works for everyone, environment and climate action, inclusive governance, and peace and security. There are high expectations for the policy, which will require a massive cultural shift within the federal bureaucracy after years of poor funding for international gender issues.

Getting the tone right is one thing—and it seems nobody does that better than our jetsetting feminist PM—but now the Liberal government must show lofty talk can actually lead to real action, and finally commit the resources to make it happen.

The FIAP and accompanying shift in rhetoric by the government is a positive step “towards gender

Assuming funding levels don’t change, Canada will be spending six times as much on defence as it does on international aid by 2026.

transformative change,” says Fraser Reilly-King, a senior policy analyst with the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC). “Generally, we’re very happy with how the policy turned out in the end after a long time waiting for it,” adds Diana Sarosi, a women’s rights policy and advocacy specialist with Oxfam Canada.

Such comments were typical of the people I spoke to (stakeholders in government parlance) for this article. But so was disappointment with the government’s lack of significant new funding for its ambitious new international assistance policy, and general questions about the capacity of Global Affairs Canada to successfully operationalize it. “If you’re going to have an ambitious vision, then you’re going to need to have ambitious resources to back that up,” says Reilly-King.

In general, there were high marks for the government’s responsive consultation process, which led to several key civil society proposals being included in the policy. For example, the initial discussion paper that led to the FIAP lumped women’s rights under a pillar on health. “That was something we were absolutely against,” says Sarosi, noting the policy as it stands now reflects those concerns. “We really wanted to have that (women’s rights) as a standalone priority, but also mainstreamed throughout.”

The federal commitment to focus funds and programming on sexual health and reproductive rights (an area that got little attention under the Harper government) is another winner. And the development community welcomed moves this summer toward multi-year funding for humanitarian crises—a first for Canada, according to Oxfam’s Sarosi—and decidedly away



from a “countries of focus” strategy in favour of more flexibility.

The Oxfam analyst says she’s pleased with the “ambitious” targets the FIAP sets, including a promise that within five years 15% of bilateral international development assistance will have gender equity and empowering women as a primary target, with a further 80% of bilateral aid integrating these themes. At the same time, Sarosi wonders if the policy really earns its feminist title.

“We wouldn’t go as far as calling it ‘feminist,’ maybe, in the sense that in many ways...it’s still really instrumentalizing women,” she tells me. “As in, ‘Yes, if we just get women in the economy we’re going to have better economic growth,’ rather than ‘women deserve fair and decent work.’” At points the policy falls short of “looking at power relations and structural relations, and really transforming gender roles,” she adds.

Minister of International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau launches Canada’s new feminist international assistance policy.

(ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

The question of implementation is top of mind for Canada’s development community. Sandeep Prasad, executive director with the non-profit Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, points out only a few other countries, including Sweden, apply a feminist lens to development, and that in broad strokes the policy is “a major step forward.” But he finds it “shocking and disappointing” that the Trudeau government is contributing only meagre funds to see the FIAP through.

For some time, voices in the development community have been calling for additional, predictable long-term funding and a concrete plan to get

Canada up to the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) for official development assistance. Canada’s ODA currently sits at just 0.26% of GNI—a little over a third of the global target, and the lowest it’s been since Lester B. Pearson was prime minister.

“The prime minister shows no signs of wanting to change that, and some would argue that his popularity globally is such that he doesn’t have to,” Prasad says. “Getting traction on [the funding issue] is proving very difficult.”

Reilly-King says that while the FIAP is “a very good start,” the government’s other international policy objectives may be overshadowing its commitment to development. He notes how the FIAP was announced just days after a speech by Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland on Canada’s need for “hard power” to support global order, and a separate announcement, on June 7, of plans to

boost military spending by more than \$30 billion over the next decade.

“In the [Freeland] foreign policy speech, development got next to no mention,” says Reilly-King.

Currently, Canada spends just under four dollars on defence for every dollar on development, according to a CCIC briefing note on the new feminist international development policy. Assuming no new money is put toward the latter, Canada will be spending six times as much on defence as it does on international aid by 2026-27. Comparable countries, such as Norway, Germany and Sweden, have ratios between 1:1 and 1.6:1.

“Do Canadians prioritize defence over supporting development overseas? And why is it that we’re putting \$30 billion into defence and nothing into development? It doesn’t seem coherent with...how Canadians see themselves internationally in the world,” Reilly-King says. Canada needs to “put money behind what we’re saying on the international stage,” confirms Sarosi.

“On paying its global share, Canada’s not back—it’s far back,” Celine Wadhwa and Robert Greenhill wrote earlier this year in a report for *OpenCanada*, an online publication produced by the Centre for International Governance Innovation. They point out the Trudeau government is on track to have the lowest commitment to international assistance of any Canadian government in the last half century. This resource gap has a “massive human cost,” say the authors, who calculate that “the total human cost of Canada’s commitment gap since 1995, across Liberal and Conservative governments, is the equivalent of over seven million lives.”

How long will it be before the international community takes note of the void between the Trudeau government’s

rhetoric and action on human development? While international development advocates continue to push for new money, few are predicting there will be a significant funding boost before the next federal election.

“We don’t want to wait, but to be honest we have little hope that there’s going to be more money put into foreign aid over the next two budgets,” Oxfam’s Sarosi says.

Another potential obstacle to successfully putting the FIAP into action is the capacity of Global Affairs Canada itself. A number of experts, who spoke to me on background, agree that while the ambitious language behind the new policy was indeed a significant step forward, there remain serious questions about how GAC will deliver on progress.

“You have a minister without a department—that’s Minister Bibeau—whose staff is buried in the bowels of [GAC],” says one experienced international development professional familiar with the department. As such, their “options for promotion are not regulated by the quality of their work in relation to development assistance, but by their evaluations by the people who are more traditional foreign affairs people.”

New governments like shiny new programming. But the truth is the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which was absorbed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (now Global Affairs Canada) under the Harper government in 2013, had been working with gender equality and women-in-development policies since 1984.

For many years, CIDA was a model for how to integrate gender equality into programming and the structure of international development agencies. That is no longer the case, the development expert tells me, explaining that the Harper government’s turn away from a focus on gender equality toward maternal and child health severely whittled away GAC’s in-house expertise on the file, on top of cuts to the development budget dating back to 2012.

“A lot of the bureaucracy, first of all, has been very resistant to really giving gender equality and women’s rights the priority it needs,” says Sarosi. “There needs to be a serious investment in training of Global Affairs staff...there need to be real champions within the department that are going to push this forward.”

Until that happens, relying on the expertise of outside organizations is crucial. But the number of GAC partners has noticeably decreased over the past decade, says Prasad. “You need to question whether, in that diminished set of partners, you have the right partners to implement a feminist international assistance policy, and I would argue that they don’t.”

The result is that we have noticeable shift in emphasis of international development announcements, to supporting

Prime Minister Trudeau talks to Tina Brown during the Women in the World event in Toronto on September 11, 2017.

PHOTO TAKEN FROM THE PRIME MINISTER’S FLICKR ACCOUNT



Government Twitter ads for Canada's feminist international assistance policy

gender equality and women's rights, but not the policy infrastructure to make it happen. "So far the projects announced haven't really hit the mark," says Sarosi, meaning the funds are not going to organizations where women are in the "driver's seat" on implementation. "That's really a shift that we still need to see."

Realistically, it will take time to get the implementation right, says Reilly-King, but that shouldn't hold up projects that have been awaiting approval a long time.

The gap between the Trudeau government's feminist foreign policy ambitions and its funding commitments so far is disappointing but, as mentioned already, hardly unusual. Canada has never met the globally agreed spending target for foreign aid. Not even close. And none of the major federal parties seem in a rush to get there.

In the lead-up to the 2015 federal election, the NDP promised a multi-year plan to get to 0.7% of GNI (which would have cost billions annually to implement), but the pledge was missing from the party's eventual fiscal plan. The NDP later confirmed that the foreign aid target wouldn't have been met during the first mandate of an NDP government.

The full NDP platform pledged to increase international assistance spending by a modest \$500 million, along with a non-defined promise to set a timetable to meet the foreign aid target. But the question remains: if Canada's leading progressive party isn't more ambitious in pressing Canada to step up its international assistance commitments in the near term, what impetus is there for the Trudeau government to do any better?

In a world where women's access to basic human, sexual, health and reproductive rights is still threatened far and wide, the Liberal government's new plan deserves some credit. After "months of Trump macro-aggression



CANADA'S FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BUILD A MORE INCLUSIVE WORLD

#HerVoiceHerChoice

Global Affairs Canada / Affaires mondiales Canada

Canada



CANADA'S FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Canada believes in **HUMAN DIGNITY** and a world where everyone has access to quality health care and nutrition, education, and timely humanitarian assistance

#HerVoiceHerChoice

Global Affairs Canada / Affaires mondiales Canada

Canada

can we not celebrate the Trudeau government's steady if imperfect progress in gender equity?" wrote Tina Brown, organizer of the Women in the World summit, in a *Globe and Mail* column in September.

As with some other progressive policies introduced by this government, the answer to this admittedly rhetorical question is, of course, yes. But Canadians are justified in asking for more. Props from the international media don't fund grand commitments.

And if the Trudeau government is serious about its pledge to strengthen global gender equality as part of its international objectives, there is hard work ahead for Global Affairs Canada and its civil society partners.

Ultimately, after countless years of subjugation, inequality and oppression, the world's women and girls deserve more than good intentions and inspiring YouTube clips by Hollywood's, and Ottawa's, feminist superstars. **M**

How Canada can tackle gender inequality through trade

The Trudeau government's feminist international assistance policy is a bold step forward. But it cannot stop there. Canada's ambition to be a global champion for women's rights can only be achieved through a robust feminist foreign policy and unrelenting championing of women's leadership. This must absolutely include a focus on trade, and a commitment by Canadian trade negotiators to put gender equality at the heart of their work.

In Canada and around the world, gender inequality persists when it comes to access to decent work and wages, and responsibility for unpaid care work. Applying a feminist lens to trade policy is a crucial way to ensure that the benefits of trade are shared more equally with those at the bottom of the economic ladder, the majority of whom are women.

Women in the labour market consistently earn lower wages than men—40% less in some countries—with pay gaps made worse by other forms of discrimination such as race and immigration status. Although 70% of women report a desire to find paid work, the International Labour Organization estimates that more than half are out of the job market. Even when women do find paid employment, they tend to be concentrated in low-wage roles with little job security, and without access to basic rights and protections.

There are obstacles even for those who own their own businesses. Many female entrepreneurs and small-scale producers face particular barriers to seizing trade opportunities. Marginalized women have limited access to resources such as capital, land and credit. They also have difficulty getting the training and technology they

require to help grow their companies. This puts them at a huge disadvantage when it comes to marketing their products and getting them to export markets.

Trade can be a tool for poverty reduction, but Oxfam has found that rather than break down these structural inequalities, the liberalization of trade in recent decades has only reinforced inequalities by lining the pockets of big multinational companies predominantly run by men. These deals are often inked without any thought to how they will affect women and men differently, and they all do. If we want to maximize the gains for women, trade rules, agreements and support programs must all address the specific issues that female workers, entrepreneurs and consumers face.

To meaningfully deliver on its feminist promise, the government would need to consider gender in all aspects of its trade agenda. That includes a commitment to protecting women's labour and human rights, stopping the race to the bottom on tax policy, conducting transparent and inclusive processes, and listening to the voices of women's rights organizations. Here is how Oxfam believes this can be done.

Apply a gender lens across all trade agreements and programs

The Trudeau government is proposing to include gender chapters in Canada's free trade agreements. The gender chapter in the Canada–Chile FTA was the first of its kind agreed to by a G20 country. Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland said Canada will pursue a similar gender chapter in the NAFTA negotiations, suggesting

this strategy will be rolled out in negotiations on future trade deals as well.

A dedicated stand-alone chapter sets an important precedent by acknowledging the gendered impacts of trade. Women's rights activists have produced much evidence on this, but it is rare that specific language on gender equality is actually incorporated into trade agreements. That being said, a closer look at the Canada–Chile gender chapter reveals that it is not tied to a particular timeline, goal or indicator that would allow us to measure whether it is actually making a difference. It also focuses primarily on supporting women so they can benefit from trade, while doing little to recognize the potential harmful impacts of free trade on their rights.

The chapter holds Canada and Chile to their existing commitments on gender equality, referencing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, it lacks any ex ante analysis of how the trade deal as a whole will affect those commitments. How might the deal impact different groups of women specifically? How will it impact women's unpaid care work responsibilities, violence against women and female leadership? These are core components of SDG number 5 on gender equality, for which women's rights movements fought hard.

The chapter sets up a committee to lead on gender and trade initiatives between the two countries, such as building women's networks, improving labour standards, and supporting the specific needs of women to help them take advantage of the agreement. While it is great to have a dedicated group of people looking at



MATHIEU-ETIENNE GAGNON / OXFAM

the issues and moving things forward, the committee needs to have a strong mandate and resources behind it to be effective. Ensuring representation of women's rights organizations, labour movements and leaders will help keep their concerns on the table.

A key weakness of the gender chapter is that activities remain entirely voluntary, and it is not clear what success would look like or how it will be measured. The chapter could be strengthened by adding concrete requirements to keep parties accountable. At a minimum, both countries should be required to conduct a poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) or a gender trade impact assessment (GTIA) to explore the possible gendered impacts. This analysis could lead to a better understanding of where the needs are, and whether gender equality gains are being achieved through the agreement. The findings could guide the gender committee in its activities, but members should also have the authority to make recommendations for the wider trading relationship and how it can support gender equality.

Keeping gender equality in a silo with no impact over the rest of the policy is not going to be effective.

Over time, the government's goal should be to develop provisions on gender equality in all trade deals that are binding and subject to a dispute settlement process, to give women recourse if they have been negatively impacted. It is also worth noting that the government continues to implement agreements that do not have specific provisions on gender equality, such as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union. Strong leadership will be needed to ensure gender issues are addressed in these trade relationships as well.

Commit to transparency and include women's rights organizations in talks

In the past, trade negotiations have been criticized for their lack of transparency and limited opportunity for civil society and labour groups, who are often shut out or their recommendations discarded. Under the previous

federal government, the international trade committee produced two reports on CETA without even mentioning gender, and less than a fifth of witnesses in the committee's study were women. Even when women's voices are taken into consideration, it's often only the concerns of female business owners; rarely does the government consider a feminist take on overall macroeconomic policy.

Improving the representation of women and gender equality experts in meaningful consultations would help achieve the Liberal government's stated objective of making trade deals progressive. For example, the government could ensure that a women's rights expert is included in all committee consultations, and bring together stakeholders to discuss a shared approach to gender equality in trade.

Supporting and funding women's rights organizations that advocate for fairer trade and economic policies would contribute importantly to the development of a feminist foreign policy. A study by the African Women's

Development and Communication Network in five African countries concluded that increasing partnerships between governments and women's groups that analyze and advocate for gender-based analysis was a key to ensuring trade deals were gender sensitive.

Ensure women's labour and human rights are protected

For trade deals to really address gender inequality, they must look beyond simply integrating women into existing economic opportunities and address the various ways trade policies create and maintain inequality. While the liberalization of trade has brought more women into paid employment, particularly in developing countries, too often these jobs are precarious and underpaid.

From hotel housekeeping to garment production, Oxfam has found that women are concentrated in industries with low pay and exploitative working conditions. Countries that use export-led growth strategies need to compete in a globalized market by offering cheap labour, usually provided by women who have lower bargaining power and status. For example, in Mexico women make up the majority of workers in the maquilas (manufacturing centres frequently on or not far from the U.S. border) where labour rights abuses are well documented.

Women also experience work in different ways and need specific measures to ensure that jobs are actually empowering, such as non-discrimination on the basis of gender and flexible parental leave provisions. Addressing labour rights in trade policy is therefore a key feminist issue. Canada should ensure that labour provisions it proposes in trade agreements are analyzed from a gender perspective, and that specific measures are put forward to address women's labour rights. Labour chapters should include binding language that specifies commitments to address gender inequality in labour markets, including pay equity and access to decent work. Canada should also propose strong language on non-discrimination, gender-based violence at work, child care, and parental and flexible leave.

Policy-makers must also pay special attention to the power dynamic created by trade deals. Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms in these agreements

Supporting and funding women's rights organizations that advocate for fairer trade would contribute importantly to the development of a feminist foreign policy.

have given corporations more power than workers and individuals. Companies can sue governments for implementing policies that infringe on their profits, but those they employ have no such recourse if they are made worse off. Governments, including Canada's, must ensure that their duty to protect and promote women's rights is not curtailed through trade policy, and be prepared to carve out or shield human and environmental rights from ISDS to protect the public interest. That includes safeguarding investments in public services that benefit disadvantaged workers.

Stop the race to the bottom of the tax ladder

Though corporate tax rates remain at all-time lows in Canada, trade negotiators are always looking for ways to lower costs for business. For many governments around the world, that often involves the removal or lowering of tariffs to attract new investments. Countries focused on export-led growth often offer tax breaks for companies operating in export processing zones to stay competitive. These policies reduce the costs of international trade and production for companies, making it easier to manufacture and sell cheaper goods. However, they also reduce the revenue collected by governments.

This lost tax revenue means less investment in public services such as health care, education and child care, which are crucial for gender equality and women's rights. Without these services, women often end up filling in the gaps with higher loads of unpaid care work, which impedes their ability to access full-time paid employment. Women in developing countries are particularly affected by this trend of decreased investments in public services.

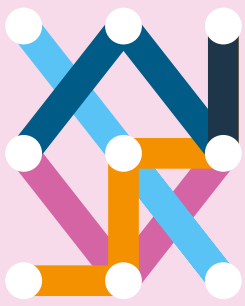
Governments often try to make up the shortfall in public revenue through regressive tax measures, such as consumption taxes. These measures disproportionately impact the poorest people in society who end up paying a higher percentage of their income in tax. Because women are concentrated in these lower-income groups and are responsible for a higher proportion of household spending, they are hit hardest by these regressive tax policies.

When pursuing future trade deals, Canadian negotiators should be mindful that their efforts to get a better deal for business do not come at the expense of services for hard-working women living in poverty.

A way forward

The Trudeau government says it wants to pursue a different kind of trade agenda, with Minister Freeland stating "We believe in progressive trade that works for working people." In order to achieve this vision, Canada must put gender equality and human rights at the heart of its mandates for new trade and investment agreements while addressing the unequal power dynamics that free trade deals create.

It's also high time corporations took responsibility for ensuring that workers—and women in particular—are not made worse off by their dogged pursuit of profits. That is what inclusive growth is really all about. **M**



Index Gender equities

In early 2016, State Street Corporation, the Wall Street investment firm behind the “Fearless Girl” statue (pictured) standing in front of the famous “Charging Bull” in New York City’s financial district, set up an exchange-traded fund (ETF) called the SPDR Gender Diversity Index (ticker: SHE). The goal: to provide investors with “exposure to U.S. companies that demonstrate greater gender diversity within senior leadership than other firms in their sector.”

SHE was a response to research by McKinsey, the non-profit Catalyst and other groups showing that women, who are drastically underrepresented in the business world, can have a positive impact on company performance. The passive fund held assets worth about US\$350 million when the *Monitor* went to print, far surpassing the comparable Barclays Women in Leadership ETF (WIL), with its US\$35 million, or the Workplace Equality Portfolio ETF (EQLT), which has US\$17 million in holdings.

Obviously, no one, let alone the company, is saying you can change the world with the right investment. But they are heavily signalling you can make a difference for women,

show your values and earn above-market returns by buying their financial product. State Street talks of its “commitment to corporate responsibility,” which is “infused across our corporate strategy and values, and is an important part of our way ahead.” Looking at some of SHE’s top 10 holdings, we’re not buying it.

Coca-Cola (5.39%)

Investors looking for reasons to doubt Coke’s “corporate responsibility” have many options, but for brevity let’s pick just one: diabetes. The use of liquid sugar in its many drink varieties is described as “uniquely harmful” by the Kick the Can website. “Liquid sugar is a unique driver of today’s skyrocketing type 2 diabetes and obesity epidemics,” it says. In 2015, the *New York Times* reported that Coke was funding an organization called the Global Energy Balance Network to shift the conversation about childhood obesity away from nutrition and onto exercise. It’s all your fault, kids!

PepsiCo Inc. (4.37%)

Global campaigns against conflict palm oil—the product of much deforestation, forced displacement and wildlife destruction—are making a dent in the practice. But according to the Rainforest Action Network, “PepsiCo is a major Conflict Palm Oil laggard, dragging its feet, refusing to admit it even has a problem. With a whopping 457,200 metric tonnes of palm oil used annually in snacks like

Quaker Chewy Granola Bars, Cheetos and Lay’s potato chips, PepsiCo has a huge impact on the planet, the forests, and the people and animals which call them home.”

Lockheed Martin Corp. (2.54%)

Global Arms Dealer.

Pfizer (6.01%)

Pfizer is perhaps best known for two things: the impotence drug Viagra and the company’s zeal for avoiding taxes. According to Americans for Tax Fairness, “Over the last decade, Pfizer has admitted guilt in three high-profile cases that have included Medicare fraud, overseas bribery of physicians, and the illegal marketing of its products.”

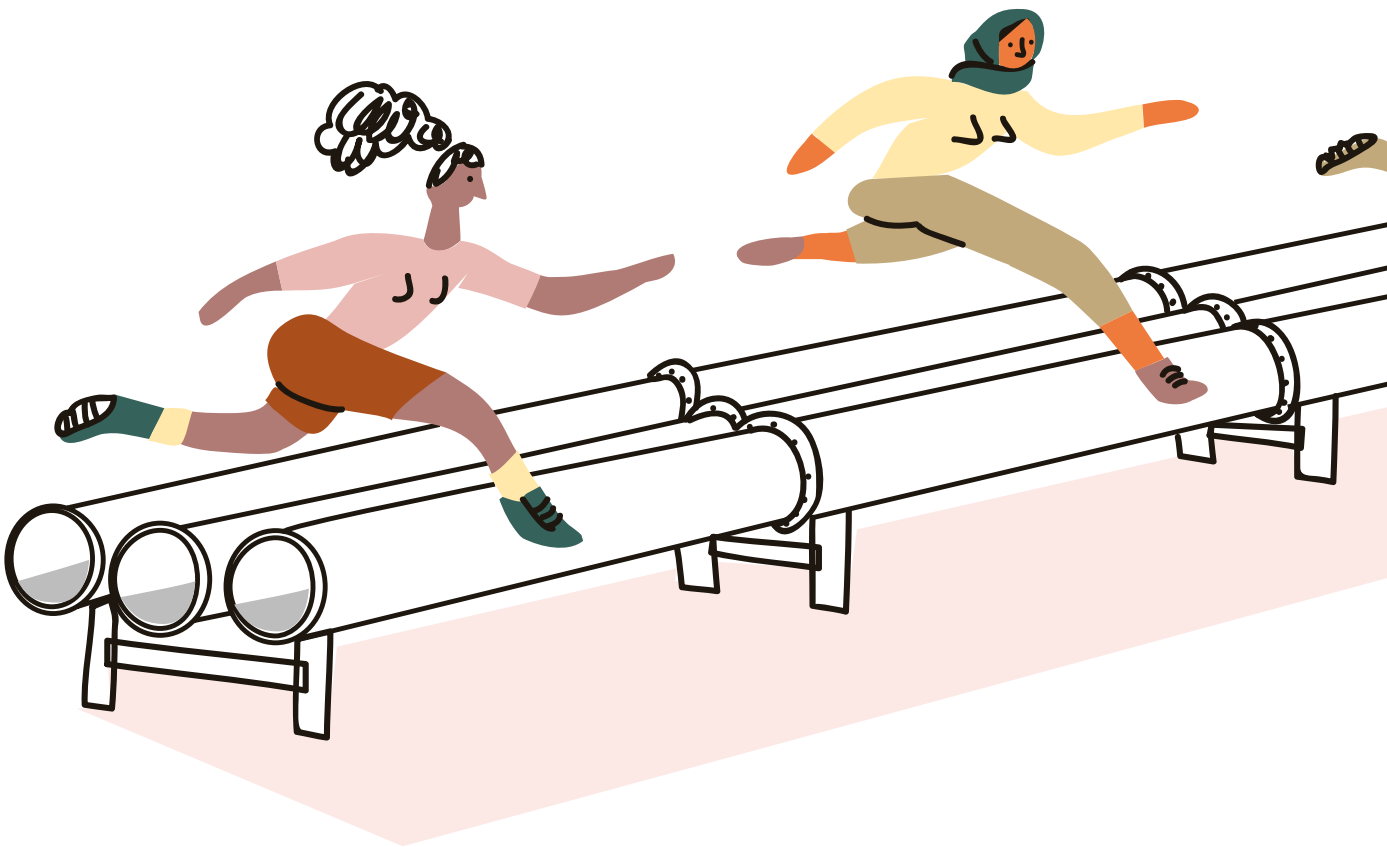
Amgen (3.78%)

In 2012, as reported by the *New York Times*, Amgen agreed to pay \$762 million in criminal penalties and settlements for marketing an anemia drug for unapproved uses despite FDA orders not to. More recently it has faced charges of overpricing its drugs, like myeloma therapy Krypolis and arthritis treatment Enbrel, by hundreds of dollars a vial.

Full disclosure: We may not buy the claim that State Street’s gender ETF is a responsible investment tool, but we are very much buying into the companies it has bundled up in a faux-feminist ribbon. As of March 2017, the Canada Pension Plan (i.e., all of us) owned \$590 million worth of shares in Coca-Cola, \$516 million in Pepsi, \$57 million in Lockheed Martin, \$371 million in Pfizer and \$241 million in Amgen.

SHINYA SUZUKI





STORY BY ANGELE ALOOK, NICOLE HILL AND IAN HUSSEY
ILLUSTRATION BY ALISHA DAVIDSON

Seeking “good jobs” in the oil patch

How gender and race shape experiences of work in Alberta’s extractive industries



The province of Alberta, specifically its northern oil sands region, is often described as a frontier, a harsh landscape rich with potential for anyone tough enough or “man” enough to make it. The NDP government’s 2017 speech from the throne drew more than a little inspiration from this mythologized idea.

Real Albertans are people “who made the decision to call this northern slice of the continent their home and never looked back,” read Lieutenant Governor Lois Mitchell in the legislature on March 2. They value “hard

work” along their “common journey towards a common future.” The story ends with a paean to the province’s fabled toughness worthy of a television truck commercial.

“Grit built this province. Grit will build its future. As a province, we have had our ups and downs. Though the world around us may be growing more uncertain, your government will remain calm and focused. Now is not the time to let our steady hand waver.”

This frontier theme depicts Alberta not as the mostly urban, well-educated province that it is, but as a collection of rugged individuals besieged by danger and uncertainty, carving out a living as best they can. Although many Albertans may identify with this idea, it is important to consider the less romantic realities of frontiers past, and the people who were—and continue to be—marginalized by celebrations of the hard-working (usually white) man.

The frontier is a colonial concept that, in Alberta as across Canada, purposely overlooks the fact that Indigenous peoples had lived here for a very long time before European settlers arrived; that Indigenous nations managed complex relationships with each other and the land to successfully maintain a subsistence-based lifestyle. Portraying Alberta as a wild, untamed frontier was a simple way to justify the expropriation of Indigenous lands and resources for white capitalist extraction.

In Alberta’s northern regions, where much of the extraction occurs, a “frontier masculinity” has developed that further limits who this mythology belongs to, according to social scientists Sara O’Shaughnessy and Göze Doğu. Writing in the 2016 anthology, *First World Petro-Politics* (University of Toronto Press), they describe the ideal frontiersman as “strong, rugged, self-sufficient—conquering the dangerous wilderness in the hope of striking it rich.” Masculinity here is defined against “all that is deemed incapable of enduring the tough conditions of the frontier,” that is, the feminine, urban and non-white. Women participate at the frontier by supporting men and their work.

Being self-sufficient through employment is of the utmost importance to frontier masculinity. Having a “good job” matters. Playing to that feeling, the term appears nine times in the NDP government’s speech from the throne, sometimes twice in the same sentence: “Alberta’s energy industry creates good jobs, and good jobs are the bedrock of a strong province.” But what is a “good job,” and who has access to them in northern Alberta?

Most jobs directly in the resource extraction industry involve working very long shifts (often 12 or more hours a day); workers are expected to spend days and sometimes weeks at work camps, away from their homes and families. Oilfield maintenance workers may find stable, long-term work at the same plant or refinery. But the nature of resource extraction means new areas are always opening to exploration and development, which requires a migratory workforce.

This seasonal cycle of working away from home may be manageable for some individuals. It can also put extra strain on families and communities, not only from the time apart, but because those left at home (often women) end up doing most of the cleaning and caring work.

As labour economist Andrew Jackson has pointed out, high income should be factored against job security, physical conditions, work pace and stress, working time, opportunities for self-expression and individual development, and work-life balance when determining the “goodness” of employment.

We should also consider how the Canadian job market has changed over the last half-century. Typical “good jobs” in the decades following the Second World War were mostly held by male breadwinners employed full time, with benefits, and under a single firm that was expected to need its employees indefinitely. However, neoliberal restructuring over the last four decades—the same period that saw women entering the workforce in large numbers—has made these stereotypical good jobs scarce.

In their 2003 article for *Industrial Relations*, Cynthia Cranford, Leah Vosko and Nancy Zukewich refer to

FEMALE WORKERS	White Women		Visible Minority Women		Aboriginal Women	
	Median yearly earnings (\$)	White women in occupation as % of all FT female white workers	Median yearly earnings (\$)	Visible minority women in occupation as % of all FT female white workers	Median yearly earnings (\$)	Aboriginal women in occupation as % of all FT female white workers
Occupation						
Management occupations	\$53,000	10.43	\$40,000	6.46	\$44,000	6.32
Business, finance and administrative occupations	\$43,000	31.89	\$41,000	22.26	\$36,000	26.43
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	\$61,000	4.67	\$60,000	6.16	\$58,000	2.07
Health occupations	\$53,000	9.69	\$47,000	13.07	\$44,000	5.06
Occupations in social science, education and government service	\$57,000	13.10	\$35,000	8.90	\$35,000	12.69
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	\$33,000	2.84	\$41,000	1.22	\$49,000	1.66
Sales and service occupations	\$25,000	19.51	\$23,000	31.28	\$19,000	25.58
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	\$30,000	2.99	\$29,000	0.89	\$50,000	3.48
Occupations unique to primary industry	\$7,000	2.59	\$8,000	0.23	\$13,000	1.25
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utility	\$34,000	0.82	\$33,000	2.96	\$23,000	1.40
<i>Total number of women in full-time employment</i>		546,979.1		123,921.4		34,372.6

the “feminization of employment norms” over this period, by which they mean increasing precarity, atypical work contracts, limited benefits and short job tenure, along with low wages, poor working conditions and higher health risks. Since even oil industry jobs fit this description, can we really call them “good jobs?” Are they good for some, but not for others? And when we consider “good jobs” should we also consider the impact they have on the collective good?

Direct jobs in the oil and gas and mining industry account for 6% of total employment in Alberta, according to a 2017 government profile. Only a quarter of these workers are women. In contrast, women make up 45.5% of Alberta’s overall labour force. Additionally, about four in five mining and extraction workers are between 25 and 54 years of age (compared to 68% of Alberta employees overall). These statistics portray the Alberta mining and extraction employee as either a young or middle-aged man, but that’s only part of the story.

Sociologist Sara Dorow describes the frenzied work environment of Fort McMurray as a “pressure cooker” in the 2015 anthology *Alberta Oil and the Decline of Democracy in Canada* (AU Press). Her research shows how much of that pressure is felt by women and visible minorities. Through their paid and unpaid work, these marginalized populations support and maximize men’s highly masculinized work in the oil industry, to the profit of those men, oil executives (who are mostly men), and shareholders of oil corporations (who, again, are mostly men).

While some women stay home with children to free up their partner’s time to work in the Alberta oil industry (90% of tradespeople and transport and equipment operators are male, according to Statistics Canada), other women and

racialized workers are highly overrepresented in feminized and invisible service, retail and care work in the oil sands region. This gendered inequality of access to high-paying jobs means that men’s incomes in the region are more than double those of women.

Nannies in the region, often Filipina temporary foreign workers (TFWs), pick up the care slack in homes where both parents work. Outside of the home, other TFWs do much of the care and cleaning work that supports the retail, service and hospitality sectors in the Fort McMurray region. Of the more than 10,000 TFWs who came to Alberta in 2016, 6,484 worked in service sectors, including 2,868 in accommodation and food services.

By catering to the mostly male tradespeople in oil industry work camps, these temporary workers fill a critical social reproduction role in the accumulation process. Yet this type of employment is highly precarious. TFWs have limited access to citizenship rights and the labour market; their jobs come with few benefits, low wages and heightened health risks, and their work permits are tied to a specific employer. Labour researchers Jason Foster and Bob Barnetson point out the inherent discrimination in the TFW program in *Alberta Oil and the Decline of Democracy in Canada*:

“Migrant workers are predominantly from the Global South and are thus members of ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic minorities. Providing migrant workers with fewer and/or different rights is a systematized form of racism that extends long-standing colonial practices of wealth appropriation by Western countries.”

O’Shaughnessy and Doğu find that Somali women working in Fort McMurray experience discrimination based on their gender, race, religion and culture. With some

Occupation	White Men		Visible Minority Men		Aboriginal Men	
	Median yearly earnings (\$)	White men in occupation as % of all FT male white workers	Median yearly earnings (\$)	Visible minority men in occupation as % of all FT male white workers	Median yearly earnings (\$)	Aboriginal men in occupation as % of all FT male white workers
Management occupations	\$80,000	13.69	\$56,000	10.25	\$60,000	5.53
Business, finance and administrative occupations	\$54,000	8.65	\$50,000	8.36	\$54,000	4.57
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	\$75,000	11.33	\$68,000	17.41	\$63,000	5.72
Health occupations	\$77,000	1.55	\$60,000	3.02	\$85,000	0.88
Occupations in social science, education and government services	\$76,000	4.55	\$54,000	3.82	\$65,000	2.80
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	\$31,000	1.63	\$37,000	0.99	\$29,000	0.66
Sales and service occupations	\$44,000	12.32	\$28,000	18.77	\$34,000	13.73
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	\$51,000	33.41	\$41,000	23.58	\$40,000	45.22
Occupations unique to primary industry	\$29,000	8.32	\$37,000	1.78	\$24,000	10.29
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utility	\$55,000	3.49	\$40,000	6.24	\$49,500	2.64
<i>Total number of men in full-time employment</i>		<i>811,140.7</i>		<i>163,801.3</i>		<i>44,120.6</i>

employers reluctant to hire them, many of these women end up working as cleaners. Those who find work in the industry may be pressured to change their clothing (e.g., to not wear long skirts) or remove cultural attire like headscarves while at work—pressure that can include threats of being replaced by men.

More generally, women who work directly in the oil industry face a catch-22 related to their appearance. O’Shaughnessy and Doğu describe how women who attempted to minimize their femininity physically (by wearing more masculine/neutral clothing and less makeup) or behaviourally (by acting less “bubbly” or friendly) were ostracized as “bitches” or as “mannish.” Women who maintained a more traditionally feminine look or personality were ostracized for being too “girly” or perceived as “not tough enough” to succeed in their job. Add to this a prejudice in the sector against hiring women, a significant pay gap between men and women, and the normalization of verbal, physical and sexual harassment, and the challenges faced by women are apparent.

In a 2016 report for the Parkland Institute, law professor Kathleen Lahey highlights the sizable and persistent

income gap between men and women in the province. Although a gender pay gap exists in all Canadian provinces and territories, and Canada has the third largest gap among wealthy (OECD) countries, it is largest in Alberta: women working full time, all year make on average \$31,000 less than their male counterparts.

The gender pay gap is even more problematic when we consider that Alberta women are performing a “double day,” doing approximately 35 hours of unpaid house work per week compared to men’s average of 17 hours.

Lahey confirms that higher-paying resource industry jobs are almost the sole domain of men, while women take up the lower-paying service and care jobs. Although such work undergirds the resource industry and is crucial for the whole economy, workers in these fields are valued less than workers labouring more directly in fossil fuel extractive processes—those men with “good jobs” the NDP government was speaking to in its speech from the throne.

Gender, race and country of origin are all built into the division of labour in the extractive industries. In a recent report, Amnesty International

Tables reproduced from Lahey (Parkland Institute, 2016).

finds patterns of inequality and discrimination against Indigenous people in northeastern British Columbia that are similar to what researchers have identified as prevalent in Alberta’s oil industry.

Treatment of First Nations and Métis workers in B.C. “varied enormously among companies and at different worksites,” writes Amnesty. Some workers told researchers they felt “unwelcome and unsafe,” and that they are the “last hired [and] first fired” for any job. “There’s an old boys club that controls hiring,” Chief Marvin Yahey explained. “After everything is in play, they invite the First Nations in for the shovel jobs, the grunt jobs.”

The Amnesty report highlights “the conflict between jobs that require long, multi-day and multi-week shifts often far from home, and cultural traditions of being out on the land with extended family.” Indigenous peoples bear the brunt of the socioeconomic and environmental burdens in regions where resource extraction happens on a huge scale, yet they benefit the least

from the massive profits generated by these industries. Amnesty writes:

Indigenous peoples whose lands and resources provide the basis for the wealth generated in the region, are excluded from a meaningful role in decision-making and bear a greater burden, including loss of culture and traditional livelihoods. The model of resource development, particularly the reliance on large numbers of transient workers, widens inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and between women and men, negatively impacting Indigenous families' access to food, housing, and social services and increases risks of violence.

One woman who works in the resource sector summarized the masculine working environment, telling Amnesty that women “work twice as hard to get half the recognition.” The study describes the work camps as, “a highly stressful environment. [The] physical isolation, and the drug and alcohol abuse at some camps all create an environment that can be unsafe for women.”

One of the main findings of Amnesty’s study is that violence toward Indigenous women is a routine part of life for those involved in B.C.’s extractive sector. Participants described daily harassment on some worksites. “It’s a boys’ club, so if something happens you don’t say anything,” confessed one Indigenous woman. Others described sexual advances or expectations by some of their male co-workers, and even cases of sexual assault.

Likewise in Alberta, workers in the extractive industries are afforded a different worth based on their race and gender. As the table here shows, white men are significantly advantaged in employment in the province, with the highest incomes in nearly every field. Furthermore, we see women overrepresented in low-paying sales and service jobs, with visible minority and Indigenous women the most overrepresented in these industries.

It is also clear from Lahey’s table that Indigenous men and women tend to do better in certain public sector jobs: health care, the arts, culture, and recreation and sport. Male and female workers of various races all seem to do a bit better in trades and transport jobs, showing the value in skilled trades work. However, white men still earn higher wages than most in this occupational category.

In its throne speech this year, the NDP government claims its core responsibility is to “make life better for

White men are significantly advantaged in employment in the province, with the highest incomes in nearly every field.

everyday Albertans.” Although many of the government’s policy changes to date support that goal, its commitment to “good jobs” in the fossil fuel sectors is obviously leaving some people behind.

Women, Indigenous and racialized people are finding their way into these jobs, but they are still the exception, and they face enormous challenges of discrimination when they get there. How can the government and the private sector work together to ensure that all Albertans prosper?

On the government’s part, it’s time to introduce pay equity legislation. Alberta was a leader on raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, but it lags far behind other provinces when it comes to fixing pay gaps related to gender and race. Though the public sector has some checks and balances in place to ensure more equal opportunities for marginalized populations, the absence of pay equity legislation allows parts of the private sector to function in ways that maintain economic inequality.

Dealing with other forms of discrimination in the workplace will take effort by the private sector and unions. And the sooner the better.

In June, CBC News reported the story of Amino Rashid, a young, Black Muslim woman who alleges she and two of her colleagues were fired from their maintenance jobs at a Husky Energy upgrader in Lethbridge after reporting Islamophobic comments directed at them on the job. The women have filed a human rights complaint against their employer.

In one of the alleged incidents, Rashid says she was told to take off her hijab because it was supposedly making others “uncomfortable” and that “this is the way things are done around here.” She told CBC News she filed the complaint to fight for herself and others. “I want all the people who can’t speak for themselves, that feel like they don’t have a right to speak up, I want them to know that I’m speaking up for you.”

As Albertans, we should be disappointed that “this is the way things are done around here.” That it’s OK our workforce is segmented by race and gender, and that women and ethnic minorities earn less money and experience more precarious work.

On a positive note, Husky Energy is taking the allegations of discrimination seriously by launching an investigation of its own into the contractor that employed Rashid. It is important that workers, employers and unions take these stories seriously, and act on them accordingly. But the response shouldn’t end there.

As Albertans, we need to take the evidence of a racialized and gendered workforce seriously—to understand how it undermines the frontier mentality that still attaches the image of a rugged, white oil man to the words “good jobs.” Those high-paying jobs, and the profits they create, are made possible by far too many underpaid, precarious care and service jobs done by women and other marginalized groups. There is nothing good about that. **M**

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Bait-and-switch of a Canadian dream

The compounding hurdles faced by highly skilled immigrant women in STEM sectors

In the game of settler-nation relay, Canada ranks second in the world for largest per-capita immigration rates, one in five Canadians being foreign-born. We've had this immigrant-fuelled-economy thing down pat for many decades now, especially when it comes to ensuring the immigration stream prioritizes highly skilled workers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (aka STEM). It should give us a clear advantage in that other race—to become one of the world's leading knowledge economies.

Yet, while Canada has been great at attracting this highly skilled talent pool, we have substantially failed at benefitting from their expertise, especially when it comes to migrant women skilled in STEM. If Canada's gender diversity in STEM education and labour participation has been steadily discouraging for the last 30 years, it is in large part because we have not focused on addressing the issues around integrating their skills into the specific workforces where they belong.

More recently, the government of Canada has been prioritizing and putting significant resources behind STEM productivity. The top item on the innovation minister's national agenda is "the need to secure the right people—including women, immigrants, and training for the next generation—who can help us close the gap between the number of jobs posted and the number of workers available to fill them."

Funding has been allocated to several initiatives, including ones that encourage young girls to consider a career in STEM, which should really pay off for them, and the country, 10+ years down the road. This kind of investment in our kids' future, and in combatting negative stereotyping

of who belongs in STEM careers, is commendable, yet it does little to thwart the shortages we are facing in our labour markets today.

A closer look at Canada's record

Our natural and applied scientific workforce renewal is considerably dependent on immigrant talent, with the proportion of immigrants among science graduates relatively higher than in other programs. In 2011, more than one-half (51%) of all STEM degrees were held by immigrants. The 2011 census showed that:

Among university graduates aged 25 to 34, immigrant women were twice as likely to have a STEM degree as Canadian-born women (23% versus 13%). As a result, among those aged 25 to 34 with a STEM university degree, 38% of women were immigrants....

Given the high STEM credentials of immigrant women, what explains the present-day statistics showing lack of diversity in STEM workforces—despite a serious labour shortage in these lucrative priority sectors?

In *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market*, published in 2011, researchers Sheila Block and Grace-Edward Galabuzi explain that new immigrants and first- and second-generation racialized Canadians, encounter a "persistent colour code" and "continue to face different labour market experiences, which include higher levels of unemployment and lower employment earnings." These statistics hold up across the board in all skilled labour categories.

What this tells us is that while we are panicking about the so-called skills gap (e.g., a need to fill an estimated 182,000 jobs in information and communications technology alone

by 2019), we are squandering a highly trained and ready-to-work labour pool by not focusing on integrating immigrant women equitably in the job markets to which they belong.

While barriers are faced by all immigrants, skilled and university educated migrant women confront a specific set of hurdles that keep them unemployed or underemployed, and underpaid. The following factors are particularly frustrating for highly skilled migrant women, compounding the challenges they face.

1. Lack of child care

In the 2016 CCPA report *A Growing Concern*, researchers found that in almost all large urban centres outside of Quebec, child care and early education costs for parents are prohibitive, and subsidies vary considerably (and often unfavourably) for low-income families.

For example, according to the report, "a middle-income family in Toronto with an infant and a toddler would pay \$36,000 a year for regulated child care—more than the cost of university tuition." Furthermore, "wait lists are a common feature of centre-based care, with almost all the cities surveyed reporting that at least 70% of centres maintain a wait list and charge a wait list fee."

Now imagine being a young family that's new to Canada, with little to no family or personal network to fall back on to care for young children, tasked with navigating complex and often convoluted systems to look for work, all the while relying on your quickly disappearing savings for living expenses.

The absence of a non-subsidy-based, comprehensive national child care and early education program in Canada is a hurdle that is particularly onerous for migrant women. It leaves highly

skilled, STEM-experienced talent with no choice but to resort to the culturally “encouraged” role of primary caregiver.

These women lack the time, support or mental bandwidth to try and find work in their fields of interest and expertise. And the probability that they will return to the workforce after caring for children at home decreases with each passing year they are not able to explain the “gap” between their last job and their current ambitions.

2. Fragmented credential landscape

Skilled immigrants are required to get their education, work experience and professional credentials assessed if they received them outside of Canada. To get an idea of how many immigrants need to go through the process of accreditation, consider this data from a 2010 article by René Houle and Lahouaria Yssaad:

Almost nine out of 10 newcomers with credentials above a high school diploma had a university degree at the time of landing in Canada. Among these, 82% held degrees in fields of study ranging from engineering to agriculture, biology, physics, mathematics and health sciences, as well as the humanities and social sciences. Two-thirds held professional jobs before immigrating to Canada; in management and business administration, natural sciences, health and education.

The process of accreditation is not standardized for most fields, resulting in a frustrating, exhausting, costly, unreliable and counter-productive landscape to manoeuvre for most immigrants, especially those belonging to racialized and visible-minority groups, compared to their non-visible-minority counterparts (42% versus 52%). Here is Houle and Yssaad again:

New immigrants living in Alberta and British Columbia and the territories had a lower probability (24% and 23% respectively) of credential recognition than their counterparts in Ontario (32%). Newcomers residing in the Atlantic region appear to have had the best odds of credential recognition (59%). Although their numbers were small, immigrants living in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2006, for example, were the most likely (60%) to be working in occupations that matched their field of study, only three percentage points behind the Canadian-born in the province.

With respect to foreign work experience, newcomers living in Ontario had the highest probability of experience recognition within four years after landing (47%), while their counterparts residing in Quebec had the lowest (32%).

Migrant women face a specific challenge embedded in this foreboding and fragmented “system,” in that “a smaller proportion of women have their work experience recognized by an employer, a work-related organization or an educational institution (48% versus 56% for men)” within four years of landing in Canada.

Even successfully wrangling results from this fragmented system of accreditation does little to address the catch-22 that most immigrants face while looking for work in Canada. Employers deny immigrants work because of a lack of Canadian work experience, pushing them into a

self-fulfilling vicious cycle that often masks an insidious power dynamic that keeps racialized and visible minorities marginalized, and therefore forced to work in substandard conditions.

3. Pay inequity

The gender pay gap in STEM sectors in 2016 (7.5%) was half what it was two decades earlier. But precarious employment in STEM sectors is on the rise.

Immigrants in general, but particularly racialized immigrant women, who are the most vulnerable group when it comes to job discrimination (as confirmed by Galabuzi and Block), often end up settling for “contract, temporary work arrangements with low wages, limited job security, and no benefits.” They are also “disproportionately represented in sectors of the economy where these forms of work are a major feature,” meaning there is clear economic incentive for businesses to keeping them marginalized.

Women’s lower earning power doesn’t just mean there is a reduced incentive for them to stay and contribute to STEM sectors, it also means they are at a high risk of falling into poverty if they have children and then become separated, divorced or widowed. As documented by the Canadian Women’s Foundation, “They are less able to save for their retirement and more likely to be poor in their senior years; in fact, women 65 or over are more likely than their male counterparts to live on a low income.”

The mythos of talented, hardworking and ambitious people from around the world choosing to migrate to Canada to build their version of the Canadian dream, and a better future for themselves and their families, is deeply entrenched and seldom critically examined today. This narrative prevents us from talking about how difficult it can be for newcomers, especially migrant women, when they arrive to find their choice is between being shut out of the STEM labour force or settling for work conditions that create highly unfavourable outcomes compared to their Canadian-born counterparts.

For visible-minority migrant women, the implications of Canada assigning them a different socioeconomic status are far-reaching and multi-pronged. Already vulnerable from the underutilization of their in-demand skills and high levels of pay inequity, they are underserved by a lack of investment in affording child care, housing, additional training and career development resources, among other social safety nets. All of these factors compound into an experience known as the *racialization of poverty*. They raise questions about the dissonance between the role immigration plays to boost economic growth—by populating Canada with highly skilled individuals—and what we are willing to do to make that a reality.

For a nation trying to steer the national GDP away from its dependence on natural resources and toward the innovations of the future, we cannot afford not to be doing more to integrate our highly talented, highly educated migrant women into STEM sectors, and to keep our word when it comes to who really gets to make their Canadian dream a reality. **M**

WORK LIFE

LYNNE FERNANDEZ

Riding the rickety Amazon bandwagon

ONLINE SHOPPING BEHEMOTH Amazon is looking for the best location for its second headquarters and cities across North America are scrambling to assemble their bids. The lure of a capital investment of US\$5 billion (\$6.24 billion) and jobs for 50,000 high-skilled workers is too good to pass up.

It might also be too good to be true.

We know how Amazon's corporate culture affects its workers. I wrote recently in *Work Life* about Amazon's perfected "digital Taylorism," which effectively dehumanizes the workplace, pushing workers harder than ever. A closer look at how Amazon conducts business in its warehouses gives us more details about what kind of a corporation it is.

In 2013, Carole Cadwalladr spent a week as a seasonal worker at an Amazon warehouse in Wales then described her experience in a nightmarish report for *The Guardian* newspaper (U.K.). Cadwalladr worked 10.5-hour days sorting through a vast sea of consumer items—everything from giant plastic sex toys to dog onesies and the always popular fake twig (who knew?)—to meet the insatiable needs of customers clicking through more than 100 million items on the Amazon U.K. website.

So vast is the company warehouse that employees walk up to 24 kilometres in a shift. If a worker is one minute late, she is given 0.5 points; if she takes a sick day, that's a full point. Once workers accumulate three points they are "released."

Cadwalladr was hired through a temp agency and advised that she could work herself into a permanent position. But she found permanence at an Amazon warehouse to be a fleeting promise. One estimate puts the seasonal/permanent employee ratio at 6.5 to 1. Predictably, seasonal workers (hired for the Christmas season) have no benefits and earn low wages.

Amazon places its warehouses (called "fulfillment centres") in high-unemployment areas where workers are desperate for a job, any job. Equally desperate local governments eagerly throw subsidies to land deals with Amazon. The Welsh government, for example, paid 8.8 million British pounds (\$14.6 million) to secure the warehouse Cadwalladr worked in.

Those vying for the company's new headquarters, in Canada as in the U.S., will point out that I digress: this is not

just a warehouse but a source of 50,000 new professional, highly paid jobs. That's a hefty bounty indeed. In return, Amazon wants an attractive, livable city with good public transit and a highly skilled, healthy workforce (i.e., a city with a strong public education and health care system), attractive, functional public infrastructure, affordable housing and office space, lots of trendy restaurants and a vibrant cultural scene.

In other words, Amazon wants to move into a community where the government has invested significant resources to improve people's lives. But it has no intention of helping pay for such improvements.

Like most tech companies of its size, an important part of Amazon's business model is avoiding taxes. As documented in a 2016 *Newsweek* article by Simon Marks, the company drives hard deals wherever it locates, demanding large subsidies and tax breaks. Amazon chose to put its global headquarters in Luxemburg to avoid paying taxes in the U.S.

If the lure of 50,000 high-paying jobs is still too good to resist, consider the warning from Tyler Chamberlin at the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Management. He told CBC News he doubts that Amazon will be able to establish a second headquarters with the same stature as the one in Seattle, and fears that the jobs will not pay such high wages. Chamberlin notes that in Canada the sort of subsidies Amazon will be demanding are normally granted when companies bring good unionized jobs to town, but Amazon is decidedly anti-union.

Furthermore, Amazon's talent for avoiding taxes while demanding top quality public services undermines our ability to actually maintain those services. It's a lesson several European countries have learnt the hard way. Spain, Italy, Germany and France are appealing to the EU for a means to tax tech companies like Google, Apple and Amazon. They have found that in the final analysis, these companies take more than they give.

In early October, the European Commission slapped Luxemburg on the wrist for offering Amazon illegal tax incentives and ordered the company to pay the government 250 million euros (about \$367 million) in back taxes. The commission also announced it will pursue Apple in the courts to make sure it pays back the 13 billion euros it owes Ireland in unpaid taxes.

Meanwhile in Canada, cities are jumping on the Amazon bandwagon. Unless the company changes its business model and corporate culture, we are all headed down a perilous road. In terms of employment, all Amazon has to offer is a dog-eat-dog, two-tier structure, with some professional and many precarious jobs, while it free-rides on our public goods.

The question Canada's mayors and councillors should be asking isn't "What can we do to entice Amazon to our city?" but "Is this the kind of employer we want here in the first place?" **M**

LYNNE FERNANDEZ IS THE ERROL BLACK CHAIR IN LABOUR ISSUES WITH THE CCPA-MANITOBA. YOU CAN REACH HER AT LYNNE@POLICYALTERNATIVES.CA AND FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER @LYNNEFERNANDEZ.

TRISH HENNESSY

\$15/hour: an antidote for low-wage jobs in Canada

RESULTS FROM THE long-awaited return of Canada's long-form census are showing us just how intractable income inequality can be in the absence of a dedicated public policy strategy to tackle the problem. In 2015, for example, Toronto's one-percenters made on average 66% more money than the city's poorest 10%. In Calgary, those at the top earned 62% more than those at the bottom.

The income gap remains wide throughout the country. In Ontario, where I live, income inequality has become stubbornly entrenched, aided by a worrying trend: since 2000, the labour market income of the bottom half of families has been dropping while the incomes of the upper half are increasing. That trend has been fuelled by a decline in Ontario's manufacturing sector and the rise of low-wage, precarious jobs.

High levels of labour market inequality do no one any favours. Inequality feeds the anxiety you keep hearing about Canada's middle and working classes: the fear that we're losing ground; the concern that our children's and grandchildren's generations will not do better than this one. That fear can diminish faith in institutions, in politicians, and in each other.

In the blink of an eye, fear can replace a democracy with a plutocracy—government by and for the wealthy. All we need to do is look south of the border to see how a labour market powered by so-called right-to-work laws and weak labour standards feeds extreme income inequality, polarization and economic anxiety, with ugly social and political results.

The rise of the "alt right," neo-nazism and overt racism in Donald Trump's America should cause concern for us here in Canada, because we are not

immune. The kinds of violence and divisiveness that we are observing on our news feeds didn't erupt overnight. It is the inevitable result of a society that tolerates and ignores extreme levels of income inequality, racism and other systemic—and related—barriers to equality of opportunity (let alone outcome).

So we greet with cheers any movement from governments to start closing the income gap. Three provinces—Alberta, Ontario, and B.C.—are doing exactly that by pursuing a \$15 minimum wage strategy.

Alberta led the way with a commitment to get to a \$15 minimum wage by October 2018 (in October 2017 it went up to \$13.60). Ontario followed suit, promising to raise the minimum wage to \$14 on January 1, 2018 and to \$15 on January 1, 2019. In its election campaign, the B.C. NDP promised to get to a \$15 minimum wage by 2021. Now in government, it's unclear how fast the NDP will move in that direction.

Raising the floor on the minimum wage is an important approach to reducing income inequality because it will make concrete progress in reducing labour market inequality. But as you'd expect with any minimum wage increase, large or small, there is a vocal business lobby trying to suppress any improvements to low-wage workers' bottom line.

We are notoriously living in the age of "alt facts," and in Ontario we have been barraged with misinformation by the business lobby claiming the sky will fall if the minimum wage goes up. Over at RankandFile.ca, David Bush did a brilliant job documenting such nakedly self-interested fear mongering dating all the way back to 1922. Here is the *Globe and Mail* that June:

The Minimum Wage Board, at a public hearing last night granted to employers and employees of the textile industry in Ontario, heard the protest against, its scale of a Tavistock manufacturer, who claimed that the girls in his factory could not be induced to work harder for better wages as they were content \$6 or \$7 a week with a lighter task.

Business lobby arguments against minimum wage hikes in the following decades were no less ridiculous, as Bush recites in his article.

- ▶ In 1962, the business lobby claimed restaurant prices would have to increase.
- ▶ In 1963, the business lobby claimed increases were "too much, too soon."
- ▶ In 1976, they cried, "We're on the road to pricing ourselves out the tourism business."
- ▶ In 1980, they said it "discourages employers from offering work to the low-skilled."
- ▶ In 1987, they claimed it could mean fewer jobs for teenagers.
- ▶ In 1992, they said they "fear for small businesses...it will result in job losses."
- ▶ In 2010, they said "restaurant owners could be forced to cut hours and jobs."

Today we hear these same old arguments trotted out in Ontario, where the hike is said to be "too much too fast" and "could lead to job losses." But this time the business lobby is upping the ante, with threats of replacing service and retail jobs with automation, which by "all discernable macroeconomic measures," notes Bush in another piece for RankandFile.ca, "is occurring at the slowest rate since World War Two."

They are also touting flawed research warning of massive job losses. The most

conservative estimate—that 50,000 jobs could vanish—comes from Ontario's Financial Accountability Office. The most outrageous figure—185,000 jobs gone over two years—comes from an Ontario Chamber of Commerce-funded report that accepted all of the worst-case scenarios and, as a result, came up with a jarring and outlandish guesstimate.

Economists Zohra Jamasi, Sheila Block and Michal Rozworski analyzed the Chamber of Commerce numbers and found the exercise to be flawed and premised on outdated economic thinking. It's important to note that even this flawed research is warning of slower job growth; no one is seriously saying thousands of workers will get pink slips next year.

Lost in the fear mongering is the fact that a significant number of adult workers in Ontario will have their financial bottom line greatly improved with these scheduled minimum wage increases. If you're working full time, all year in Ontario and earning minimum wage today, you are among the working poor. At a minimum, the most basic reward for working should be that it lifts you out of poverty. A \$15 minimum wage does that.

This summer, 53 Canadian economists signed a letter supporting the Ontario government's move to bring the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. They estimate that a \$15 minimum wage in 2019 would only be \$1 more than the 1977 minimum wage when adjusted for inflation. The economists also note that minimum wage increases have not kept up with improvements in worker productivity.

As CCPA Senior Economist Sheila Block has written, the share of Ontario workers who are in minimum wage jobs more than doubled between 2003 and 2013. One in four workers make less than \$15 an hour in Ontario today. That's a significant proportion of workers who would get a raise, and 82% of them are working adults over the age of 20.

It all comes down to this: a \$15 minimum wage would boost spending power for low-income workers, which is good for the economy. The 53 Canadian economists write: "For years, we have heard that raising the minimum wage will kill jobs, raise prices and cause businesses to flee Ontario. This is fear mongering that is out of line with the latest economic research."

CCPA Research Associate Jordan Brennan, an economist with Unifor, writes:

Of the hundreds of studies that have been conducted on the employment effects of a minimum wage increase, the majority find no evidence of significant job losses. Even when the studies zero in on those segments of the labour market where low-wage workers are overrepresented—such as retail, hospitality and young workers—there is no evidence of significant job losses over long spans of time in North America or Europe.

Brennan's own research with economist Jim Stanford examined minimum wage increases in 10 provinces over 30 years. Their conclusion: there is no consistent connection between a higher minimum wage floor and employment levels in Canada. "Our results confirm that stimulating more purchasing power in the economy is the most important way to support job creation," says Stanford. "The stagnation of overall wage levels has contributed to the weak demand conditions holding back Canada's economy,



and increasing the minimum wage would, in fact, help to address that weakness."

Economists Armine Yalnizyan and Kaylie Tiessen wrote in their 2013 report:

A minimum wage that is above the poverty line for a full-time full-year worker is good for business and the economy in three important ways: (1) businesses and workers would have a predictable basis on which to plan for the future; (2) businesses would likely achieve a stronger worker retention rate, lowering training and recruitment costs; (3) a decent minimum wage would increase the purchasing power of low- and middle-income households who typically spend their money locally. This would contribute to increased consumer demand and local economic growth. That's good for workers and it's good for business.

As economists Lars Osberg, Craig Riddell, Michal Rozworski and Jim Stanford have written, "Ontario's move is ambitious but hardly unprecedented." Next year, Alberta will have a \$15 minimum wage. Vancouver has committed to pay its workers a minimum of \$20 an hour—a living wage in that city. And the City of Cambridge, Ontario pays its workers the local living wage as its minimum wage floor, which is currently \$15.42 an hour.

For all the bluster you'll hear from the well-funded business lobby, there's a new employer group called The Better Way Alliance. Pay attention to them, because they're paying a living wage and are championing the \$15 minimum wage. These employers say they're saving money on sick days, reducing staff turnover, seeing greater employee engagement, and they appreciate the role they are playing in spurring local economic growth by paying their own workers a higher rate of pay.

Don't fall for the fear mongering. Almost half of minimum wage workers in Ontario have jobs in big companies (employing more than 500 people). Those workers contribute to the companies' success and profits. They deserve a raise. **M**



The good news page

Compiled by
Elaine Hughes

Up on the roof

No longer the domain of *The Drifters*, Santa's reindeer or storks, the world's rooftops are being turned into gardens, hives, chicken coops, soccer pitches, power generators and water filters thanks to crafty architects and construction firms. The green-roofed Albion Library in Toronto's diverse Rexdale neighbourhood feels like an extension of your living room, incorporating storm water management and energy-saving technologies. Since 2011, the Canker Centre, a convention space in Ljubljana, has hosted bees on its roof whose honey recently won an award for quality. There are some 150 beehives in the Slovenian capital (pop. 300,000), most of them in gardens and on roofs and terraces. In Paris, postal workers are growing vegetables and breeding chickens on the roof of a 900-square-foot post office in the city, one of 32 sites in the first wave of a rooftop farming project that will harvest 425 tonnes of fruits and vegetables, 24 tonnes of mushrooms, 30,000 flowers, 8,000 litres of beer and 95 kilograms

of honey. In Neath, Wales, a new 16-unit housing development will generate, store and release its own energy, with immediate savings of £600 (\$992) per year on residential energy bills. / *Curbed* / *Inhabitat* / *Reuters* / *Fast Company*

Solar reigns

Renewable energy now generates enough power to run 70% of Australian homes, though the country still leans heavily on the export and burning of carbon-emitting coal and gas. Victoria will become the first Australian state to enshrine in law both its renewable energy targets and its commitment to invest in renewable energy. The government expects its scheme will drive a 16% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2034. The 2017 winner of the Ashden Award for clean energy for women and girls, Empower Generation, has enabled 23 women in Nepal to overcome family and cultural resistance to set up clean energy businesses selling solar panels, lights, clean cooking stoves and water filters. Here in Canada, a promise of land and rebates under Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart Solar Energy Program seems to be sufficient incentive for farmers to go renewable. Otterburne-area farmer Hans Gorter put a \$500,000, 175-kilowatt solar system on his barn and received \$175,000 back from the utility, reducing his overall cost significantly. / *Guardian* (U.K.) / *Truthdig* / *Winnipeg Free Press*

Second chances

A rare (for Ottawa) Bullock's oriole, spotted stranded, frostbitten and dehydrated in the Canadian capital two years ago, has finally flown back home—part of the way on a passenger jet. Air Canada gave the bird a free ride to B.C., the northermost point in the oriole's normal range, and she has since flown on her own to her native wintering grounds in the southern U.S.—northern Mexico. California condors have returned to the state's skies after nearly going extinct from lead poisoning (the bird was eating the corpses of animals killed with lead bullets). From 22 condors captured in 1987, there are now 450, including 270 in the wild. Though the giant sea turtle's own habitat is threatened by climate change and pollution, better fishing practices and the spread of protected beaches are slowly bringing their numbers back up. / *Guardian* (U.K.) / *Associated Press* / *ABC*

High and low tech

China's environmental protection ministry launched 8,000 water clean-up projects worth \$100 billion in first half of 2017. Included were plans to make 246,000 square miles of land off-limits to animal husbandry, shutting 213,000 livestock and poultry farms, building 809 new household sewage treatment facilities, and the appointment of 200,000 "river chiefs" to ensure local officials are more accountable when improving water quality and curbing

pollution. The Dutch continue to prove that if you build it, they will pedal. Over the last 10 years, more than a quarter of all trips from Utrecht to elsewhere in the Netherlands were taken by bicycle. When city residents do take their bikes, they ride on paths paid for with \$600 million in annual funding from the federal government. "Our revenue is healthy people, less traffic and beautiful living," says Frans Jan van Rossem, Utrecht's head of bicycle programming. Regina's Dave Burdeniuk, 52, can see his wife again after gradually losing his vision to retinitis pigmentosa, which he was diagnosed with at 13, thanks to a pair of eSight goggles incorporating built-in cameras and two OLED screens. "[W]hen you get ordinary things back like that, they really are extraordinary. It's priceless," he said. / *Reuters* / *New York Times* / *CBC*



TIM MCSORLEY

It's better than C-51, but that isn't saying much

Five reasons civil liberties advocates are worried about the Liberal government's security policy redo

THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT'S centerpiece national security legislation, a response to the widely unpopular and much-criticized C-51 anti-terrorism bill introduced by the Harper Conservatives, is raising its own serious concerns from human rights and civil liberties advocates.

On September 19, 41 organizations, including the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG), the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the *Ligue des droits et libertés*, published an open letter expressing grave concerns with Bill C-59, the National Security Act, 2017.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale introduced the legislation in June, stating, "Governments have no

greater responsibilities than keeping their citizens safe and safeguarding their rights and freedoms. These are the fundamental obligations that underpin the new national security legislation."

While the planned legislation is "a substantial undertaking that aspires toward balanced policy-making," said the civil liberties groups in their letter to Goodale, Justice Minister Jody

An April 2015 demonstration against Bill C-51, the Harper government's highly controversial anti-terror legislation.

(CHRIS WATTIE/REUTERS)

Wilson-Raybould and Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen, "it is not the fundamental change needed to undo C-51's legacy, nor to fully realize and respect that human rights must sit at the core of our national security framework."

The feeling was echoed a few days later, on September 26, when three experts in the field—Micheal Vonn of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Paul Champ of Champ and Associates, and Tamir Israel of the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic—spoke at an ICLMG-organized event in Ottawa on how Bill C-59 will impact human rights. "The tinkering is proving as unsatisfactory as we feared it would," said Vonn.

Over 150 pages, the bill modifies several existing laws and creates an entirely new act governing the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), Canada's secretive surveillance and data collection agency. It would be difficult to cover all the intricacies and nuances of C-59, but we (at ICLMG) thought five in particular would be of special concern to *Monitor* readers.

Information sharing

Among the major problems with the omnibus Bill C-51 were its provisions, in the new Security of Canada Information Sharing Act (SCISA), allowing government departments to more easily share personal information with nearly 20 departments, from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to Health Canada, if they believe a person's actions "undermine" national security.

As Vonn pointed out at the panel discussion in Ottawa, this new law broadened the scope of what was considered a threat to national security to include actions that would impact Canada's economy, its financial system and its critical infrastructure. Indigenous activists and environmental groups rightly worried this definition would capture protests against pipelines, highway occupations or other minor disruptions.

The Liberals have somewhat scaled back this part of C-51 in a renamed Security of Canada Information Disclosure Act, but the reforms do not go far enough. The reworded legislation would still disproportionately affect Muslim and Arab communities, Indigenous land and water protectors, and political and environmental activists.

The ICLMG questions the government's inclusion of new review and oversight bodies in the same bill that would grant troubling new powers to security agencies.

Given that the government, under Harper or Trudeau, has never convincingly explained why these information-sharing provisions are necessary, the most logical solution would be to take them off the books entirely.

Surveillance

Over the past several years, both CSIS and CSE have been caught overstepping legal boundaries in their surveillance of Canadians. This includes a Federal Court ruling in November 2016 that said CSIS had violated the law for over a decade by holding on to private information on Canadians that had nothing to do with the service's investigations.

It was a shocking revelation that made national headlines, and there were expectations that this kind of collection and retention of personal information would be banned in the Liberal security reforms. Instead, Bill C-59 legitimizes this troubling conduct by Canada's spy agencies, making it legal if regulated by new authorizations.

CSE focuses on sweeping up foreign digital communications, and in fact is barred from collecting data in Canada or belonging to Canadians. The agency has been widely criticized, however, for ignoring this rule and acting on a "collect first, ask questions later" basis. Though CSE says it eventually eliminates this information and does not analyze it, there have been troubling incidents of the agency sharing private data on Canadians with foreign governments.

Even within CSE's strict mandate, from a human rights perspective we should be concerned with the level of mass surveillance the agency performs on foreign individuals. Up until now, CSE has been governed by the National Defence Act, meaning the defence minister both sets the agency's priorities and monitors its activities—a case of "the fox guarding the henhouse," Tamir Israel told the Ottawa event in September.

Bill C-59 for the first time creates a CSE Act, which more clearly defines the agency's role, activities and how its work is authorized. While this is good for transparency's sake, much like the new CSIS rules it also serves to legalize what before was seen as highly questionable behaviour: information-gathering on Canadians; widespread, foreign-focused mass surveillance (of the kind the U.S. National Security Agency is criticized for); and the collection and retention of publicly available information.

To help see why this last task could be an issue, Israel asked the Ottawa audience to picture CSE purchasing and analyzing vast amounts of information sold by U.S.-based data-brokers who scrape Facebook, Amazon and other social media and commercial sites for information to sell banks, governments and (why not?) spies.

The Liberal security bill takes the important step of creating an intelligence commissioner, a position that will be held by a retired judge who will have to sign off on important aspects of both CSE and CSIS surveillance operations, but these authorizations will be granted in secret, with minimal transparency (more on this below). Finally, it's important to note that Bill C-59 also grants CSE new

cyberwarfare and hacking capabilities not described here, but which you can read about on the iclmg.ca website.

Spy agency disruption powers

The tasks of spies and law enforcement officials are different for a reason. Spying is by nature secret: as soon as a target realizes they are being watched, they will change their behaviour. The pursuit of criminal activity, on the other hand, should (in theory) take place in the open, so that the tactics and evidence used by police to make their case against someone can be challenged in open court.

This division of responsibilities was enshrined in Canada in the early 1980s when the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Certain Activities of the RCMP, also known as the McDonald Commission, concluded that national security responsibilities should be removed from law enforcement agencies and assigned to a civilian agency. The commission investigated what came to be known as the RCMPs “dirty tricks,” which included illegal activities such as arson, break-ins and theft.

Most infamously, RCMP agents burned down a barn where the *Front de libération du Québec* was rumoured to be meeting with the Black Panther Party. The revelations made clear that police agencies, with the mandate to stop crime, should not have the ability to operate in secret. As a result of the inquiry, the government created CSIS in 1984, though the RCMP would be granted important national security roles in the post-9/11 period.

Bill C-51 further blurred the boundaries between spying and policing by granting CSIS new “disruption powers,” for example to interfere with someone’s movement, tamper with equipment or share false information. Some of these actions would need to be approved by a judge, but those warrants would be issued in secret and could never be challenged by the targeted person in court.

In his talk at the Ottawa event in September, Israel suggested that CSIS would probably not be cleared to actually burn down a barn, but it is highly likely they could engage in “digital barn burning.” In such a



situation, agents would be granted authorization to disrupt online means of communications, such as a blog or online discussion forum, either temporarily or permanently, essentially shutting down an online “meeting place,” burning down the digital barn, all without the public or the targets knowing what happened.

Bill C-59 would bring in some new restrictions on disruption powers. Whereas current legislation only sets out three specific limitations (death or bodily harm, aggravated sexual assault and the perversion of justice), the Liberal proposal contains an enumerated list of disruption options for CSIS. However, the only adequate solution is to stick with the recommendations of the McDonald Commission, by leaving crime fighting, including disruption, to law enforcement, and outlawing it for spy agencies.

The no-fly list

Canada’s so-called no-fly list has long been a concern of Canadian civil liberties defenders. The list is maintained in secret; the last time a government official stated how many names were on it was 2007 (“up to” 2,000); it is impossible to know if you are on the list unless you are stopped from flying or the government agrees to disclose the information; and once you find out you are on the list, you may still never be told why you are there or what information is being used against you. For all those reasons it’s also very difficult to get off the list once you are on it.

These problems with the no-fly list have come to the fore recently with revelations of the number of kids it ensnares—minors whose names are the same or similar to adults on the list and who therefore experience

constant delays at the airport. The families of these kids, with growing support even from Liberal MPs, have advocated for a redress system to ensure that false positives, especially among minors, can be flagged and issued a redress number to avoid future problems.

This small reform would not resolve the underlying problems with the no-fly list, but it would help. Bill C-59 moves in that direction by allowing parents to find out whether their child's name matches one on the list. However, while there are some other minor changes in process, it does little to provide redress for adults who may be mistakenly refused access to a flight. It also does nothing to ensure that there is an open and transparent means for an individual to challenge their inclusion on the list (let alone find out if they are on the list before they go to board a plane).

Review and oversight

Bill C-59 creates important new bodies to review and control national security activities: the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA) and, as mentioned already, an intelligence commissioner (IC). While both are improvements to the system, there are concerns regarding how they will

operate, as well as their likely overall impact.

The new intelligence commissioner will replace the CSE commissioner, who reviews only the activities of that agency, and must be a retired judge. Among the new commissioner's tasks would be to grant approval of various CSIS and CSE surveillance and intelligence gathering activities within 30 days of receiving a request from either agency. This is an improvement, since currently surveillance activities are only reviewed after the fact.

However, the commissioner position is part time, and surveillance and disruption approvals would be granted in secret, which will always create concerns. In the U.S., similar secret judicial authorizations of foreign surveillance have resulted in a more-or-less "rubber stamp" process where nearly all warrants are approved. This issue only came to light because of Edward Snowden's whistleblowing. What will prevent a similar experience in Canada?

The NSIRA is a much larger organization tasked with reviewing all of Canada's national security agencies and activities. It will operate similarly to the current Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), but with a mandate to review all security activities, not just those carried out by CSIS.

The NSIRA would be able to receive complaints about CSIS, the RCMP and CSE, and could order any other government department or body to carry out a study and report back on a particular national security issue. But as Champ warned during his presentation in Ottawa in September, the SIRC process is highly problematic, and C-59 will simply transpose some of its flaws onto the larger NSIRA.

Champ described situations he has seen as counsel for complainants to SIRC. Privacy and secrecy rules mean the complainants might not be allowed in the room while CSIS presents counter-arguments, for example. The complainant and their counsel may be stopped by the committee from sharing their arguments with the public, and SIRC has the option to divulge (or not) its decisions. Likewise, CSIS is not required to publicly account for how a SIRC ruling has been accommodated, or to share that information with complainants.

All this amounts to a review system with such limited accountability and transparency that Champ questions its value, and suggested to the audience that if someone has a real concern with CSIS they would be better to turn to the courts than to go through the SIRC process.

The ICLMG also questions the government's inclusion of new review and oversight bodies in the same bill that would grant troubling new powers to security agencies. The adoption of stronger safeguards should not be contingent on accepting these new national security powers, nor do they fully make up for the dangerous impact of the latter on human rights.

Throughout the 2015 election, since forming government, and upon announcing Bill C-59, the Liberals have emphasized that the protection of human rights and civil liberties will balance out their national security policies. Unfortunately, it's not enough to say the legislation is better at doing that than C-51. The benchmark must be to what degree do the laws respect and even strengthen Canadians' civil liberties. Right now, C-59 is slightly better than what we had, which isn't good enough. **M**

Over the past several years, both CSIS and CSE have been caught overstepping legal boundaries in their surveillance of Canadians.



KYLE LIAO AND JONAH BUTOVSKY

ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE RASO

FOMO and the financialized imagination

Tax-free savings accounts may be messing with our heads and our retirement security

LAST SPRING, dramatic headlines announced that financial speculators and day traders were using their tax-free savings accounts (TFSAs) to make spectacular profits, in the millions of (non-taxable) dollars, over a very short period of time. The financial press was outraged by this apparent manipulation of an otherwise wholesome and prudent savings tool by already very wealthy people.

We take a different view of the TFSA program. Even when used the way the federal government intended, the TFSA is regressive in its outcomes and pernicious in the way it conditions our views on money and finance. It is neoliberal policy *par excellence*. And it ties us all, financially and psychically, to a system in deep crisis, putting the retirement security of millions of Canadians at risk.

Origins and outcomes

The TFSA was the idea of two economists from the right-wing C.D. Howe Institute, Jonathon Kesselman and Finn Poshmann, who claimed that paying tax on profits made from investments originating from earned income was a form of “double taxation.” The pair felt Canada should follow the U.K. example, where tax-free individual savings accounts (ISAs) have been available for some time.

The Conservative government of Stephen Harper introduced the TFSA in 2008 as an additional tax incentive-based retirement savings program akin to a RRSP, but with some important differences. Former finance minister Jim Flaherty said the new accounts, in which profits from investments would be sheltered from taxes, would “help families prepare for the long term”

and “ensure Canadians have the right incentives to save for the future.”

Initially, adults could contribute up to \$5,000 a year to a TFSA. The Harper government raised that limit to \$10,000 in 2015, but the Trudeau government has since dropped it back to \$5,500. The result is that a person could have contributed no more than \$52,000 to their TFSA so far. Had they started saving in 2008, they would have accrued between \$8,000 and \$28,000 on that base amount through typical interest and appreciation.

Though TFSA contributions are not tax-deductible in the same way as RRSPs, the earnings you make are never taxed, even when you withdraw from the account. Income from a TFSA is out of reach of the tax man—a perk that is available to all Canadians regardless of income, at least in theory

(more on that later). In addition, and more importantly to low-income earners and seniors, the income earned within a TFSA does not affect an individual's eligibility for income-tested benefits.

The TFSA was not built only or even predominantly for retirement purposes, however. As emphasized on the old Conservative government website advertising the program, "TFSA savings can be used for any purpose, such as to purchase a new car, renovate a house, start a small business or take a family vacation. *Canadians from all income levels and all walks of life can benefit* (emphasis added)."

The site conjured a hypothetical couple, with a supposedly modest income, who intended to draw \$2,000 a year from their TFSA to supplement their retirement income. Given today's interest rates, the couple would need to have about \$100,000 in their TFSA for this scenario to work—hardly an option for the millions of Canadians who cannot afford to save anything, even in a RRSP, let alone to max out their contributions.

The first major report on the TFSA program appeared in Finance Canada's *Tax Expenditures and Evaluations 2012*, which included numbers on participation. The report emphasizes that TFSAs have been widely adopted across the income range, and that 80% of people with an account had incomes less than \$80,000. However, the 11% of Canadians who earn more than \$80,000 a year account for 20% of TFSAs.

There is also a substantial difference between setting up a TFSA and contributing the annual maximum. As CCPA economist David Macdonald noted in 2015:

The fact is that only 13% of seniors are maxing out their TFSAs today, prior to the doubling (the budget says 25% of seniors maxed out contributions in 2013, but many of them then withdrew a portion). So there are actually only a limited number of seniors who would use this. In fact, 57% of seniors have nothing in their TFSA. Only 35% of seniors have RRIF/RRSP savings over \$50,000.

According to the 2012 Finance Canada report, TFSA participation rates steadily rise with total income, increasing from 20% for individual tax filers with less than \$20,000 of annual income to 58% for individual tax filers with more than \$200,000 of annual income in 2011. About 40% of TFSA holders earning less than \$20,000 contributed the maximum allowable amount, compared to about 70% for those earning more than \$200,000.

In viewing their actions through the prism of financial literacy, the individual (entrepreneur) becomes personally and solely responsible for the day-to-day "business" of their lives.

If it seems odd that people earning less than \$20,000 a year could afford to contribute \$5,000 or more to a TFSA, keep in mind that many of these low-earning maximizers are spouses of high-income earners. After a high-income earner maxes their contribution they can top up their spouse's TFSA—a de facto type of income splitting. In 2011, 162,000 Canadians made TFSA contributions greater than their total income.

A 2015 study by the Parliamentary Budget Officer concluded that "the TFSA program is regressive, overall" because benefits "skew to higher income, higher wealth and older households." Likewise, Kessellman, who co-authored the C.D. Howe report advocating the TFSA, recently retracted his support in a report for the Broadbent Institute. Kessellman projected that 40 years from now, the TFSA would lead to \$15.5 billion in lost annual tax revenue.

The financialization of daily life

Even if the TFSA were less regressive in its fiscal outcomes, we believe it would still be a highly problematic program from a broader societal perspective.

The TFSA is another example of the neoliberal drift in the role of the state, from providing universal income security to "incentivizing" individualized investing through tax changes. As we said at the top, the TFSA is a neoliberal public policy *par excellence* in that it encourages the "financialization of daily life"—the title of Randy Martin's 2002 book on the subject.

In essence, the neoliberal state treats citizens as merely self-governing individuals making choices in a free market. Lose your job? It's time for you to retrain, to "better yourself," and take advantage of the ever-changing opportunities of a capitalism that is always creatively destroying and rebuilding itself. Capitalist displacement is never the problem—you are.

The financialized imagination extends this self-starter ethos into the realm of investment planning. The emphasis on individual economic actions—paying off credit card debts on time, saving for retirement, and starting up a TFSA—as a means of securing a life independent of state welfare ignores the material reality that may prevent people from practising financial literacy. It is much easier to seem financially literate when you have a substantial income.

The TFSA is also neoliberal in that it imagines us all as entrepreneurs of the self. In viewing their actions through the prism of financial literacy, the individual (entrepreneur) becomes personally and solely responsible for the day-to-day "business" of their lives. Many of the reality-based personal finance shows on TV (for instance, *Money Moron* and *Til Debt Do Us Part*), which profile the financial mistakes of ordinary families, have an audience more interested in judging financial failures than in learning about personal finance.

The social and economic shift away from a culture of savings toward a culture of investing is promoted as a means of achieving a financially healthy future. For someone to retire comfortably—without a substantial defined-benefit pension—it might be necessary for that person to develop a mastery of financial knowledge (including the stock

market) in order to manage the risks associated with personal investing.

As Robin Shaban noted in a recent issue of the *Monitor* (Alternate Futures, September/October 2017), those of us without pensions have to rely on the advice given by financial institutions that seek to profit from our investments. The state is no longer a central tool for society-wide economic stabilization; now, the individual citizen-investor is encouraged to navigate risk on their own. In this transformation, we strip away one more element of shared citizenship—an ideal that is already so marked by deep racial, gender and class divisions.

The financialized individual is expected to “grow” their retirement funds by trading in equity and bond markets. This expectation has led to the explosive growth of the finance-based service industries. Where once risk was seen as something to be avoided, today we’re asked to master risk in order to maximize monetary gain.

Needless to say, in any given timeframe, surplus money invested in financial markets may result in less money (or a loss) than it would have earned in a (boring) low-interest savings account. Conversely, those taking the safer course may feel left out if they miss a golden opportunity to profit from a rising stock market. Of course, this calculation can only really be made in retrospect, but banks rely on this financial FOMO to sell personal investing accounts to retail customers.

The “financialized imagination” concept is further developed by Max Haiven in his 2014 book *Cultures of Financialization*. Haiven describes it as the product of the proliferation of neoliberal capitalism, with its emphasis on active participation in financial markets as a means of managing risk in a post-Keynesian risk society. The financialized imagination encourages us to exercise smartness as a form of cultural capital associated with successful participation and understanding of financial markets and opportunities.

The ability to leverage one’s smartness in order to predict future market conditions and act accordingly offers us a particular form of economic agency. Those who choose not to participate in financial markets and

Those of us on the left who consider the TFSA to be another move toward a regressive tax system disengage from it at our own financial peril.

programs like the TFSA—for political or ethical reasons—are no doubt rare and wary of seeing themselves as in shabby financial fitness. They certainly don’t want to be seen as a sucker, someone who is opting out of the financial benefits of the TFSA but lacks the individual purchasing power to alter the financial system.

And here is the core of the contradiction: those of us on the left who consider the TFSA to be simply another move toward a regressive tax system disengage from it at our own individual financial peril. Participation in the TFSA, however, strengthens our ties to the system and casts our fate increasingly with financial markets. Furthermore, making regular contributions to our TFSA, and ideally meeting the annual maximum, transforms us into responsible, even moral, citizens.

The next crisis

For sociologist Margaret Somers, market fundamentalism is a key trait of neoliberalism that corrodes the notion of citizenship, reducing people to individual profit-seekers. The TFSA clearly contributes to this outcome, but there are a range of policy options that would more effectively, and equitably, encourage savings and financial security.

For example, we could place a cap on interest rates associated with consumer debt (including credit cards), increase the minimum wage or establish a guaranteed annual income, increase the progressiveness of the income tax system or expand welfare state entitlements. All these alternatives tend to be more collective and therefore anathema

for the financialized imagination. All emphasize social security over growth in market-based financial products.

The political response to growing financialization has been muted. Whereas the Liberal government cancelled spousal income splitting and scaled back the TFSA contribution limit, in both cases for their obvious regressive tax implications, it has not dispensed with the latter entirely.

To repeal the TFSA would be to swim against the wave of financialized capitalism, whose force transcends party politics. Financialized capitalism grows in tandem with a dematerialized economy and the mystical notion that money begets more money. In essence, financialization, of which the TFSA is a small piece, is indicative of an economic system in deep crisis.

It’s now been over 10 years since the start of the financial crisis and the Great Recession. The bank failures, the foreclosures and the bailout of General Motors that struck the North American economy have faded deep into the rearview mirror. The stock market losses, which hit investments and retirement funds, have been recovered and then some throughout a sustained bull market.

We should recall, however, that the TSX lost 35% of its value in 2008, dropping to 8,406 in December 2008 from its peak at over 14,000 just months earlier. The market took fully five years to make up these losses. While that timeline might not be a problem for Canadians in their 30s and 40s, seniors in their 70s and 80s may be short of money when the next dip takes place.

As we wait for a seemingly overdue “market correction,” we are faced with the decision of parking our money in safe investments like GICs or high-interest savings accounts, and risking missing out on whatever is left in the bull market. We turn to financial “experts” with shoddy records or products to sell us to maximize our financial outcomes, and once more turn toward individualized responses, rather than collective strategies, to weather the storm.

Meanwhile, in 2017 alone, the TFSA program will result in almost \$2 billion in lost tax revenue that could be used to provide income security and basic services to those that need them most. **M**

PAULA MALLEA

Beyond Incarceration

CANADIAN PRISONS HAVE been in the news a lot lately, something we don't often see. Headlines have focused on the misuse of segregation, but problems with our prisons extend far beyond solitary confinement.

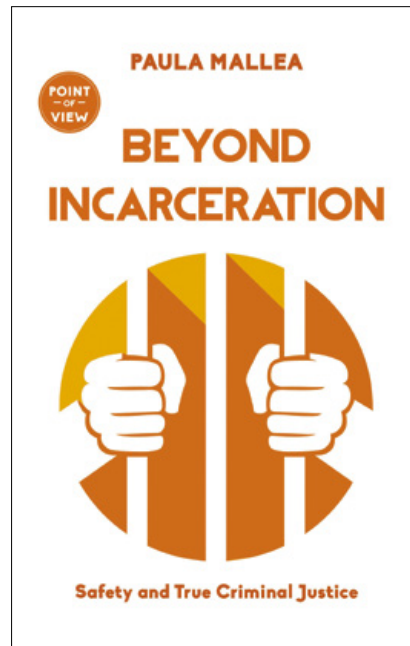
In fact, imprisonment as a way of dealing with crime is wrong-headed, inhumane, counterproductive, discriminatory and ruinously expensive. We need to rethink our entire approach to criminal justice, stop relying upon prisons as our default for all manner of wrongdoing, and design a system that actually works to reduce crime and keep our communities safe and whole.

In Canada people go to prison for everything from murder to sleeping in a park. We have become so reliant upon incarceration that alternatives are rarely considered, even though we know that these can produce better results at a fraction of the cost.

Canada in fact incarcerates almost twice as many people per capita as some European countries that share similar crime rates. These rates of incarceration tend to be inversely proportional to the availability of relevant social programs.

The Criminal Code of Canada sets out objectives for sentencing. These include denunciation, rehabilitation, deterrence, incapacitation, reparations and the acceptance of responsibility by the wrongdoer. All of these can be better achieved outside rather than inside prisons. The Code recognizes this when it says judges should apply all available sanctions other than imprisonment where appropriate.

Not only is our system largely ineffective and extremely expensive, it is also highly discriminatory. A large



number of Canadian prisoners are mentally ill, drug dependent, elderly or the “wrong” skin colour or gender. Housing people in cages with cruel living conditions can only make things worse for these and other offenders.

This is about public safety as much as human rights and the rule of law. Virtually all prisoners will be released to live in a neighbourhood near you. It would be far better to provide programming and a social safety net to prevent wrongdoing in the first place and/or to rehabilitate those already caught up in the system. Victims largely agree.

Prisons are simply what we know, so we continue to perpetuate a system that we seldom think about, even though it represents so much that is fundamentally wrong.

There will never be a regime in which nobody at all is incarcerated. However,

even the dangerous few who need to be separated from society should be treated in a way that is humane and decent.

Our preoccupation with the idea of punishment for its own sake militates against our ability to see the serious harm we are doing. Our system hurts the offender, the victim, their communities and their families. Pervasive ignorance and indifference to the prison system allow this to continue unchecked.

The way we treat prisoners in the 21st century has brought Canada into disrepute internationally. We need to rehabilitate ourselves in the eyes of the world and of our own compassionate and caring citizens.

We need to stop thinking in terms of punishing offenders to the exclusion of all other approaches. This requires a serious rethinking of our criminal justice system with an eye to reducing incarceration to near zero. Other countries are already working toward this end. We can do no less. **M**

PAULA MALLEA'S LATEST BOOK, *BEYOND INCARCERATION: SAFETY AND TRUE CRIMINAL JUSTICE*, WAS RELEASED ON NOVEMBER 4 BY DUNDURN PRESS.

Very little magic in Sollée's conjuring

WITCHES, SLUTS, FEMINISTS: CONJURING THE SEX POSITIVE

KRISTEN SOLLÉE

ThreeL Media, 2017, \$24.50

“THE WITCH IS having a moment,” begins Kristen Sollée’s book *Witches, Sluts, Feminists: Conjuring the Sex Positive*. “Otherworldly women” are increasingly the subjects of film, television, visual art and literature in ways that, according to Sollée, provide interesting insights into the “sex-positive history of the witch.” Her book begins with a promising attempt to provide a feminist, interdisciplinary and intersectional account of contemporary and historical manifestations of witches and sluts that will appeal to a wide audience, including “feminist scholars, historians, lawyers, activists and occultists.” But this particular reader was left wanting.

I have two primary, interrelated critiques of the text. First, although the book is presented as a primer, there are several intellectual presuppositions that the reader will have to unpack in order to read the text charitably; foundational knowledge that require more than a “primer-level” understanding of feminism and intersectionality. Second, the book approaches a very rich terrain indeed (including chapters on reproductive justice, the politics of pornography, queerness, and sex work), but instead of highlighting the landscape and narrowing in on a handful of subtopics, the reader is presented with an onslaught of connected but under-theorized ideas that inevitably do a disservice to the work.

Sollée draws an intriguing connection between witch and slut; she

suggests that there is a link to be made between the historical subjugation of women-as-witches and the contemporary subjugation of women-as-sluts. Further, she asserts that this connection ought to be examined for us to have a richer understanding of the complicated politics of sex positivity. For example, Sollée notes that for centuries the word “witch” was used to punish women and police sexuality, and that in the contemporary moment “slut” has become *de rigueur* for surveilling and punishing women. I think most women, feminist-identifying or not, are all too familiar with the epithet “slut” and, as Sollée notes, many activists interested in gender justice movements are working to reclaim the language of “slut” (as seen in SlutWalk protests, for example).

The witch is a historical, complicated, but ever present figure: she is “Hecate, the ancient goddess of the crossroads,” “Joan of Arc, the French military hero,” “Malala Yousafzai,” and the “practitioner of granny magic, hoo-doo, and conjure.” According to Sollée, the witch is “everywoman.” To call the witch “everywoman” is a seemingly charming gesture and one that, I think, attempts to further Sollée’s argument that witches are not (necessarily) old crones with warts and pointy hats, but instead embody elements of women’s sexuality, power, resistance, situated knowledge, and activism. This argument also appears to highlight a transhistorical and cross-cultural community of women.

However, herein lies one of the first tensions underlying Sollée’s arguments. At the outset of her book she is careful to commit herself to a practice of intersectionality, but in practice her nod to intersectionality is just that, a gesture. She cites Kimberlé Crenshaw’s

work and provides a cursory explanation of what intersectionality is and why it’s important to feminist theorizing. But while she begins with an expressed commitment to intersectional thinking, this commitment doesn’t travel through her chapters. Instead, it appears that her intellectual commitment to exploring the interconnectivities between witches and sluts appears to actually be grounded in a particular brand of feminism that thinks of women as constituted in a universally intelligible way.

Gender essentialism is, of course, a longstanding feminist debate and not one that can be solved in a single text. It is also unclear whether or not Sollée is personally committed to this view, or is taking it up for pragmatic purposes, but a universal category of women seems to be in deep theoretical tension with the practice and theory of intersectionality. Further, it is unclear to me where exactly the intersectionality appears in *Witches, Sluts, Feminists*. Mentioning well-known historical or contemporary figures, who happen to be women of colour, does not make a text or analysis intersectional.

Finally, although Sollée’s book has received positive reviews (in the *Guardian U.K.* this summer, for example), and in part for the breadth of topics she discusses, I think the book attempts to cover too much ground. The topics are relevant to her efforts to explore themes of sex positivity, feminism and women’s acts of resistance. But in attempting to demonstrate how these themes relate to, let’s say, capitalism, art, online activism and Hillary Clinton, Sollée doesn’t spend enough time providing a rich intellectual grounding or exploration of each topic. In the end, the reader is left with both too much and not enough. **M**

REVIEWED BY LYNN SPINK

Uniformity and fashion in long-term care

WASH, WEAR, AND CARE: CLOTHING AND LAUNDRY IN LONG-TERM RESIDENTIAL CARE

PAT ARMSTRONG AND SUZANNE DAY

McGill-Queen's University Press (April 2017), \$29.95

ANYONE WITH EXPERIENCE in a long-term care home, as a resident, family member or worker, knows how important clothes are. How residents are dressed signals who they are. For some it is the last connection they have with their life outside the nursing home.

Wash, Wear, and Care, by Pat Armstrong and Suzanne Day, summarizes how research on laundry in long-term residential care homes (nursing homes) provides a way in to larger questions about care and how work is organized. The book is part of a seven-year project, "Re-imagining Long-term Residential Care: An International Study of Promising Practices," involving professors, students, unions, employers and community organizations in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Laundry (the cleaning of linens, towels and clothing) is often an invisible aspect of care because it is considered unskilled women's work. If the laundry is done by volunteers and family members, they're usually women; more often, it is done by workers whose work is limited to doing laundry, or by workers for whom laundry is one of many tasks. In some places, laundry work is done by racialized and usually immigrant men.

Forty-eight researchers from 19 universities visited 25 nursing homes in the six countries noted above. They selected sites based on information from community organizations,

unions, governments and reports, including inspections. Teams of 12, made up of locally based researchers and outsiders, visited and observed each home at different times throughout one week, with a minimum of two researchers per visit. They made field notes and conducted 500 interviews with residents, relatives, workers, managers, volunteers and visitors.

Examples range from a nursing home in Texas, where laundry is contracted out to a private for-profit company, to a home in Sweden where there's a washing machine in each resident's room. There laundry work is a visible part of residents' daily lives and capable residents may do their own. There's a U.K. nursing home where a resident with dementia folds the clean towels, for her a comforting memory of a time when she did the housework.

Another difference is staff uniforms. Workers in one German home are issued uniforms colour-coded by size. A relative of a U.K. care home resident says uniforms signal authority. She's happy workers there wear bright colours and flowers in their hair to encourage interaction with residents. An Ontario director justifies colour-coded uniforms because they distinguish among staff and can prevent infection.

How clothes and laundry are handled shows whether the place is more like a home or an institution for residents. The conditions of care for residents reflect the working conditions of staff.

At the end of the last chapter of *Wash, Wear, and Care* is a list of 10 critical factors the larger long-term care project has identified, many of which are reflected in this study. Number one is that public or non-profit ownership,

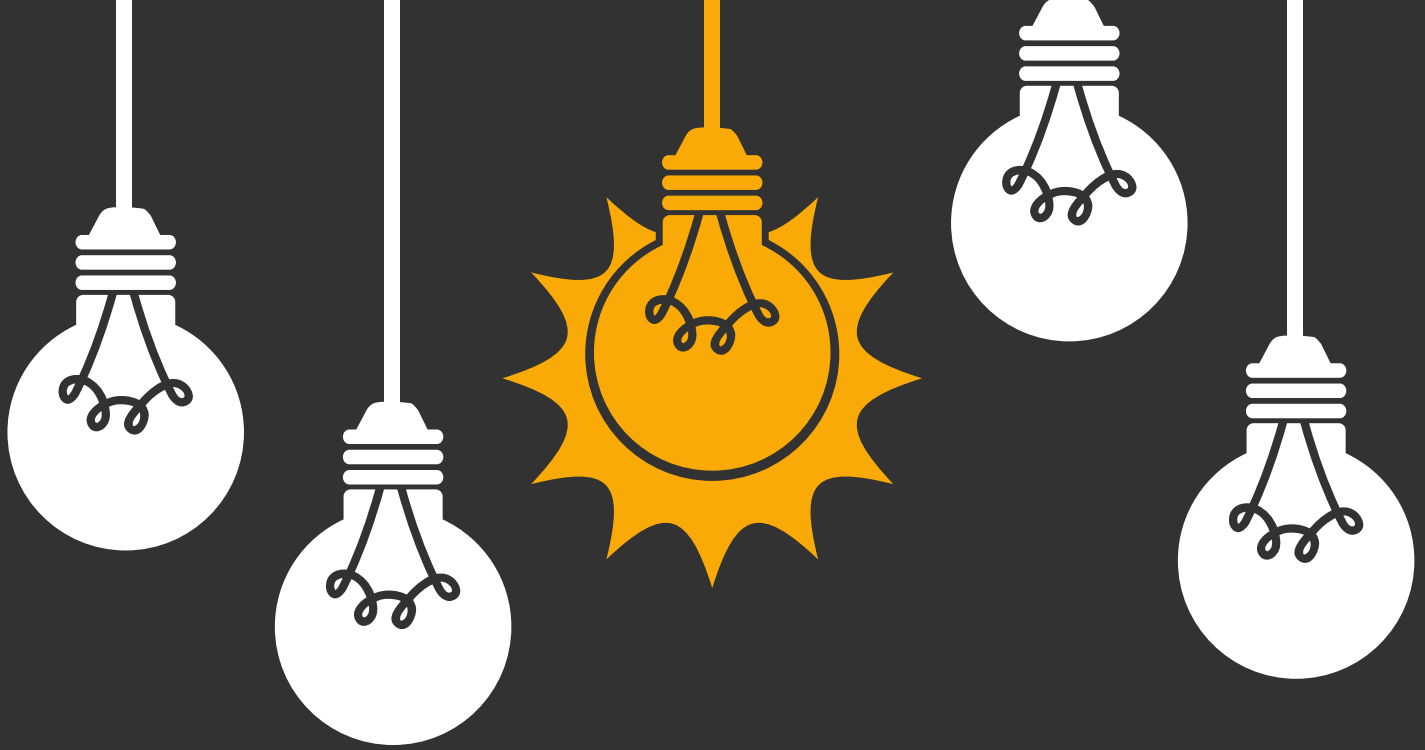
combined with adequate funding and staffing, is essential to high-quality care. Privatizing laundry work is not only likely to increase costs in the long run, but it denies the contributions that laundry work and workers can add to the social care of residents.

The book also includes the observation guide researchers used on their visits to long-term care homes across the six countries in the study. The last line in the guide is "Ask yourself what is missing." The book reflects that approach—comprehensive and careful. The field notes and quotes from interviews vividly distinguish the differences and describe similarities, supported by references to books and articles.

If you're a resident or family member concerned about the smell of laundry piled in carts that rattle when pushed down the hallways, there are descriptions of other ways to deal with dirty linen that keep the smell confined. If you're a worker you'll find examples of severe health hazards faced by people handling dirty laundry, including infections and physical risks such as repetitive strain injuries. There are a variety of ways—good and bad—that employers deal with these problems.

If you're a manager whose board is proposing to cut costs by contracting out the laundry work to a private company, you can present evidence showing that once nursing homes have laid off workers and cleared out the facility's laundry machines, private companies often raise their prices. By that time it's too expensive to return to in-house laundry.

Finally, if you're helping someone choose a nursing home, then *Wash, Wear, and Care* is full of tips on important things to consider. **M**



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